Homeric Models in Plutarch's *Lives*

by

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Committee's Page. This page is not to be hand-written except for the signatures

For Karla

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Abbreviations

Parallel Lives

Theseus and Romulus	*Thes.*	*Rom.*
Lycurgus and Numa	*Lyc.*	*Num.*
Solon and Poplicola	*Sol.*	*Popl.*
Themistocles and Camillus	*Them.*	*Cam.*
Pericles and Fabius Maximus	*Per.*	*Fab.*
Coriolanus and Alcibiades	*Cor.*	*Alc.*
Aemilius Paulus and Timoleon	*Aem.*	*Tim.*
Pelopidas and Marcellus	*Pel.*	*Marc.*
Aristides and Cato Maior	*Arist.*	*Cat. Mai.*
Philopoemen and Flamininus	*Phil.*	*Flam.*
Pyrrhus and Marius	*Pyr.*	*Mar.*
Lysander and Sulla	*Lys.*	*Sul.*
Cimon and Lucullus	*Cim.*	*Luc.*
Nicias and Crassus	*Nic.*	*Cras.*
Sertorius and Eumenes	*Sert.*	*Eum.*
Agesilaus and Pompey	*Ages.*	*Pomp.*
Alexander and Caesar	*Alex.*	*Caes.*
Phocion and Cato Minor	*Phoc.*	*Cat. Min.*
Agis and Cleomens and Tiberius and Caius Gracchus	*Ag./Cl.*	*Grac.*
Demosthenes and Cicero	*Dem.*	*Cic.*
Demetrius and Antony	*Demetr.*	*Ant.*
Dion and Brutus	*Dion*	*Brut.*

Other Lives

Aratus	*Arat.*

Moralia

Ait. phys.	*Quaestiones naturales: Questions of Nature* (Αἰτιαὶ φυσικαί: 911C-920A)
Amat.	*Amatorius: Dialogue on love* (Ἐρωτικός: 748E-771E)
Ap. reg. et imp.	*Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata: Sayings of kings and generals* (Ἀποφθέγματα βασιλέων καὶ στρατηγῶν: 172A-208A)

Conj. praec.	*Coniugalia praecepta: Marriage advice* (Γαμικὰ παραγγέλματα: 138A-146A)
Cons. ad Apoll.	*Consolatio ad Apollonium: Consolation to Apollonius* (Παραμυθητικὸς πρὸς Ἀπολλώνιον)
De aud. poet.	*Quomodo adulescens poetas audire debeat: How a young man should listen to poetry* (Πῶς δεῖ τὸν νέον ποιημάτων ἀκούειν: 14D-37B)
De cap. ex inim.	*De capienda ex inimicis utilitate: On getting usefulness from one's enemies* (Πῶς ἄν τις ὑπ' ἐχθρῶν ὠφέλοιτο: 86B-92E)
De curios.	*De curiositate: On curiosity* (Περὶ πολυπραγμοσύνης: 515B-523C)
De exil.	*De exilio: On exile* (Περὶ φυγῆς: 599A-608A)
De fort. Alex.	*De Alexandri magni fortuna aut virtute: On the fortune or virtue of Alexander the Great* (Περὶ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου τύχης ἢ ἀρετῆς: 316B-345C)
De garr.	*De garrulitate: On talkativeness* (Περὶ ἀδολεσχίας: 502B-515B)
De Herod. malign.	*De Herodoti malignitate: On the malice of Herodotus* (Περὶ τῆς Ἡροδότου κακοηθείας: 854E-874D)
De inv. et od.	*De invidia et odio: On envy and hatred* (Περὶ φθόνου καὶ μίσους: 536E-539A)
De Iside et Osir.	*De Iside et Osiride: On Isis and Osiris* (Περὶ Ἴσιδος καὶ Ὀσίριδος: 351C-384C)
De lat. viv.	*An recte dictum sit latenter esse vivendum: Whether it is a good doctrine 'to live unknown'* (Εἰ καλῶς εἴρηται τὸ λάθε βιώσας: 1128A-1130C)
De se laud.	*De se ipsum citra invidiam laudando: On praising oneself without envy* (Περὶ τοῦ ἑαυτὸν ἐπαινεῖν ἀνεπιφθόνως: 539A-548A)
De sera num.	*De sera numinis vindicta: On why the gods are slow to punish* (Περὶ τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ θείου βραδέως τιμωρουμένων: 548A-568A)
De call. anim.	*Terrestriane an aquatilia animalia sint callidiora: Whether marine or land animals are more intelligent* (Πότερα τῶν ζῴων φρονιμώτερα τὰ χερσαῖα ἢ τὰ ἔνυδρα: 959A-958D)
De Stoic. repugn.	*De Stoicorum repugnantiis: On Stoic contradictions* (Περὶ Στωικῶν ἐναντιωμάτων: 1033A-1057C)
De tranq. animi	*De tranquillitate animi: On tranquility of mind* (Περὶ εὐθυμίας: 464E-477F)

De tuend. sanit.	*De tuenda sanitate praecepta: Advice on health* (Ὑγιεινὰ παραγγέλματα: 122B-137E)
De unius in rep. dom.	*De unius in republica dominatione, populari statu, et paucorum imperio: On which of monarchy, democracy, and oligarchy was in the Republic* (Περὶ μοναρχίας καὶ δημοκρατίας καὶ ὀλιγαρχίας: 826A-827D)
De virt. mor.	*De virtute morali: On moral virtue* (Περὶ τῆς ἠθικῆς ἀρετῆς: 440D-452D)
Mul. virt.	*Mulierum virtutes: Virtues of women* (Γυναικῶν ἀρεταί: 242E-263C)
Non posse	*Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum: That it is not possible to live pleasantly according to Epicurus* (Ὅτι οὐδὲ ἥν ἔστιν ἡδέως κατ' Ἐπίκουρον: 1086C-1107C)
Praec. ger.	*Praecepta gerendae reipublicae: Political precepts* (Πολιτικὰ παραγγέλματα: 798A-825F)
Prof. in virt.	*Quomodo quis suos in virtute sentiat profectus: How someone may recognize his progress in virtue* (Πῶς ἄν τις αἴσθοιτο ἑαυτοῦ προκόπτοντος ἐπ' ἀρετῇ: 75A-86A)
Quaest. conv.	*Quaestiones convivilaes: Table talk* (Συμποσιακὰ προβλήματα: 612C-748D)
Quom. adul.	*Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur: How a flatterer may be discerned from a friend* (Πῶς ἄν τις διακρίνειε τὸν κόλακα τοῦ φίλου: 48E-74E)
Sep. sap. conv.	*Septem sapientium convivium: Dinner of the seven wise men* (τῶν ἑπτὰ σοφῶν συμπόσιον: 146B-164E)
Stoicos absurd. poet. dic.	*Compendium argumenti Stocios absurdiora poetis dicere: Conspectus of the Essay, "That the Stoics say more absurd things than the poets."* (Σύνοψις τοῦ ὅτι παραδοξότερα οἱ Στωικοὶ τῶν ποιητῶν λέγουσι: 1057C-1058E)

Introduction

Wilamowitz was among the first scholars to underscore the criticisms that have been raised against Plutarch: "Plutarch is not a historian and does not want to be one, but a biographer and philosopher; and, secondly...the biographies are grouped in pairs and have to be read as such."[1] Wilamowitz here reacts to the tendency that emerged in the nineteenth century to criticize Plutarch as a historian in the *Lives*. Since the work of Ziegler,[2] this dismissal of Plutarch's biographies has undergone a dramatic reversal and they are now respected as essays of moral exempla that mirror the beliefs stated in the *Moralia*. Under the aegis of Donald Russell, Philip Stadter, and Christopher Pelling, the focus has moved from railing against Plutarch's historical inaccuracies to admiring his literary and pedagogical strengths, with the result that they have illuminated the *Lives* and stressed their importance as didactic and theoretical essays on moral thought.

Despite Wilamowitz's prescience, however, comprehensive Plutarchan studies have examined only the first of his two concerns.[3] Though there have been occasional studies discussing relationships between Plutarch's pairs of *Lives* since Erbse's discussion on Plutarchan *synkrisis*,[4] not until Timothy Duff published his seminal work has a comprehensive, book-length examination of several pairs been expounded.[5] Duff correctly argues that each *Life* illuminates the themes and character described within its

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[1] Wilamowitz (1995) 58.
[2] Ziegler (1951) esp. 273-91.
[3] Cf. Duff's (1999) 10 statement that "The need to read the *Parallel Lives* 'in parallel' is a lesson which is, however, still sporadically applied."
[4] Erbse (1956). For an exhaustive list of studies that discuss *synkrisis* within the published pairs of *Lives*, see Duff (1999) 250 n. 25. To his list I would add more recent works of Duff (2000) and Beck (2002). For specific discussions of pairs in comparison, see *Pyr.-Mar.*: Buszard (2004) and (2005); *Lys.-Sul.*: Candau Morón (2000); *Demetr.-Ant.*: Duff (2004); *Cor.-Alc.*: Alexiou (1999), Pelling (2000) 335-39 (=2002, 342-46); *Per.-Fab.*: Duff (2001); *Alex.-Caes.*: Beneker (2003) 25-28.
[5] Duff (1999).

parallel in essential ways.[6] It is to Duff's example that the present study thus owes much of its focus. Though there is no doubt that reading a *Life* without its pair may have some value, a critical approach to understanding each *Life* is incomplete without references to its parallel.[7]

Where Duff's work examines pairs of *Lives* in order to explore in particular those that contain ambiguous moral messages, however, my focus centers on how sets of parallel *Lives* correspond to each other in a literary context. As Mossman has stated, "In no other prose author...are the poetic genres, tragedy and epic, used in so sophisticated and refined a way to illuminate the tensions within a character."[8] My study examines the influence of epic within in the *Lives*, notably how *pairs* of *Lives* seem to be modeled in some manner on Homeric characters, notably Odysseus and Achilles. To my knowledge, this is a novel approach: although several scholars have investigated epic, tragic, or novelistic elements in a single *Life*, no one has discussed how literary models are used across a single pair of *Lives*.[9] It is this gap in scholarship that the present study partially attempts to fill.

My reason for focusing on epic instead of any other genre, such as tragedy, is driven by Plutarch's own writing: of all his quotations, he cites Homer more than any

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[6] Duff (1999) 10, 250.

[7] In order to comprehend Plutarch's themes and examine the moral questions he posits, the reading of Plutarch's *Lives* in parallel is absolutely necessary, though I do not unconditionally consider the decision to publish and translate sets of Roman or Greek *Lives* without their parallels "deplorable," as does Duff (1999) 10.

[8] Mossman (1988) 93.

[9] Mossman (1988) and (1992) has looked at use of Homeric epic in the *Alexander* and the *Pyrrhus*, respectively, but not in relation to their parallels *Caesar* and *Marius*. The closest to such a parallel study has been Braund (1993), which touches on the connection to Euripides that exists near the end of both the *Nicias* and the *Crassus*. Other studies examining forms of poetry (usually tragedy) within the *Lives* are de Lacy (1952), Swain (1992), Zadorjnyi (1997), Braund (1997), Duff (2004), Bréchet (2005).

other author.[10] Consequently, I believe that an examination of how the *Lives* interact with Plutarch's poetic predecessors should begin with Homer.[11] This is not to say that *only* Homeric poetry serves as a literary model in the *Lives*, nor that Homeric modeling is the most important theme or object of them. Like all of Plutarch's *Lives*, the ones that I shall examine in the following pages combine several genres and themes, which not only incorporate concepts and models from Homeric epic, but also harbor countless correspondences with philosophy – Academic, Peripatetic, Stoic, Cynic, and even Epicurean – historiography, tragedy, rhetoric, the novel, and, of course, earlier biography. I am not insisting that Homer is the key to identifying Plutarch's literary and biographical purpose, but that the study of his Homeric modeling is one more hermeneutic piece that can be used in Plutarchan interpretation, one more prevalent than has been supposed to date.

It is also important to state that many of the references to Homer that I shall discuss in the following pages are seldom more than implied, and are nowhere sustained or stated repeatedly throughout an entire *Life*.[12] In fact, instances where Plutarch explicitly compares a hero to Odysseus or Achilles are remarkably rare.[13] This should not be surprising of a moralist who left his own judgments implicit most of the time,[14] and of a biographer who, as Pelling notes, "is closer to our modern idea of respectable

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[10] Cf. Helmbold and O'Neil (1959).

[11] Let me stress that in terms of *poetry*, I find no one more important to Plutarch than Homer. If one were to include all genres, Plato, Aristotle, and Stoic philosophy would be considered more essential to Plutarch's works.

[12] Of the biographies discussed below, the *Life* which contains the most constant references to epic would be the *Pyrrhus*.

[13] For direct comparison to words or actions of Achilles, see *Arist.* 7.8, *Cam.* 13.1, *Comp. Lys.-Sul.* 4.3, *Pyr.* 13.2, *Ag./Cl.* 55.3; for characters nicknamed Achilles, see *Alex.* 5.8, *Phil.* 1.2; for an explicit comparison to Odysseus, see *Cor.* 22.4.

[14] Cf. Duff (1999) 55, and Stadter (2002) 3 says Plutarch "does not lecture his reader so much as counsel him."

historical activity than most of the historians were."[15] Thus, I refer to Plutarch's use of Homeric epic as modeling. That is, the *Lives* in the following study correspond to the heroes of epic in an archetypal manner: in theme, plot, and characteristic behavior that emphasize or elaborate upon their traits. The scarcity of Homeric allusion or intertextuality makes it entirely possible that Plutarch has modeled the *Lives* on Odysseus and Achilles unawares, either because the models of Odysseus and Achilles were so compelling that he naturally adopted them,[16] the character of the *Life* had modeled himself on a Homeric hero,[17] or he is simply reflecting the historical and literary tradition surrounding his subjects, which had already compared them to Odysseus or Achilles.[18] I believe and thus argue that Plutarch has consciously modeled these heroes on Homeric characters: there remains a possibility that Odyssean and Achillean models may be coincidental, but more likely influenced by Plutarch's intimate knowledge of historiographical, philosophical, and literary tradition as well as his tendency, in Pelling's words, of creating "integrated personalities."[19] At any rate, the lack of pervasive and explicit connections to Homeric epic compel me to examine the sources that Plutarch employs in order to illustrate how he has diverged from them. The tendency, at least in

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[15] Pelling (1990b) 29 (=2002, 148). Still, as Pelling (*ibid.*) also notes, his degree of rigor varies in different *Lives*, he "helps his truth along a little," and "strains plausibility" (1990b, 31, 32, 33, =2002, 149, 150, 151)

[16] Odysseus is the ancient equivalent for what Stanford (1964) 10 (also see 148 n. 9) calls the "Wily Lad" of folktale, who earns his notoriety as "a man of extreme wiliness" (13). King (1987) xix notes that there are standard qualities to denote Achilles: "the youthful warrior, the brutally vengeful warrior, preeminent prowess, wrath, obsession with honor, the quarrel between king and best warrior, the choice of imperishable glory over long life...All these became *topoi* that could instantly create an Achillean context." Fierce warriors in single combat are rare in the *Lives* so it is likely that Plutarch would, at least subconsciously, include Achillean connotations for such subjects.

[17] This is almost certainly the case with *Alexander*, who, in addition to a desire to rival Achilles (cf. Arr. 7.14.4) also imitates Heracles and Dionysus. On this, see Strabo 3.5.5 and Hamilton (1969) 174. Cf. also *Antony*, who identifies not with Achilles or Odysseus, but Dionysus and Osiris. Cf. Pelling (1988b) 179-80, Brenk (1992b).

[18] In fact, I shall discuss the sources in depth in my three case studies in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

[19] Pelling (1990a) 227-33 (=2002, 315-21). See below, Chapter 2, pp. 33-34.

the *Lives* investigated in this study, is that he emphasizes qualities that stress positive or negative aspects in relation to the heroes of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

This paper contains four main arguments. First, I shall attempt to show that Plutarch has based several *Lives* on what I call Homeric models. Second, that, as in many other aspects of Plutarch's *Lives*, these models are complementary: Homeric modeling in one *Life* aids in interpreting not only that *Life* – through comparison and contrast – the character and description of its parallel. Third, I believe that these models, whether unconscious archetypes or carefully constructed portraits, illuminate and underscore important aspects of each hero's character. Lastly, at least in the case of two sets of pairs, the Homeric models promote comparison between heroes of two different set of *Lives*.

Before I examine how Plutarch includes and employs Homeric models in the *Lives*, two prefatory inquiries are in order. First, (in chapter 1) I will establish that, within Plutarch's literary, cultural, and philosophical milieu, Homer was still of immense importance. This study is primarily a survey of the reception of Homer from the Archaic period to Plutarch's time, focusing initially on Pindar and Attic tragedy and transitioning to the philosophers of Platonic, Peripatetic, Cynic, and Stoic bent. The chapter culminates with a description of Plutarch's own relationship to and use of Homeric epic within the *Moralia*. The second task will be to categorize Plutarch's views of the heroes of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (chapter 2). Having discussed Plutarch's interpretation of these two heroes – their virtues and their vices – I will lay the foundations of my argument, namely that Plutarch at times includes an Odysseus-Achilles schema in writing sets of *Parallel Lives*.

The remainder of the study focuses on how Odyssean and Achillean models affect the reading of three sets of *Lives*. First (chapter 3), I discuss how Odysseus and Achilles are reflected in the *Themistocles-Camillus*, a largely encomiastic pair whose positive aspects have largely been undervalued. Next (chapter 4), I analyze how *Coriolanus-Alcibiades* contains this same pattern, in which Greek hero once again shares qualities with Odysseus and the Roman statesman with Achilles. I will attempt to show that the themes and characterizations of the statesmen within this pair echo those of Odysseus and Achilles as well as Themistocles and Camillus. In examining the *Pyrrhus-Marius* (chapter 5), I will show how these *Lives* have an Odysseus-Achilles scheme that both echoes and differs from that of the previous two pairs. Lastly, the study concludes with an attempt to evaluate and project its importance upon the rest of the *Lives* and point to potential future research on the subject.

Chapter 1

Plutarch and the Tradition of Homeric Reception

The earliest work within the textual tradition of Plutarch's *Moralia* that can be attributed to him is the *De audiendis poetis*.[1] This essay stresses the importance Plutarch places on education and focuses heavily on how to teach the works of Homer.[2] In this chapter, I shall attempt to demonstrate that Plutarch's close reading of Homer throughout the *De audiendis poetis* and the rest of the *Moralia* reflects the overall importance of Homeric epic within the intellectual atmosphere of Plutarch's era. Plutarch's philosophical and rhetorical contemporaries are constantly defending, explaining, and citing Homer's poems, and it is unsurprising that Plutarch engages with poetic interpretation himself. In this chapter, which intends to be merely a survey, I will narrate the tradition of Homeric reception up to the time of Plutarch. Once we grasp the philosophical and rhetorical context in which Plutarch writes, we may then his own discussion of Homeric epic as well as Homer's importance within his own works.

Homeric Interpretation from Pythagoras to Zeno

Plutarch's interpretations of the Homeric poems are only the latest in a long series of ancient analyses. From as early as the sixth century, scholars and philosophers discuss

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[1] For arguments against its genuineness, see Wyttenbach (1820) 6.29-64; for a short overview of the debate, see Berry (1958), and Keaney and Lamberton (1996) 1-10.

[2] Out of over 600 Homeric quotations in the *Lives* and *Moralia*, (Cf. Helmbold and O'Neil, 1959, 39-48) Plutarch uses 120 in the *De aud. poet* by my count.

the philosophical and scientific merits of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.[3] A complete history of the ancient explanations of Homeric thought would be a daunting task, far beyond the scope of this study.[4] Still, a brief outline of the views of the major schools – that is, the Academy, the Peripatetics, the Cynics, and the Stoics – will be very helpful in illustrating both the traditions with which Plutarch engages and the atmosphere in which he writes. The reaction to Homer within Plutarch's time is merely a continuation and amalgamation of the beliefs established by the major philosophers several hundred years earlier.

Evidence for the beginnings of a philosophical debate about Homer dates from Pythagorean interpretations of the sixth century BCE. As Lamberton notes, "the evidence for early Pythagorean concern with Homer…is considerable,"[5] and there may have been allegorical readings as early as the sixth century.[6] Traditionally, scholars have argued that the attacks on Homer by Pythagoras, Empedocles, and Heraclitus of Ephesus are countered by defenders such as Theagenes of Rhegium.[7] These early philosophers, though brought up on the poetry of Homer, find problems and contradictions within his works and use his own terms and style to revise him.[8] As Buffière notes, two sides subsequently form: those who deem Homer irreproachable and divinely inspired, and

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[3] The origins of the first interpretations of Homer are incredibly difficult to reconstruct and have created an intense debate. The first discussions no doubt arose from Pythagoreanism and are commonly attributed to Theagenes of Rhegium, whose *floruit* has been established as 525 BCE. For more information on the nature of Theagenes and early Pythagoreanism, see Lamberton (1986), esp. pp. 31-43, and Detienne (1962).

[4] For more information on the topic of Homeric interpretation, I refer the reader to Lamberton (1986) and (1997), Buffière (1956), Babut (1969), Detienne (1962), and Fowler (2004) 235-53.

[5] Lamberton (1986) 43.

[6] Tate (1934) argues adamantly for non-apologetic Homeric allegories well before Theagenes of Rhegium, who was a contemporary of Cambyses of Persia and Xenophanes (Buffière 1956 3, 104). Detienne (1962) disagrees, stating that Theagenes was unlikely to have started the allegorical method.

[7] Tate (1934) 105, Russell and Konstan (forthcoming) xiv.

[8] Tate (1934) 105-9.

those who consider him – despite his artistic sublimity – a narrator of fictions, falsehoods, contradictions, and mistakes, and therefore culpable of immorality and impiety.[9]

By the fifth century CE, Pindar complains of poetic misrepresentations. He wishes for poets to speak the truth, and tell stories that suit the gods. In *Olympian* 1, he insists that men should only say good things of the gods (*Oly.* 1.35) and presents a tale of Tantalus that avoids accusing Demeter of the cannibalistic deed of devouring Pelops' shoulder (1.52-66). Pindar reveals his distrust of certain writings of Homer in particular in his depiction of the gifted but lying bard in *Nemean* 7. Pindar here explicitly condemns Homer for his aggrandizement of Odysseus:

> ἐγὼ δὲ πλέον' ἔλπομαι
> λόγον Ὀδυσσέος ἢ πάθαν διὰ τὸν ἀδυεπῆ γενέσθ' Ὅμηρον·
> ἐπεὶ ψεύδεσί οἱ ποτανᾷ <τε> μαχανᾷ
> σεμνὸν ἔπεστί τε· σοφία δὲ κλέπτει παράγοισα μύθοις· τυφλὸν δ' ἔχει
> ἦτορ ὅμιλος ἀνδρῶν ὁ πλεῖστος. εἰ γὰρ ἦν
> ἔ τὰν ἀλάθειαν ἰδέμεν, οὔ κεν ὅπλων χολωθεὶς
> ὁ καρτερὸς Αἴας ἔπαξε διὰ φρενῶν
> λευρὸν ξίφος· ὃν κράτιστον Ἀχιλέος ἄτερ μάχᾳ.
>
> But I believe that the fame of
> Odysseus became more than his sufferings merited due to sweet-singing Homer;
> since there is reverence for Homer's lies and
> winged art: and his wisdom deceives us, leading us astray with tall tales; but
> most of the throng of men have a blind heart. For if
> they had been able to see the truth, the mighty Ajax,
> stirred to rage for the armor, would not have driven through his chest
> the polished sword; he, the strongest in battle but for Achilles.
> (*Nem.* 7.20-27)[10]

[9] Buffière (1956) 9.
[10] All translations, except where noted, are my own.

Pindar thus expresses a genuine wonder for Homer's skill, but regrets the purpose to which he has directed it. Homer's sin is that he eternally commemorates Odysseus, the worse man.[11]

Pindar's criticism of Odysseus is representative of much of the literature of the fifth century. The lyric poet is among the first to associate the hero negatively with a tendency for self-serving and fallacious cleverness, a trait that many of the Classical poets find distasteful.[12] Pindar explicitly rejects Odysseus' methods: "May I never have a character like [Odysseus'], but always go in straightforward ways" (*Nem.* 8.35-36).[13] The tragic poets also invoke this negative view of Odysseus in several of their works. Sophocles' *Philoctetes* creates an Odysseus who relies wholly on persuasion and craft to attain the bow of Philoctetes. At one point he convinces the young Neoptolemus to use trickery (δόλῳ) and also defends his shady tactics:

Νε· οὐκ ἄρ' ἐκείνῳ γ' οὐδὲ προσμεῖξαι θρασύ;
Οδ· οὔ, μὴ δόλῳ λαβόντα γ', ὡς ἐγὼ λέγω.
Νε· οὐκ αἰσχρὸν ἡγῇ δῆτα τὸ ψευδῆ λέγειν;
Οδ· οὔκ, εἰ τὸ σωθῆναί γε τὸ ψεῦδος φέρει.
Νε· πῶς οὖν βλέπων τις ταῦτα τολμήσει λακεῖν;
Οδ· ὅταν τι δρᾷς εἰς κέρδος, οὐκ ὀκνεῖν πρέπει.

Ne: So, it is not safe to meet with [Philoctetes]?
Od: No, unless one takes him by trickery, as I am saying.
Ne: Do you not consider such lying shameful?
Od: No, if the lie brings salvation.
Ne: How does anyone dare to utter such things while looking so honest?
Od: Whenever you do something for benefit, it is not fitting to hesitate.
(*Philoctetes* 105-10)

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[11] Stanford (1964) 103-4, believes that Aeschylus also preferred the "frank" heroic model that Pindar promotes over the "crafty" type that Odysseus represents.
[12] Stanford (1964) 94, Lattimore (1951) 53.
[13] *Nem.* 8.35-36: εἴη μή ποτέ μοι τοιοῦτον ἦθος, Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἀλλὰ κελεύθοις
ἁπλόαις ζωᾶς ἐφαπτοίμαν.

Neoptolemus eventually revolts against Odysseus' villainous manipulations, claiming that in giving the bow back to the wretched Philoctetes, he has right on his side (1251). Though Odysseus does what is necessary for his side to win, his underhanded tactics render his actions questionable.

The Odysseus of Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Trojan Women* is likewise despised as a cold-hearted logician. In the *Hecuba*, when the women learn that Polyxena is to be sacrificed at Achilles' tomb, Hecuba says to Odysseus:

> Ἑκ· οὔκουν κακύνῃ τοῖσδε τοῖς βουλεύμασιν,
> ὃς ἐξ ἐμοῦ μὲν ἔπαθες οἷα φῇς παθεῖν
> δρᾷς δ' οὐδὲν ἡμᾶς εὖ, κακῶς δ' ὅσον δύναι;
> ἀχάριστον ὑμῶν σπέρμ', ὅσοι δημηγόρους
> ζηλοῦτε τιμάς· μηδὲ γιγνώσκοισθέ μοι,
> οἳ τοὺς φίλους βλάπτοντες οὐ φροντίζετε,
> ἢν τοῖσι πολλοῖς πρὸς χάριν λέγητέ τι.
>
> Hec: Do you not now injure me with these counsels,
> you who endured from me what things you said you endured,
> and you aid me not at all, but perform as much evil as you can manage?
> Whoever would seek honors from haranguing the people
> is your graceless spawn; nor would you consider anything for my sake,
> you who do not stop to think of harming your friends,
> if you should say anything that will please the masses.
> (*Hecuba* 251-57)

Odysseus responds with a long-winded, rhetorical explanation of why he must do what has been decided in the assembly and honor the dead Achilles (301-29), eventually reproving Hecuba for her ingratitude (330-31). In the *Trojan Women*, though Odysseus does not appear, his name is invoked with great scorn. Hecuba's dismay upon finding that she has been assigned to him stands out in her conversation with Talthybius, causing her to burst from one-line responses into full-fledged woe:

> Εκ. μυσαρῷ δολίῳ λέλογχα
> φωτὶ δουλεύειν,

πολεμίῳ δίκας, παρανόμῳ δάκει,
ὃς πάντα τἀκεῖθεν ἐνθάδ<ε στρέφει,
τὰ δ'> ἀντίπαλ' αὖθις ἐκεῖσε
διπτύχῳ γλώσσᾳ,
φίλα τὰ πρότερ' ἄφιλα τιθέμενος πάλιν.

I have drawn the punishment to be a slave to
a treacherous and loathsome man,
an enemy, a lawless beast,
who by his double tongue
has turned against us all that once
was friendly in his camp, changing this for that
and that for this again.

(*Trojan Women* 282-88)

Hecuba's grief is merited, as at Odysseus' insistence the Greeks decide to kill Astyanax (720), and Hecuba, comparing Odysseus to Hector, says that her son earned greater honors by far than "the arms of that clever and wicked Odysseus could earn" (1224). As for Pindar and Sophocles, Euripides' Odysseus is a villainous rogue, the worst sort of man to whom Troy could have fallen.[14]

Similar conclusions of the Homeric poems flourish in the time of Plato,[15] who severely criticizes many of Homer's moral implications. Plato's view becomes the benchmark to which subsequent Homeric apologists will direct their responses.[16] His criticism of Homer focuses on the behavior of gods and men within the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and according to Socrates in the *Republic*, much of what Homer (and Hesiod) writes needs to be censored. The wars and murders and scheming among the gods described by Homer and Hesiod are either false or have meanings too obscure for young

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[14] Sophocles' view of Odysseus is not quite all evil and wicked, however. His character in the *Ajax* is that of a man eager for mercy and forgiveness and shares many features with his character in the *Odyssey* when he visits the land of the dead (11.541-62).

[15] Stanford (1964) 3.

[16] As Russell and Konstan (forthcoming) xix note, "...It was Plato's denunciation of Homer...that had the greatest immediate impact on philosophical approaches to myth."

people to comprehend.[17] Socrates thus insists that the poets' works must be omitted from the education of children (*Rep.* 2.377C-378C). Frequently, he discusses specific scenes in Homer that are unacceptable, such as the following:

> Ἥρας δὲ δεσμοὺς ὑπὸ υἱέος καὶ Ἡφαίστου ῥίψεις ὑπὸ πατρός, μέλλοντος τῇ μητρὶ τυπτομένῃ ἀμυνεῖν, καὶ θεομαχίας ὅσας Ὅμηρος πεποίηκεν οὐ παραδεκτέον εἰς τὴν πόλιν, οὔτ' ἐν ὑπονοίαις πεποιημένας οὔτε ἄνευ ὑπονοιῶν.
>
> But the binding of Hera by her son and the casting of Hephaestus by his father – though he only wished to prevent his mother from being beaten! – and the battles of gods which Homer has written of must not be accepted into the city, whether constructed with deeper meaning or without.
>
> (*Republic* 2.378D)

Socrates continues: Since the gods are always good, and good things can cause no harm, all stories of the gods as causes of evil or falsehood must be rejected (2.379A-C). Specifically, Socrates lists Homer's narration of Zeus and the jars of good and evil (2.379D),[18] the disruption of the truce by Pandarus at the instigation of Athena (2.379E-380A),[19] and the false dream sent by Zeus to Agamemnon (2.383A-C).[20] Gods, as good, are also not subject to intemperance, and thus Socrates rejects the stories of Hera and Zeus at Ida and the love affair between Ares and Aphrodite (3.390B-C).[21] The portrayal of the gods in Homeric epic consistently fail to attain the more august level of respect that Socrates requires.

Plato's disapproval of the gods in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* extends to Homer's descriptions of the heroes as well. For instance, Socrates is dismayed at Homer's apparent praise of intemperance from the mouth of Odysseus:

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[17] *Republic* 2.378D. Cf. Russell and Konstan (forthcoming) xix.
[18] Cf. *Iliad* 24.527-32.
[19] Cf. *Iliad* 4.69-140.
[20] Cf. *Iliad* 2.1-47.
[21] Cf. *Iliad* 14.294-341 and *Odyssey* 8.266-366.

Ποιεῖν ἄνδρα τὸν σοφώτατον λέγοντα, ὡς δοκεῖ αὐτῷ κάλλιστον
ὅταν παραπλεῖαι ὦσι τράπεζαι
σίτου καὶ κρειῶν, μέθυ δ' ἐκ κρητῆρος ἀφύσσων
οἰνοχόος φορέῃσι καὶ ἐγχείῃ δεπάεσσι,
δοκεῖ σοι ἐπιτήδειον εἶναι πρὸς ἐγχράτειαν ἑαυτοῦ ἀκούειν νέῳ;

"To portray his wisest man as saying that it seems to him to be the most beautiful thing of all, that the tables should be full
'of food and meat, and the wine-bearer drawing wine from
from the mixer bears it and pours it in the goblets' (*Od.* 9.8-10),
Does this seem to you to be suitable for a youth to hear to aid his self-control?"
(*Republic* 3.390A-B)

Socrates also finds fault with Homer's depiction of Achilles in the *Iliad.* Socrates complains that Achilles, the son of "chaste" Peleus and a goddess, is full of presumptuous arrogance and greed (3.391C). In addition to these specific quarrels with Homer, Plato more generally disapproves of scenes of the heroes weeping and laughing.[22] The sum of these sins earns Homer the ultimate punishment – expulsion from Plato's city (3.398A).

As Plato notes, regardless of whether or not these stories of the gods and heroes are constructed using "deeper meaning" (ὑπονοίαις), none of them should be allowed into his Republic. Plato here responds to the allegorical technique, an effort of reconciling Homer to philosophy that continues for centuries after his own time. For Plato, such interpretations – even if correct – are not sufficient to overcome the damage done to a naïve youth who first reads the poems at a basic level. Plato's early and pre-emptive strike against later Stoic and Neoplatonic exegesis has a significant impact on Plutarch, who will also reject such readings.

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[22] *Ibid.* 3.387E-388E. Although here Plato uses an example of the gods laughing, he also directs men not to laugh or weep excessively at *Laws* 5.732B-C.

Despite the final decision to banish Homer, Plato does not reject every moral implication within Homer's epics.[23] In the *Iliad*, for instance, when Diomedes says, "Friend, sit down in silence, and listen to my words,"[24] and in the *Odyssey*, when Odysseus chides himself with "Endure, my heart; for you have endured more horrible things before,"[25] Plato praises Homer for encouraging self-control. Socrates also concedes that there are "many things that we praise in Homer" before condemning the episode of the dream sent by Zeus to Agamemnon.[26] In the *Apology*, Socrates uses Achilles as a positive example of a man who fears disgrace rather than death (*Apol.* 28C-D). In the *Laws*, when an Athenian stranger discusses sacrifice, Plato praises the piety of Homer for these words (*Laws* 7.803F-804A):

> Τηλέμαχ', ἄλλα μὲν αὐτὸς ἐνὶ φρεσὶ σῇσι νοήσεις,
> ἄλλα δὲ καὶ δαίμων ὑποθήσεται· οὐ γὰρ ὀΐω
> οὔ σε θεῶν ἀέκητι γενέσθαι τε τραφέμεν τε.
>
> "Telemachus, in your own heart will instruct yourself in some things,
> but in others the spirit will aid you; for I do not think
> you were born and raised without the will of the gods."
> (*Odyssey* 3.26-28)

As Plato notes, this quotation of Homer emphasizes the need of men to make their own nature like that of the gods (*Laws* 7.804A-B). Still, despite several examples worthy of education, and in spite of Plato's own reverence for Homer (*Rep.* 10.595A), he still considers poetry inadequate and dangerous. Homer's imitative method renders him an inappropriate teacher of children – an issue that Plutarch also takes special pains to discuss in his *De audiendis poetis*.

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[23] Plato also frequently refers to the fact that reading Homer is a pleasure: e.g. *Laws* 2.658D, 3.680C, *Republic* 3.387B.
[24] *Il.* 4.412: τέττα, σιωπῇ ἧσο, ἐμῷ δ' ἐπιπείθεο μύθῳ.
[25] *Republic* 3.390D, *Odyssey* 20.17-18. This quotation also appears at *Phaedo* 94D.
[26] *Republic* 2.383A: "Πολλὰ ἄρα Ὁμήρου ἐπαινοῦντες..."

Though Plato inspires other Homeric detractors, such as the author of *On the Sublime*,[27] Epicurus,[28] and Zoilus the Cynic,[29] his attacks against Homer, as Buffière notes, seem to have rallied more defenders to Homer's cause than besiegers against his works.[30] Some of the first to side with Homer are the followers of Aristotle. Buffière has remarked how the Peripatetics agree with Homer in three key ways: in the conception of virtue, in the idea of what constitutes happiness, and in the place and role that it attributes to action.[31] For Aristotle as for Homer the valiant and good hero is not perfect nor made of a heart of bronze, but moderates his passions and fears as much as possible.[32] Likewise, Aristotle agrees with Homer that happiness depends not on virtue alone, but also on fortune.[33] As the second century CE author of the *De Homero* states, both Odysseus and Nestor are paradigms of virtue: the one is forced to wander for ten years

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[27] In *On the Sublime*, the author reveals his dislike of Homer's portrait of the gods; for they fight and quarrel and fear and the poet puts them forever in misery (ἀτυχίαν ἐποίησεν αἰώνιον, 9.7). He also believes that the *Odyssey* shows that Homer is getting older and demonstrates how "easily great natures in their decline are occasionally channeled into absurdity" (9.14). Yet the author admits, "Though I am discussing the effects of age, still it is *Homer's* old age" (9.14), and he also admits that Homer includes some excellent examples of the gods (9.8) and embarks on heroic greatness with his heroes (9.10).

[28] In *Non posse*, Plutarch mentions how Epicurus passed on to Heracleides the term "Homer's idiocies" (Ὁμήρου μωρολογήματα, 1087A) and scornfully mentions that Metrodorus the Epicurean implies that learning the *Iliad* is not necessarily worthwhile (1094D). Also, the later Epicurean philosopher Philodemus (fl. ca. 110-40 CE), though he believes Homer's poetry contains much that is harmful, does not consider his works wholly useless. He believes that Achilles and the suitors of the *Odyssey* are examplars of the misuse of power, but that Nestor and Odysseus demonstrate how this misuse can be corrected. On this, see Asmis (1995) 31.

[29] Buffière (1956) 20-24. Though Bracht Branham (1996) 84 relates that Zoilus was famous not only for his attacks on Homer (and earned the title "Homeromastix"), but also for critiques of Isocrates and Plato himself.

[30] Buffière (1956) 19: "On peut dire que les attaques de Platon ont suscité plus de défenseurs à Homère que de sympathies à l'auteur de la *République*."

[31] *Ibid.* 308: "L'éthique aristotélicienne...rejoint la morale homérique sur trois points essentiels: dans sa conception de la vertu; dans l'idée qu'elle se fait du bonheur; dans la place et le rôle qu'elle attribue à l'action."

[32] *Ibid.* 308.

[33] *Ibid.* 312. Cf. Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* I.8.15-17.

while the other quickly returns home. Nestor, thanks to fortune, becomes the happy one. The difference between them is a result of fate, not Odysseus' lack of virtue.[34]

Along with the Peripatetics, the Cynics and Stoics generally[35] come to Homer's defense, most notably in their praise of Odysseus. Both the Cynics and Stoics view Odysseus as the man of suffering and wisdom, whose happiness depends not on material goods and fortune, but on his own virtue. Antisthenes, the father of the Cynic sect,[36] considers Odysseus the exemplar of many of the precepts of Cynicism: he is indifferent to the sufferings of pain, hunger, and insults; Odysseus also chooses to learn from his suffering.[37] In Antisthenes' pair of speeches that make up the contest between Ajax and Odysseus for the arms of Achilles, Stanford notes how Odysseus, like a Cynic, "emphasizes his readiness to serve the common good, his individualism and self-sufficiency, his vigilance,...his disregard of indignities and mutilations which a conventional hero would think worse than death, his belief (shared by Socrates) that the good man can suffer no true harm."[38] Antisthenes also defends Odysseus by explaining that the word "πολύτροπος"[39] does not mean that he is unprincipled and immoral, but, as Stanford states, the term "denotes Odysseus' skill in adapting his figures of speech ('tropes') to his hearers at any particular time."[40]

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[34] *De Homero* 141.
[35] For one exception, of course, see Zoilus the Cynic above, esp. note 29.
[36] Diogenes Laertius (6.2) claims that after learning hardiness from Socrates Antisthenes started the Cynic lifestyle (κατῆρχε πρῶτος τοῦ κυνισμοῦ), though modern scholars dispute this claim. Cf. Buffière (1956) 372. See also Giannantoni (1985) vol. 3: 203-12. On Antisthenes' approach to Homer in general, see Navia (2001) 39-52.
[37] Buffière (1956) 373: "...indifférence à la douleur, à la faim, aux insultes, force par l'ascese, par l'entraînement aux plus dures fatigues, trouvaient chez Ulysse de faciles applications."
[38] Stanford (1964) 98.
[39] Cf. *Od.* 1.1, 10.329.
[40] Stanford (1964) 99.

These beliefs of the proto-Cynic Antisthenes influence Zeno, the founder of the Stoics who attempts to establish a distinction between "opinion" (δόξα) and "truth" (ἀλήθεια) in Homer. Dio of Prusa states:

> "ὁ δὲ Ζήνων οὐδὲν τῶν τοῦ Ὁμήρου ψέγει, ἅμα διηγούμενος καὶ διδάσκων ὅτι τὰ μὲν κατὰ δόξαν, τὰ δὲ κατὰ ἀλήθειαν γέγραφεν, ὅπως μὴ φαίνηται αὐτὸς αὑτῷ μαχόμενος ἔν τισι δοκοῦσιν ἐναντίως εἰρῆσθαι."
>
> "However, Zeno finds fault with nothing of Homer's, at the same time interpreting him and teaching that Homer has written some things in accord with opinion and some things in accord with truth, with the purpose of demonstrating that Homer should not appear to be battling with himself in certain things that seem to be inconsistent.
>
> (*Discourses* 53.5)

The "Truth" for Zeno is that which reinforces the natural doctrine under the veil of allegory; the "Opinion" consists of those concepts that change with the speaker.[41] The attempt to find reconciliations of the apparent contradictions within Homer lead to a nearly universal defense of his writings within Stoic philosophy. The second century BCE Stoic philosopher and grammarian Crates of Mallus, to take one example, admires the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and also attempts to justify some of the errors or manifest inconsistencies in Homer, to whom he ascribes omniscience.[42] More importantly, Zeno's references to "Truth" – the secret meaning hidden beneath Homer's words – result in a Stoic literary tradition of textual exegesis. Exegesis, the process of using allegory both to prove that Homer's detractors are incorrect in labeling his poems as lacking in morality and natural science, becomes the primary method of commenting on Homer's texts.[43]

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[41] Buffière (1956) 146-47.
[42] *Ibid.* 83.
[43] Babut (1969) 369.

Homeric Interpretation to the 2nd Century C.E.

The allegorical tradition influenced by Zeno flourishes up to and beyond Plutarch's own time. One of the most important allegorical approaches is conducted by Heraclitus,[44] a rhetor of Stoic sympathies from the first or second century CE.[45] In his *Homeric Allegories*, he first states that Homer is a pious man and proclaims that philosophers such as himself can truly interpret his alleged impieties:

> εἰ δ' ἀμαθῶς τινες ἄνθρωποι τὴν 'Ομηρικὴν ἀλληγορίαν ἀγνοοῦσιν οὐδ' εἰς τὰ μύχια τῆς ἐκείνου σοφίας καταβεβήκασιν, ἀλλ' ἀβασάνιστος αὐτοῖς ἡ τῆς ἀληθείας κρίσις ἔρριπται, καὶ τὸ φιλοσόφως ῥηθὲν οὐκ εἰδότες, ὃ μυθικῶς δοκεῖ πλάσαι προσαρμόζουσιν, οὗτοι μὲν ἐρρέτωσαν. (3) ἡμεῖς δ' οἳ τῶν ἀβεβήλων ἐντὸς περιρραντηρίων ἡγνίσμεθα, σεμνὴν ὑπὸ νόμῳ τῶν ποιημάτων τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἰχνεύωμεν.
>
> But if some people without learning do not recognize Homeric allegory and have not reached the innermost niches of his wisdom, but the understanding of the truth is torn from them still unexamined, and being incognizant of philosophical examination they attach themselves to something that seems to be mythically constructed, then they are mistaken. (3) Still we who have been purified by the inviolable lustral water within, let us hunt after the customary solemn truth of his poetry.
>
> (*Homeric Allegories* 3.2-3)

After thus asserting his authority, Heraclitus immediately dismisses Plato's decision to banish Homer, ignores Epicurus (4.1-5), then proceeds through both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* book by book,[46] allegorizing the scenes that the ancients had traditionally considered the most impious. For example, Heraclitus states that the binding of Zeus by

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[44] Stanford (1964) 126 claims that the *Homeric Allegories* "strongly influenced the later allegorical tradition."

[45] For the date, see Buffière (1962) ix-x, Russell and Konstan (forthcoming) xi-xiii. The presumption that Heraclitus was a Stoic is largely based on the fact that there are frequent parallels between Heraclitus' *Allegories* and the *Theologiae Graecae Compendium* of the Stoic L. Annaeus Cornutus. See Buffière (1962) xxxii.

[46] A substantial portion of the *Allegories*, which interprets the tales from *Od.* 11.1 to 20.350, is lost.

Hera, Poseidon, Athena, and the other Olympians[47] is the "weightiest charge" against Homer's piety (21.1). But, he continues:

> ταύτης τοίνυν τῆς ἀσεβείας ἔν ἐστιν ἀντιφάρμακον, ἐὰν ἐπιδείξωμεν ἠλληγορημένον τὸν μῦθον· ἡ γὰρ ἀρχέγονος ἁπάντων καὶ πρεσβυτέρα φύσις ἐν τούτοις ἔπεσι θεολογεῖται. (2) καὶ τῶν φυσικῶν κατὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα δογμάτων εἷς ἀρχηγὸς Ὅμηρος, ἑκάστῳ τινὶ τῶν μετ' αὐτὸν ἧς ἔδοξεν εὑρεῖν ἐπινοίας γεγονὼς διδάσκαλος.
>
> For this impious story there is one antidote; namely, if we should show the story to be an allegory. For it is ancient and primordial nature being theologized in these words. (2) And Homer is the creator of the natural dogmas in the original concepts, the master and inspiration of all ideas that followed.
>
> (*Homeric Allegories* 22.1-2)

Heraclitus then explains this tale in terms of the primordial elements: Zeus, as the upper air (αἰθήρ), is at war with all the other elements, including Hera or the lower air (ἀήρ). Zeus is aided by Thetis, who places (τίθημι) the elements in their proper places. According to Heraclitus, Homer shows that harmony may only be maintained when the elements are in their proper place, and here demonstrates a natural phenomenon allegorically.

Using etymologies and myths not necessarily extant in the Homeric poems, Heraclitus thus "proves" that Homer is the world's first natural scientist and has therefore laid the groundwork for future philosophy. The gods in Homer's poems are not meant to be the deities the Greeks worship, but allegorical concepts. Athena is reason, Ares is folly, Aphrodite intemperance, Zeus is pure thought as well as the upper air, Poseidon is water, Apollo the sun, Artemis the moon, Hera the air. Within this framework, every act of the gods can be explained with a natural philosopher's point of view. Plato's banishment of Homer therefore becomes the equivalent of exiling the father of science.

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[47] Achilles recalls the story at *Iliad* 1.396-406.

Near the end of the *Homeric Allegories*, in fact, Heraclitus unleashes this final salvo against Plato:

> Ἆρ' οὖν ἐπὶ τούτοις ὁ μέγας οὐρανοῦ καὶ θεῶν ἱεροφάντης Ὅμηρος, ὁ τὰς ἀβάτους καὶ κεκλεισμένας ἀνθρωπίναις ψυχαῖς ἀτραποὺς ἐπ' οὐρανὸν ἀνοίξας, ἐπιτήδειός ἐστι κατακριθῆναι δυσσεβεῖν; (2) ἵνα ταύτης τῆς ἀνοσίου καὶ μιαρᾶς ψήφου διενεχθείσας ἀναιρεθέντων τε τῶν ποιημάτων ἄφωνος ἀμαθία τοῦ κόσμου κατασκεδασθῇ;
>
> So then should we call Homer, the great high priest of the sky and gods, the one who reveals to the sky things unassailable and closed for men, a blasphemer? (2) So that as a result of this impious and hateful sentence and after the disappearance of his poems, the stupor of ignorance shall attack the world?
>
> (*Homeric Allegories* 76.1-2)

In every respect, Heraclitus not only pardons Homer, but exalts him to a level that Plato should have known was philosophically impregnable. Though there are very few philosophers who defend Homer with the antipathy Heraclitus shows for Plato, most philosophers in the second century CE do attempt to wrestle with the vexing problem that Plato, the philosopher *nonpareil*, had exiled Homer from his Republic.

Two second century philosophers who tackle the problem of Homer's banishment more diplomatically are Dio of Prusa, also known as Dio Chrysostomos, an exact contemporary of Plutarch,[48] and Maximus of Tyre. Both philosophers adore Homer and consider him a great teacher. Neither philosopher writes in the exegetical format, though, opting instead for a series of essays similar in format to Plutarch's *Moralia*. As Berry notes, Dio of Prusa's philosophical approach is "eclectic and adheres to no single philosophical line," and the orator is first and foremost a moralist, just like Plutarch.[49] He becomes a Stoic, works as a laborer – a (method of work) the Cynic philosophers suggest

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[48] Berry (1983) 71-72. Though Wilamowitz (1995) 54 notes that "Plutarch did not take the slightest notice of [Dio of Prusa]," Dio represents the intellectual climate of Plutarch's time, which continued to make extensive use of Homeric epic.

[49] Berry (1983) 70.

– then wanders as a Peripatetic lecturer, always maintaining his strong sympathies for Stoic-Cynic philosophy, or as a Sophist.[50] A man of eclectic and varied learning, Dio of Prusa frequently cites Homer throughout his *Discourses* as a reference or a paradigm to be followed.[51] Indeed, his evaluation of Homer is entirely positive.[52]

Homer's presence throughout the *Discourses* is both authoritative and frequent. Dio's second *Discourse* is a pseudo-historical discussion between Philip and Alexander regarding kingship, which opens with Alexander defending his exclusive reading of Homer with the words, "I think, father, not all poetry befits a king."[53] Subsequently, all of Alexander's (admittedly Stoic) arguments come from Homeric exempla.[54] In the other *Discourses*, Homer achieves the pinnacle of praise: Dio says that when it comes to oratorical training, Homer is the first, middle and last (18.8). He claims that Homer surpasses all poets along with Archilochus and is always useful (33.11, 53.11), and that Homer is the teacher of Socrates (55.3), devoting his fifty-fifth discourse to a comparison between the two men. Dio cites Homer as an authority from such varied topics as how to be a good king (53.11) to how horses can be impregnated by the wind (20.25). Lastly,

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[50] *Ibid.* 71-72. Though Moles (1978) 100 states that the persona of the wandering, self-educated philosopher Dio creates "is a fraud." Despite the questions of Dio's past, he was doubtless a student of several schools of philosophy. On this subject, cf. Montiglio (2000b).

[51] For the purposes of clarity, I will refer to Dio of Prusa's works as the *Discourses*, and Maximus of Tyre's as *Dissertations*, though both are more commonly cited as *Orations*.

[52] In *Discourse* 11, Dio lists many of Homer's contradictions and "proves" that the Trojans really won the war; everything Homer wrote are essentially lies. Stanford (1964) states that the essay is "hardly trying to do more than dazzle and astonish his audience" and that "the oration is bland, persuasive, and superbly argued, but no intelligent person is likely to have believed it. Its aim is to gain admiration for skill in rhetorical technique and in sophistic arguments rather than to win lasting credence." Though Berry (1983) 76-77 has some reservations about whether the piece was serious or not, he too eventually concludes that the essay was a "sophistic tour-de-force."

[53] *Discourses* 2.3: "ὅτι δοκεῖ μοι, ὦ πάτερ, οὐ πᾶσα ποίησις βασιλεῖ πρέπειν."

[54] *Ibid.* 2.5-6 (general praise of Homer), 10 (on farming), 12 (on effeminacy), 19-24 (on the value of rhetoric), 30-31 (on a soldier remaining noble in wine and song), 34 (on spoils as the only good form of wealth), 40-48 (on the evils of luxury), 49-50 (on kingly versus foppish apparel), 51-78 (on the correct behavior for kings).

Dio also discusses interpretations of Homer when he feels that traditional readings are confused or incorrect. For instance, when Dio's fellow speaker is troubled by the statement of Homer that man is the most pathetic creature,[55] Dio defends this assertion:

> *Διο·* "...οὐ γὰρ ὡς ἅπαντες οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἄθλιοί εἰσί φησιν, ἀλλ' ὅτι οὐθέν ἐστι ζῷον ἀνθρώπου ἀθλιώτερον τοῦ γε ἀθλίου, ὥσπερ ἀμέλει καὶ ἡμεῖς φαῖμεν ἄν. ἴσως γάρ τοι καὶ μόνος τῶν ἄλλων ὁ ἄνθρωπος κακοδαίμων ἐστίν, ὥσπερ καὶ εὐδαίμων· ἐπεί τοι καὶ μόνος ἄφρων, ὥσπερ καὶ φρόνιμος. οὔτε γὰρ ἄδικος οὔτε ἀκόλαστος εἴη ἂν ἵππος ἢ σῦς ἢ λέων, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ ἄμουσος οὐδὲ ἀγράμματος."
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> *Dio.* "...He does not say that absolutely all men are wretched, but that there is no creature more wretched than man when he is wretched, just as we certainly might say. For perhaps it is fair to say that man is the only unfortunate creature of them all, just as he is the only fortunate one; for man alone is said to be foolish, just as man alone is said to be prudent. And neither could a horse or a pig or a lion be either unjust or dissolute, just as it could not be uncultured or illiterate."[56]
>
> (*Discourses* 23.5)

Dio's interpretation does not contain the vitriol and scorn towards Plato that Heraclitus' does, but throughout his *Discourses* his favoritism for Homer is obvious, and though he never explicitly attempts to heal the rift between Plato and Homer, Dio links the two men as closely as possible and praises them with similar adulation.[57]

Maximus of Tyre, who lived in the generation or so after Plutarch,[58] also betrays a tremendous fascination with Homer, whom he also frequently cites as a source or an authority.[59] His *Dissertations* contain essays on various topics, much like the *Discourses* of Dio of Prusa and the *Moralia* of Plutarch, many of which reflect a concern with

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[55] At *Discourse* 23.1, Dio quotes *Iliad* 17.446-47: "οὔ μὲν γάρ τί πού ἐστιν ὀϊζυρώτερον ἀνδρὸς | πάντων ὅσσα τε γαῖαν ἔπι πνείει τε καὶ ἕρπει." ("For there is nothing more pitiable than man of all the things which breathe and crawl upon the earth.")

[56] A similar defense of an apparent Homeric contradiction occurs at *Discourse* 2.39-43, where Philip remarks that Homer seems to praise wealth, since the palace of Menelaus is so luxurious. Alexander replies that the wealth of Menelaus represents the character of the softest Greek at Troy.

[57] See esp. *Discourses* 36.26-29.

[58] According to the author of the *Suda* (M 172), Maximus lived under Commodus.

[59] In citing Maximus of Tyre's works, I have used the numbering system adapted by Koniaris (1995) in his edition of Maximus's text. For the manuscript tradition of the order, see pp. LVI-LVII.

reconciling Plato to Homer.[60] Unlike Dio of Prusa, who avoids discussing Homer *vis-à-vis* Plato, Maximus frequently compares the two authors, and believes that "Plato became great thanks to Homer,"[61] and that "Plato is more similar to Homer than he is to Socrates."[62] He also insists that the philosopher and the poet cannot be separated from each other.[63] Significantly, Maximus justifies Plato's exclusion of Homer from his Republic on the grounds that Homer is not merely utility (χρεία), but pleasure as well (ἡδονή), and Plato's city, as a city only in theory (λόγῳ), requires only utility and has no room at all for pleasure (17.3-5). Maximus also confesses that he is "amazed" (θαυμάζω) that Socrates banishes Homer for misunderstood statements of impiety, and insists that Socrates' mysterious enigmas are more complex than those of Homer (18.5).

We also find within Maximus' *Dissertations* echoes of the concepts spouted by Heraclitus and Dio of Prusa. In his essay entitled "If there is a Sect of Philosophy According to Homer"[64] Maximus explains that the Homeric poems are a deliberate attempt of Homer to express his philosophy:

> Δοκεῖ μοι Ὅμηρος, φύσει τε κεχρημένος ἐνθεωτάτῃ καὶ φρονήσει δεινοτάτῃ καὶ ἐμπειρίᾳ πολυτροπωτάτῃ, φιλοσοφίᾳ ἐπιθέμενος δημοσιεῦσαι ταύτην τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἐν ἁρμονίᾳ τῇ τότε εὐδοκίμῳ·

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[60] I believe that Maximus adored both Plato and Homer, but I should state that several of his essays take up opposite sides of an argument, as in his "How the Practical Life is Better than the Theoretical" and its complement, "How the Theoretic Life Is Better Than the Practical." Occasionally, in arguing for one side, he will be dismissive or critical of Homer, but I believe that this is done purely out of the need to argue the point with substantial, rhetorical flourishing. If there are any doubts about this, his essay entitled "If There Is a System of Philosophy According to Homer" comes down heavily in the positive.

[61] *Diss.* 32.8: "ἀπιστῶ...οὐδὲ Ἡσιόδῳ ὑπὸ Μουσῶν διδασκομένῳ, οὐδὲ Ὁμήρῳ ὑπὸ Καλλιόπης λιηαινομένῳ, οὐ Πλάτωνι ὑπὸ Ὁμήρου μεγαλυνομένῳ."

[62] *Diss.* 26.3: "ὥστε καὶ ἐπιτολμήσαιμι ἂν εἰπεῖν ἔγωγε ἐμφερέστερον εἶναι Πλάτωνα Ὁμήρῳ μᾶλλον ἢ Σωκράτει, κἂν τὸν Ὅμηρον φεύγῃ, κἂν διώκῃ τὸν Σωκράτην." Cf. also the sentiment of [Longinus] on Plato's "Homeric-ness" in the *De Sublimitate* 13.3. Lamberton (1997) 37 notes that an Alexandrian named Ammonius wrote an essay entitled *Plato's Debt to Homer*.

[63] *Diss.* 17.3: "οὐδὲ ἀπέσχισται ἑκάτερον θατέρου."

[64] Listed in the manuscripts as *Dissertation* 26, "Εἰ ἔστιν καθ' Ὅμηρον αἵρεσις."

> αὕτη δ' ἦν ἡ ποιητική...ἅτε οὖν ξύμπασιν διαλεγόμενος, ἀθροίσας ἀναμὶξ τὴν Ἑλλάδα φωνὴν καὶ ἀνακερασάμενος εἰς σχῆμα ᾠδῆς, ὧν τὰ ἔπη εἰργάσατο προσηνῆ τε ἅμα εἶναι καὶ ξυνετὰ πᾶσιν, καὶ κεχαρισμένα ἑκάστοις.
>
> It seems to me that Homer, who enjoyed most godlike nature and a most skillful mind, and an experience most manifold (πολυτροπωτάτη), applied himself to philosophy in order to make it commonly known among the Greeks, in that harmony which was then so much esteemed: and this harmony was poetic...As speaking therefore to all, he gathered together the Greek tongue and mingled it into the form of verse, the words of which would alluring and at the same time understood by all, and enjoyable to everyone.
>
> (*Dissertation* 26.4)

Here we have an iteration of the statement of Heraclitus above, naming Homer the champion of Greek philosophy. Since the philosophy espoused by Plato relies on its original propagation by Homer, ultimately there can be no real conflict between the two men: they must both be correct.

One more work composed near Plutarch's time must be mentioned – the *De Homero*. This essay, probably written late in the second century CE,[65] was long believed to have been written by Plutarch himself.[66] Like Plutarch, the author reveals a familiarity with a variety of philosophical beliefs. At various points, he discusses the Stoics,[67] Plato,[68] Aristotle,[69] and Pythagoras,[70] usually while attempting to demonstrate how Homer pre-empts the beliefs of their philosophical systems. The author does not necessarily criticize the various philosophies except for Epicureanism.[71] Nor does he attempt to reconcile Homer to Platonism as Maximus of Tyre does, or dismiss Plato

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[65] Buffière (1956) 76-77 wished to date it just after Plutarch, but scholars have generally followed Volkmann's argument (1885) 120-21 for a date in the late 2nd century.
[66] For the debate over the authorship of the *De Homero*, see Keaney and Lamberton (1996), esp. 1-10.
[67] *De Homero* 119, 127, 130, 134, 136, 143-44, 212.
[68] *Ibid.* 120, 122, 128, 175, 212.
[69] *Ibid.* 105, 120, 128, 132-33, 135, 137, 145.
[70] *Ibid.* 122, 125, 145-49, 151, 153-54.
[71] *Ibid.* 150. Though the author's discussion of Epicureanism is limited to how it has misinterpreted Homer.

outright, like Heraclitus. Keaney notes that the purpose of the *De Homero* "is to celebrate Homer not by twisting the meaning of the poems to correspond to one single philosophy but rather by demonstrating that Homer is the source of all philosophy – and not simply of philosophy, but of rhetoric and many other skills as well."[72] Such attributions, as we have seen, are also present in the *Homeric Allegories* of Heraclitus and in Maximus of Tyre.[73] Some other skills for which the author considers Homer the source of all knowledge are mathematics (145-46), music (147-48), rhetoric (161-174), military tactics (192-98), medicine (200-10), tragedy (213), comedy (214), and painting (216).

Thus it goes almost without saying that Homer, as the originator of every field of learning, merits constant and effusive praise from the author of the *De Homero*. His final chapter stands as a panegyrical summary of the work as a whole, and incorporates the author's most important beliefs:

> καὶ οὐκ ἂν φροντίσαιμεν, εἴ τις ἐπιτιμήσειεν, ὅτι, πονηρῶν πραγμάτων ὑπόθεσιν ἐχουσῶν τῶν τοῦ Ὁμήρου ποιήσεων, προσάπομεν αὐτῷ λόγους φυσικοὺς, πολιτικοὺς καὶ ἠθικοὺς καὶ ἐπιστήμας ποικίλας. ἀνάγκη μὲν γὰρ ἦν τῷ ποιητῇ πράξεις παραδόξους καὶ πάθη καὶ ἤθη διάφορα ὑποθέσθαι· ἐπεὶ τὰ μὲν ἀγαθὰ καθ' ἑαυτὰ ἁπλᾶ ἐστι καὶ μονοειδῆ καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστα, τὰ δὲ τοῖς κακοῖς ἀναμεμιγμένα πολλοὺς ἔχει τρόπους καὶ παντοίας διαθέσεις, ἐξ ὧν ἡ ὕλη τῶν πραγμάτων συνίσταται· ἐν ᾗ παρατιθεμένων τῶν χειρόνων ἡ τῶν ἀμείνων γνῶσεις καὶ αἵρεσις ῥᾳων καθίσταται. καὶ τὸ ὅλον ἡ τοιαύτη ὑπόθεσις παρέσχεν ἀφορμὰς τῷ ποιητῇ παντοδαποὺς κινῆσαι λόγους, τοὺς μὲν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, τοὺς δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν εἰσαγομένων προσώπων· ὥστε τὴν ἀπὸ τούτων ὠφέλειαν τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσι παρασχεῖν. πῶς δὲ οὐκ ἂν πᾶσαν ἀρετὴν ἀναθείημεν Ὁμήρῳ ὅπου καὶ ὅσα αὐτὸς μὴ ἐπετήδευσε ταῦτα οἱ ἐπιγενόμενοι ἐν τοῖς ποιήμασιν αὐτοῦ κατενόησαν;

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[72] Keaney and Lamberton (1996) 10.
[73] E.g. *Hom. Alleg.* 22.1-2; also see above.

> I would not be concerned if someone should accuse me of attributing to Homer physical, political, and ethical discourse and all sorts of wisdom, when in fact the subjects of his poems are wicked deeds. The poet was forced to base his poem on extraordinary actions and to introduce all sorts of emotions and characters—things that are good in themselves are simple and uniform and unornamented, but mixtures of good and evil generate multiple possibilities and a multitude of situations—these form the material of the tale. Since this material has things of the worse sort mixed into it, the recognition and choice of the better becomes easier. In general, such a plot provided the poet with reasons for composing speeches of all sorts, some on his own behalf and some by the characters he introduces, so that the audience receives the benefit of them. How is it possible that we do not attribute every virtue to Homer, when those who have come after him have even found in his poetry all the things he did not himself think to include?
>
> (*De Homero* 218)

The author of the *De Homero* is the paradigm for Homeric interpretation of the second century CE. Like Dio of Prusa and Maximus of Tyre, he is an eclectic philosopher who is intimately acquainted with Homer, adores him and quotes his poems abundantly, and recognizes his value as a source of Hellenic education. It remains to be seen how Plutarch reacts and interacts with the established Homeric discourse.

Plutarch and Homer

It is in this philosophical and didactic environment, one in which Homer is still a primary concern in the minds of the intellectuals, that Plutarch flourishes. Like Dio of Prusa, Maximus of Tyre, and the author of the *De Homero*, Plutarch is a philosopher and teacher of immense learning and reputation.[74] Though considered a Platonist, as Dillon notes, he is by no means an orthodox one, and his stance on the creation of the world is

[74] In fact, there was a tradition that began of naming oneself a descendant of Plutarch in order to attain some level of prestige. Cf. Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 1.2, Dillon (1996) 230, Keulen (2004) 261.

considered heretical by later Platonists.[75] Plutarch's Platonism betrays influences from Pythagoras, Aristotle, and the Stoics, much like the author of the *De Homero*, and many of his theories involve re-interpretations that are philosophical amalgams. Still, we can make some general claims about his philosophy. The whole of his essay entitled *Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* testifies to his immense dislike of Epicureanism.[76] Though he frequently employs Stoic views, such as in ethics,[77] he most likely considered himself anti-Stoic.[78]

Examination of Plutarch's concepts of the soul and virtue are more complex. As Swain notes, Plutarch defines the soul by means of Aristotelian terms.[79] For Plutarch, in parallel to the concept that a person is composed of two parts, the soul and the body, he believes that the soul is likewise bipartite, consisting of the rational and irrational (*De mor. virt.* 442A-C). The rational side is in charge of controlling the passions of the irrational part of the soul, which consists of the spirited (θυμοειδές) and appetitive (ἐπιθυμητικός, 442A). The rational part of the soul, or reason, keeps the irrational part in line by means of habit, but the purpose of reason is not to destroy passion, which Plutarch states is impossible (443C). The irrational part, consisting of various passions, is directed into states of vice or virtue, depending on the education each receives from

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[75] Dillon (1996) 231. Also cf. Wilamowitz (1995) 49-50, who states, "he remained an Academic, but an open-minded one: in scientific matters he follows the Peripatetics, and, though he clearly dislikes Epicurus and is wholly put off by the blustering of the Cynics, he is still very close to the Stoa of Posidonius."
[76] Dillon (1996) 189 states that Plutarch left Epicureanism out of his synthesis of philosophies. R. Jones (1916) 26 notes that Plutarch believed a bit of fearful superstition was better than disavowing the existence of god altogether. Still, he seems to side with the Epicurean Cineas' rebuke to Pyrrhus at *Pyr.* 14.
[77] Dillon (1996) 195. Dillon also more generally mentions on p. 186 that Plutarch is indebted to Stoicism. Stanford (1964) 158 seems to imply that Plutarch was a Stoic, noting that he "remained loyal to his Stoic beliefs."
[78] Cf. Duff (1999) 155-58, Swain (1990) 193, de Wet (1988) 19, also Plutarch *De Stoic. repugn.*, *Stoicos absurd. poet. dic.* On the problem of how Plutarch can write so much Stoic philosophy while considering himself anti-Stoic, see Babut (1969) 1-13.
[79] Swain (1995) 234; Cf. Russell (1966b) 144-147 (=1995, 81-86).

reason (λόγος, 443D). The reason, by means of prudence (φρόνησις), must interpret confusing events and moves in the realm of chance (τυχηροῖς). When reason faces confusion and chance it must make use of the passions. The passions in turn spring from moral virtue, and reason keeps them free from falling short of the mark (ἀμετρία) or going beyond it (πλημμελεία, 444C-D). Thus, as Aristotle says, reason uses the passions in order to find the "mean."[80] Plutarch notes that the conflict of the self-controlled man with his passions closely resembles the image of the charioteer in Plato's *Phaedrus*.[81] The soul, when appropriately taught, learns to dismiss the false and accept the truth without resistance and perhaps even with pleasure (448C). The ability of the soul to learn virtue is an essential one for Plutarch.[82]

As Russell notes, "'Moral goodness' for Plutarch is a quality of the 'irrational' soul defined and fashioned by 'reason.'"[83] Inherently, Plutarch disagrees that the Stoic notion of immunity to emotion (ἀπάθεια) is beneficial and understands that human perfection is impossible. Russell continues, "There are limits to what can be done, and they are set by the nature of the *kosmos* and of God's power in it."[84] Plutarch's purpose is to teach the student how to strengthen the good tendencies and weaken the bad. As can be evidenced from the title of Plutarch's essay translated as *How Someone May Notice his Progress in Virtue*, to him the route of virtue is one of constant edification and

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[80] Cf. *Nic. Ethics* 1106A. Cf. also Dillon (1996) 196.
[81] See *Phaedrus* 253C.
[82] Cf. Scardigli (1995) 9-10.
[83] Russell (1973) 85. The belief that virtue must be learned from a worthy source is highly Platonic. For example, see Aeschines of Sphettos' *On the Four* and Plato's *Alcibiades*, esp. 106E-110E, where Socrates forces Alcibiades to admit that he has learned the difference between just and unjust from the many, who, according to Socrates, are not competent at teaching the game of draughts; yet, one should also recall Plato's *Meno*, where Socrates concludes that although virtue appears teachable it really has no one who can teach it (89C-90B, 94E).
[84] Russell (1973) 85.

education, not one of instant perfection, a concept he finds foolish.[85] As Duff notes, this doctrine of immediate perfection "would cut away the very point of moral education and indeed of Plutarch's own literary programme."[86] The path to virtue is invariably long and difficult.

Like his views on the soul and virtue, Plutarch's interpretation of Homer is a blend of the Stoic, Platonic, and Aristotelian, and he shares the eclectic intellectualism of Dio of Prusa and the author of the *De Homero*. Despite his indulgence in a similar blend of philosophies, Plutarch avoids unrelenting adoration and praise for Homer and nowhere equates the poet to a forefather of every field of learning. Plutarch also differs from his contemporaries by repudiating the concept that all of Homer contains absolute truth. He refuses to pile scorn upon Plato's decision to banish Homer as Heraclitus does and seems to find allegory an overwrought or superfluous approach to Homeric interpretation.[87] Plutarch also sees no need to reconcile Plato and Homer as Maximus of Tyre does – as will be demonstrated below, he readily admits that Homer is completely wrong on occasion. Finally, unlike Dio of Prusa, for example, Plutarch does not employ sophistic arguments when Homer's statements seem impious. For Plutarch Homer is just as valid as any other source, but to understand him correctly requires only a mindful teacher.

In an effort to teach just such a proper understanding of Homer and the other poets, Plutarch wrote the *De audiendis poetis*. Plutarch views education as tantamount to

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[85] For the condemnation of "instant wisdom," see *Prof. in virt.* 75C-D.
[86] Duff (1999) 155.
[87] *De aud. poet.* 19E-F. Though he does not quite come out and say such readings are ridiculous, Plutarch seems to insist that interpreting Homer is not as opaque a task as the allegorists make it. However, he seems to concede some usefulness to allegory in interpreting *Egyptian* myths at *De Iside et Osir.* 362B and 363D.

the success of a statesman,[88] and he therefore contributes his own dogma to the tradition conceptualized by the Stoics in their reaction to Plato. Yet, unlike the *De Homero*, the *De audiendis poetis* is not concerned with poetic tropes and figures and natural science, but focuses exclusively on how to derive a morally beneficial interpretation from poetry. As he interprets the poets, Plutarch frequently admits that Homer's belief is incorrect and his poems are full of falsehoods. As Schenkeveld states, "Traditional are...[Plutarch's] views on poetry being based on imitation and containing much fiction and untruth."[89] Plutarch repeats the Aristotelian proverb, "Much do the poets lie,"[90] and insists that the poets do indeed create falsehoods both intentionally and unintentionally, as fabrications "are more striking and pleasing."[91] He makes the universal claim that the art of poetry is not greatly concerned with the truth (*De aud. poet.* 17D-E). Sometimes, too, Homer writes falsehoods that he personally seems to believe, as in the tale of the twin scales of Zeus which weigh a man's fate (*Il.* 22.210-13).[92] Views such as these, which stress the lies and deceptions of the poets, whether intentional or not, correspond to the beliefs related above by Pindar as well as by Plato in the *Republic*.

Though Plutarch readily admits that not all of Homer's interpretations are worthwhile, his poetry still serves as suitable instruction for the diligent and cautious

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[88] Duff (1999) 76-77; Cf. Pelling (1988a) 259 (=2002, 285), "Time and again we find Plutarch analyzing heroes' self-control, and finding them lacking: and we find this particularly frequently in cases where Hellenic education is in point." Also cf. Swain (1990) 192, "Greek education, παιδεία, is for Plutarch man's most valuable possession."

[89] Schenkeveld (1982) 60.

[90] *De aud. poet.* 16A. From Arist. *Meta.* 983A: "πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἀοιδοί."

[91] *De aud. poet.* 16C. Also, at 16F Plutarch says that Odysseus' visit to the land of the dead smacks of the fabulous and that he fabricates this tale intentionally. Cf. *Republic* 2.387C, where Socrates says that terrible tales of the underworld "may be excellent for some other reason" (ἴσως εὖ ἔχει πρὸς ἄλλο τι) but not for instructing children.

[92] *De aud. poet.* 16F-17A. Plutarch includes Aeschylus as a believer in this fabrication as well.

reader. Thus, whereas Plato banishes Homer and his poetry outright from his city, Plutarch says:

> ὅθεν οὐ φευκτέον ἐστὶ τὰ ποιήματα τοῖς φιλοσοφεῖν μέλλουσιν, ἀλλὰ προφιλοσοφητέον τοῖς ποιήμασιν ἐθιζομένους ἐν τῷ τέρποντι τὸ χρήσιμον ζητεῖν καὶ ἀγαπᾶν· εἰ δὲ μή, διαμάχεσθαι καὶ δυσχεραίνειν.
>
> Poetry should not be avoided by those who are intending to pursue philosophy, but they should use poetry as an introductory exercise in philosophy, by training themselves habitually to seek the profitable in what gives pleasure, and to find satisfaction therein; and if there be nothing profitable, to combat such poetry and be dissatisfied with it.
>
> (*De aud. poet.*15E-F)[93]

Plutarch here disagrees with "godlike" Plato,[94] who wishes to eradicate unprofitable poetry rather than to teach children how to combat it. Plutarch disregards Plato's view that reading about bad behavior is damaging on the grounds that the young man must be wholly inexperienced from vices, as youths are more naïve and impressionable (*Rep.* 3.409A-C). Plutarch, in contrast, believes that the young may be exposed so long as he has been bound and guided with reason (*De aud. poet.* 15D). With a well-educated mentor, a student may read even the worst poetry without fear of corruption.[95]

In addition to defending even the unprofitable elements of Homer's poetry, Plutarch frequently cites Homer as an authority when discussing subjects ranging from virtue to linguistics.[96] In fact, Plutarch employs Homer more than any other source,[97] even when outlining some of his most powerful arguments. For example, Plutarch quotes

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[93] Cf. also Duff (1999) 43-45.

[94] Plutarch calls Plato divine (θεῖος)at *De cap. ex inim.* 90C.

[95] At *De aud. poet.* 18F Plutarch states explicitly that seeing bad behavior teaches a youth to discredit such acts, and he stresses the benefits of reading about the lives of base men at *Demetr.* 1.4-5. Cf. Plato's *Republic* 3.396C-E, where Socrates insists that someone of noble character resists imitating the baser man; at *Republic* 3.401B-C, Socrates explicitly forbids poets to represent the man of malicious (κακόηθες), licentious (ἀκόλαστον), slavish (ἀνελεύθερον), or unseemly (ἄσχημον) character.

[96] Cf. Russell (1973) 76.

[97] de Wet (1988) 15-16. He also notes that Plutarch uses quotations from every single book of both poems and has vast knowledge of the history of the Homeric texts.

Homer in arguing that there is no better pleasure than a harmonious marriage.[98] In stating that friends give benefits when both praising and criticizing, Homeric quotations are frequently used as evidence (*Quom. adul.* 54F-55C). Plutarch also explicitly interprets Homer in a way that contends that poets and musicians ought to focus on the august and solemn rather than the bawdy and unseemly (*De aud. poet.* 20A-B). Most importantly, Plutarch writes his friend Apollonius that we should learn from the ancient and wise men, "of whom the first was divine Homer," and follows this statement with four extended quotations from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* on the state of mortality (*Cons. ad Apoll.* 104D-F).

Plutarch also finds Homer quite beneficial as a teacher of exempla, and subsequently refers to the characters of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* quite frequently as examples from which the reader may learn. In fact, Plutarch eventually uses historical characters in his *Lives* as examples with which to instruct his readers.[99] The method of teaching lessons from specific characters seems to result from Plutarch's tendency to find more instruction in the individual than the general, and to educate more from the particular and from analogs than from the universal.[100] Plutarch not only analyzes the character of the Homeric heroes, but he will use them as models for instruction. As Polman has noted, "Plutarch was interested above all in character."[101] Russell states,

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[98] *Amat.* 770A, in which Plutarch quotes the final verse and a half of *Od.* 6.182-84:
"οὐ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ γε κρεῖσσον καὶ ἄρειον
ἢ ὅθ' ὁμοφρονέοντε νοήμασιν οἶκον ἔχητον
ἀνὴρ ἠδὲ γυνή."

[99] Duff (1999) 13: "Plutarch claims, through his *Parallel Lives*, to reveal his subjects' character and thereby improve his readers' character."

[100] Cf. Wilamowitz (1995) 54-55: "Everywhere examples from ancient times and quotations from the poets are interspersed, and especially, similes and analogies."

[101] Polman (1974) 172; cf. also Gomme (1945) 55, "[Plutarch] was primarily an essayist whose principal interest was character and moral conduct."

"One purpose of the *Lives*...was clearly to provide a repertoire of *exempla* for public men of Plutarch's own day."[102] For Plutarch the attributes of a hero tend to become established through the man's early education and, as Pelling notes, these attributes "eventually evolve into settled character-traits (ἤθη) which inform our moral choices."[103] The finished product therefore becomes a logical amalgam of different characteristics around which Plutarch directs his moral lesson.

As Pelling has discussed, the character traits that Plutarch especially describes and centers his *Lives* around are not stereotypical, but "integrated."[104] Each characteristic blends into the next one and creates a plausible whole.[105] There are no shocking contradictions or illogical jumps in any character, and all actions of the hero derive from what Pelling calls a "single original 'source-trait,'" which for Antony is "simpleness" and for Cato the Younger is "high principle and resolution."[106] Thus, for Plutarch, each anecdote or attribute of his hero helps to define this source-trait or explain how it affects the hero's life. As Pelling notes, it becomes quite possible to imagine, "'a sort of person' like Antony, or Alexander, or even Alcibiades."[107] The heroes of the *Lives* thus serve primarily as *exempla*. The men represent sets of logical and blended characteristics who, when placed in positions of power, war, peace, or disaster, show generalized and potentially repeatable happenings.[108]

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[102] Russell (1966b) 141 (=1995, 78).
[103] Pelling (1988a) 257 (=2002, 283).
[104] Pelling (1990a) 227-33 (=2002, 315-21).
[105] This technique is especially particular to the Athenian law-courts. See Schmitz (2000).
[106] Pelling (1990a) 227 (=2002, 315).
[107] *Ibid.* 228-29 (=2002, 316-17).
[108] Plutarch's method of using "generalized outcomes" based on personality and character is significantly aided by his tendency to de-contextualize his heroes. See Wilamowitz (1995) 59-62. While this method renders his works more philosophical, it makes him much less useful for modern historians.

These "integrated" characters of Plutarch may therefore possess parallel examples and analogs to characters of other genres. Two such parallels, as I will show below, derive from the heroes of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and Plutarch frequently uses the characteristics of these heroes to instruct the readers of his *Moralia*. Throughout the *Moralia*, Plutarch's examples that cite Homeric characters reveal his own idiosyncratic views of them. Plutarch's readings of these heroes are consistent and reflect his overall interpretation of each one's character. As de Wet notes, "When Plutarch refers to a character, one should interpret that character in his context to the entire poem."[109] Since, as I shall attempt to show below, Plutarch has Homeric models in some of his *Lives*, it is important to understand his moral interpretations these epic heroes. Unsurprisingly, the most important Homeric heroes in the *Moralia*, and subsequently in the *Lives*, will prove to be Odysseus and Achilles.

Conclusion

Plutarch's interpretations of Homer are an amalgam of several philosophical beliefs. Though Plutarch's philosophy depends heavily on that of Plato, he diverges from the traditional Platonic view that Homer is ill-suited for teaching and suggests that most poetry can be suitably instructive so long as the teacher directs the student correctly. Also, though Plutarch stresses that Homer is not harmful, he does not insinuate that Homer's writings are inviolable, as Maximus of Tyre and the author of the *De Homero* do, nor does he embrace the tradition of textual exegesis like the Stoics. Plutarch does not find allegory very meaningful and refuses to use the method at all within his *Moralia.*

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[109] de Wet (1988) 18.

Plutarch, standing in the midst of a dramatically pro-Homeric tradition, is a mild but rational critic. He resists the banishment that Plato places upon him but also rejects reactionary defense of Homer as a misunderstood scientist, scholar, and philosopher. Like Aristotle, he has embraced the mean: Homer is not wholly good nor bad, but must be interpreted rationally and under the aegis of philosophy. Thus, the reader, carefully directed by his philosophical instructor, will have the ability to use his poems for some level of moral guidance and to reject some excerpts as fanciful poetic indulgence. Furthermore, the reader will discover which heroes Plutarch approves of and which ones earn more complex or problematic labels. In the following chapter, I will demonstrate Plutarch's interpretations of the two main characters of the Homeric poems, Odysseus and Achilles, and describe how he uses these two characters as models for three pairs of his *Parallel Lives*. Like his appraisal of Homer, Plutarch's discussion of the Homeric heroes within his *Moralia* will demonstrate both traditional and untraditional views.

Chapter 2

Parallel Models: *Odyssey-Iliad* Pairings in the *Lives*

As Frost notes, the *Lives* are a "publication of subjects that had occupied Plutarch throughout his entire life."[1] Students of Plutarch therefore expect the philosophical beliefs expressed in the *Lives* to echo those of the *Moralia*. As Plutarch consistently reinforces his visions of virtue, vice, and education from the *Moralia*, so too will references to the poets recur in his biographies. As in the *Moralia*, the plurality of quotations and references in the *Lives* are from Homer, and when Plutarch refers to Homeric heroes, he alludes most frequently to Odysseus and Achilles. In this chapter I will demonstrate how Plutarch interprets the characters of Odysseus and Achilles within the *Moralia* and illustrate the methods he employs when modeling his *Lives* on these heroes.

Traditionally, Odysseus and Achilles are famous both for their roles in Homer's epics[2] as well as, in the words of Knox, being "two mythical and literary prototypes of two entirely different worlds of thought and feeling."[3] Odysseus represents the cunning trickster, while Achilles stands for direct confrontation and traditional virtue.[4] They are also closely connected within the epics, both as friends and rivals. For instance, Homer states that Thersites is "most hateful to Achilles and Odysseus" (*Il.* 2.220), stressing their

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[1] Frost (1980) 53. Cf. also Gomme (1945) 55-56.
[2] E.g. Socrates' statement in Plato's *Hippias Minor* 363B.
[3] Knox (1966) 121.
[4] For these rather generalized views of Odysseus and Achilles, cf. Wheeler (1988) 5; cf. also *Iliad* 7.142, 242-43 for the dichotomy of guile vs. strength and *Il.* 9.308-11 for Achilles' claim to directness versus the speaker who is full of guile. See also Knox (1966) 121: "These two heroes are the polar opposites between which the Greek ideal of man moves in its search for the mean." Cf. also King (1987) 69-71, 77, 92-93, 223.

agreement in opposing the worst man at Troy. Also, Nestor selects Odysseus to lead the embassy to Achilles (*Il.* 9.162-81), a decision that stresses both Odysseus' diplomacy as well as his friendship with Achilles, who in fact states upon the embassy's arrival, "Welcome! Indeed you two men are friends that have come!" (9.197).[5] Most importantly, when Odysseus is in the Land of the Dead he speaks at length with Achilles, praising Neoptolemus and leaving the hero joyful at his son's glory (*Od.* 11.473-537). Yet their conflicts are also famous, as when Achilles accuses Odysseus of hiding his speech (*Il.* 9.308-11) and when Odysseus opposes Achilles' desire to fight immediately after receiving the arms given him by Hephaestus, insisting that they should eat and rest before slaughtering the Trojans (*Il.* 19.154-237). Also, the minstrel in Phaeacia sings of a famous quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles that occurred at a feast (*Od.* 8.73-76). The epics underline not only their friendship, but also a tension that arises from their different characters.

Like the two poems of Homer, one a tale of the clever, long-suffering hero returning home and the other a martial epic centering around a hero's wrath, Plutarch too connects Odysseus and Achilles despite the dramatic differences in character between them. For Plutarch the two men, friends yet heroic opposites, complement each other and create an intertwined, dependent unity, as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* make a literary whole. Though the two heroes merit some comparison in the *Moralia*,[6] Plutarch more intriguingly connects them across some of his parallel *Lives*, sometimes constructing

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[5] Though the embassy consists of Odysseus, Ajax, and Phoenix, Achilles welcomes the trio in the dual.
[6] At *De fort. Alex.* 342E-343A, Odysseus and Achilles are characters in a list of Homeric heroes whose virtues Alexander exceeds; at *De inv. et od.* 537A, Plutarch says of Thersites that "it is a kind of baseness to be despised by the greatest men," referring to Odysseus and Achilles; also, at *Quaest. conv.* 747B, Odysseus and Achilles are named as a pair, similar to "heaven and earth."

archetypal similarities to Odysseus in one figure's *Life* while modeling the other figure on Achilles. There is precedent for such construction in antiquity. Vergil's *Aeneid* is divided into an Odyssean and Iliadic half,[7] and Marincola (very) cautiously proposes that Herodotus may have structured his *Histories* in a similar vein.[8] Thus, in creating pairs of *Lives* along an Odysseus-Achilles axis, Plutarch creates a general pattern with one hero that complements the pattern of the other. For example, the *Life of Themistocles* follows a pattern that closely follows both the characteristics and deeds of Odysseus, while the actions of the hero in the parallel *Life of Camillus* resonate with the Achilles of Homeric epic. Still, I do not wish to overstate my argument. Though I believe that there is a definite Odysseus-Achilles pattern between the two heroes, enough differences remain between Plutarch's statesmen and Homer's heroes so that strict Odysseus-Themistocles and Achilles-Camillus comparisons are incomplete. As I stated above,[9] each and every *Life* is a synthesis of several genres and influences. The similarities between statesman and epic hero vary and fluctuate, disappear and reappear, periodically influencing the reader in his evaluations and conclusions.

Still, before I demonstrate how Plutarch employs this Odysseus-Achilles scheme in the *Lives*, we must analyze how Plutarch views these two characters within the *Moralia*, and subsequently we must understand how my concept of a model is to be recognized by a reader of the *Lives*. A definition of the term is in order: when I refer to a "model" or say that Plutarch "models" a *Life* on a hero, I mean that Plutarch has applied

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[7] Cf. Heinze (1993) 3, 142.

[8] See Marincola (1997), "It is tempting, if somewhat over-simplistic, to divide Herodotus' work, like the *Aeneid*, into an Odyssean and Iliadic half...It is not beyond the evidence, however, to acknowledge that Herodotus' work contains both λόγοι of observation and inquiry—an Odyssean concern—and λόγοι of action—an Iliadic theme."

[9] See above, Introduction, p. 3.

the traits of a particular hero to his subject without being definitive in his characterizations. So, when I assert that Coriolanus is "modeled on Achilles," he is not equivalent to Achilles, but has been drawn by Plutarch with Achilles-like characteristics, most likely intentionally.

When Plutarch refers to a Homeric character, we must interpret that character in his context to the entire poem, as de Wet states.[10] The reader must recall not only the action referred to, but Plutarch's comprehensive view of the hero. Likewise, as Plutarch is quite conscious of philosophical consistency,[11] we will expect his depictions of both Odysseus and Achilles to remain consistent between the *Moralia* and the *Lives*. Homeric models within the *Lives* therefore provide not only poetic or literary echoes, but also philosophical and moral ones. As Duff notes, "the study of the past was – or at least should be – a morally improving activity…Plutarch puts this own doctrine to work in his non-biographical works, where historical incidents and figures are used as *exempla* to back up instruction."[12] The *Lives* in which I argue for Homeric modeling thus not only stand as examples for instruction themselves, but also recall the philosophical beliefs Plutarch expresses throughout the *Moralia*.

Odysseus in the *Moralia*

Before Plutarch's time, Odysseus endured a long and varied reception. Though Stanford claims that Odysseus was Homer's favorite hero,[13] by the fifth century his wily,

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[10] de Wet (1988) 18.
[11] Particularly Plato's. Cf. Russell (1973) 65. Additionally, Plutarch was aware of consistencies and contradictions in Homer, see de Wet (1988) 19.
[12] Duff (1999) 50.
[13] E.g., Stanford (1964) 146, int. al.

deceitful tactics are represented as self-serving and wicked rather than virtuous.[14] Pindar and the Sophists of the late fifth century consider him a villain for his words and manipulations in the trials against Palamedes and Ajax.[15] Sophocles treats him as a great-hearted, sympathetic fellow in the *Ajax*, but creates a cunning and sinister Odysseus in his *Philoctetes.*[16] Euripides prefers this latter interpretation, and criticism peaks under the influence of his pen.[17] Still, Odysseus receives praise from the Cynics and Stoics for his belief that the good man can suffer no true harm.[18] Plato, too, praises Odysseus' self-control in the *Phaedo* (94D).[19] Plutarch too has a more positive view of Odysseus, who exhibits the most important qualities a man of virtue should possess: self-control and prudence. Stanford notes, "As the ancient commentators noticed, Odysseus was the first Greek to adopt the principle of 'Nothing in excess.'"[20] This principle, among other benefits, places the good of the community or state before a man's own desires and prevents the dominance of passion in times that require reason. Under reason's guidance, Odysseus never becomes too elated with his good fortune nor too despairing of his misfortune. Plutarch consistently portrays Odysseus as the paradigmatic example of self-control and virtue.

In the Homeric epics, Odysseus' qualities, positive or not, are all suborned to his traits of cleverness and forbearance. From the first line of the *Odyssey*, "ἄνδρα

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[14] See above, Chapter 1, pp. 9-12.
[15] Stanford (1964) 96; see also Pindar *Nem.* 8.60-62.
[16] Cf. Knox (1966) 119-25.
[17] Stanford (1964) 102-17.
[18] *Ibid.* 98.
[19] For other evaluations of Odysseus, see also *Laches* 201B, *Phaedrus* 259B, *Laws* 706D; Socrates also shows interest in speaking with Odysseus (along with Ajax, Agamemnon, and Sisyphus, however) in the underworld at *Apology* 41B, and argues that Odysseus has the better and more just soul in the *Hippias Minor*, esp. 370A-376C.
[20] Stanford (1964) 35. Cf. Plutarch *Sep. sap. conv.* 164C.

μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα, πολύτροπον" (*Od.* 1.1), the reader expects to follow the exploits of a different type of man than the Achilles of the *Iliad.* Homer calls the hero Odysseus the man "of many turns" (πολύτροπος), thereby generating endless discussion on the word's meaning for thousands of years.[21] As Stanford notes, Odysseus' detractors claim that it means "unscrupulous" while Antisthenes the Cynic claims that the term means Odysseus was skilled in using rhetorical techniques ("tropes"); modern scholars have agreed that the term establishes the poem's theme: the twistings and turnings Odysseus endures before returning home.[22] In the Homeric poems, instead of possessing such epithets as "man-slaying Hector" (ἀνδροφόνος Ἕκτωρ) or "Diomedes, famed in the spear" (δουρικλυτός), Odysseus receives the unique epithets of "πολύμητις,"[23] "ποικιλομήτης,"[24] "πολυμήχανος,"[25] "πολύφρων,"[26] as well as "πολύτλας."[27] Plutarch, who adopts the views of Antisthenes the Cynic and the Stoics towards Odysseus as self-sufficient and wise,[28] interprets these terms as favorable to the hero. In fact, in the *De audiendis poetis*, Plutarch says of the phrase "διογενὴς Λαερτιάδης...πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεύς" that Homer employs "laudable sayings such

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[21] Cf. also Socrates' confusion at Hippias' statement that Odysseus is most wily (πολυτροπώτατος, *Hippias Minor* 364E).

[22] Stanford (1964) 99; also Pucci (1987) 16, who says that "'polytropy' has the felicitous advantage of describing not only [Odysseus's] character but the thematic rhetorical qualities of his text, for the turns and re-turns of his wanderings, the turns and ruses of his mind, are mirrored in the turns (*tropoi*, rhetoric and rhetorical figures) of the *Odyssey* itself."

[23] Used far more than any other Odyssean epithet, eighty-six times by my count. Also employed once of Hephaestus at *Il.* 21.354.

[24] Used six times in both poems, always in conjunction with "δαΐφρων," or "prudent."

[25] Odysseus is described as "πολυμήχανος" twenty-four times across both poems, and tells Penelope of the "πολυμηχανίη" of Circe at *Od.* 23.320.

[26] Hephaestus has this epithet as well, at *Il.* 21.366, *Od.* 8.296, 326. It is also used twice in gnomic statements at *Il.* 18.107 and *Od.* 14.463.

[27] Odysseus is the only hero called "πολύτλας," a term Homer uses to describe him forty-two times.

[28] See note 18 above.

as these" (35A).[29] Plutarch places the epithet on par with such phrases as "equal to Zeus in counsel" (Διὶ μῆτιν ἀτάλαντε), "great glory to the Achaeans" (μέγα κῦδος Ἀχαιῶν), and "noble Mentoitiades, a delight to my heart" (δῖε Μενοιτιάδη, τῷ ἐμῷ κεχαρισμένε θυμῷ). For Plutarch the scheming intelligence of Odysseus is one of the hallmark attributes of the hero, an attribute that he considers Odysseus to employ wisely.

Of course, Odysseus' cunning becomes storied on account of his many shrewd tricks, especially in the episode with the Cyclops (*Od.* 9.177-566), which Plutarch singles out in the *Moralia* as an instance of Odyssean prudence (*Quaest. conv.* 642A). Outside the scope of the Homeric poems, he is also renowned for various astute tactics, most notable among them being his inspiration to create the Trojan Horse.[30] In Vergil's *Aeneid*, Sinon's references to Odysseus recall his reputation as a deadly schemer.[31] The author of the *Suda* notes that an "Ὀδύσσεια" is known as a military ploy which the author clarifies as an "Ὀδύσσειος μηχανή" (O63). Wheeler, in his work on the ancient vocabulary of stratagem, divides the different types of military ethos into two groups, the Achilles ethos, which "promotes chivalry, face-to-face confrontation, open battle, and the use of force," and the Odysseus ethos, which "asserts the superiority of trickery, deceit,

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[29] Though the entire phrase includes the word διογενής, or "born of Zeus," Plutarch would have omitted the phrase "πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεύς" (or selected a different verse altogether!) if he had found it unsuitable, as he does at several other places, such as at *De aud. poet.* 35C, where he lists only the epithets of Oïlean Ajax without finishing the verse or the complete thought.

[30] Homer mentions the Trojan horse at *Od.*8.487-98, as a thing built by Epeius with the help of Athena, but led by Odysseus himself as a "trick" (δόλος). Cf. also the story Menelaus tells of the how Odysseus saves the heroes within the Horse from betraying their presence to Helen at *Od.* 4.265-89.

[31] E.g., at *Aen.* 2.43-44, Laocoon says, "*aut ulla putatis dona carere dolis Danaum? sic notus Ulixes?*" At 2.97-98, Sinon complains, "*hinc semper Ulixes criminibus terrere novis.*" Also, at 2.164, Ulixes is called "*scelerum inventor.*" Still, see Stanford (1964) 128-37 on Vergil's reluctance to explicitly criticize the hero.

indirect means, and the avoidance of pitched battle, although not the denial of the use of force or battle if advantageous."[32] These sorts of emphases – on the cunning rather than the heroic or straightforward manner – will prevail in Plutarch's *Lives* when he models the *Lives* of his statesmen on the character of Odysseus.

Closely intertwined with his intelligence is Odysseus' reputation as a manipulative speaker. As Achilles notes when Odysseus tries to persuade him as a member of the embassy, "For hated too, like the gates of Hades, is he who would hide one thing in his mind, but say something else" (*Il.* 9.312-13). Though many scholars believe that this accusation pertains to Agamemnon,[33] on whose behalf Odysseus speaks, many ancients believed that this statement was addressed to the wily Odysseus himself, who demonstrates fallaciousness throughout the *Odyssey*.[34] Also, Nestor says, "no one ever wished to be made like him in counsel, since glorious Odysseus far excelled in all sorts of wiles" (*Od.* 3.120-22). Likewise, when Odysseus pauses in the telling of his tale to the Phaeacians before relating the events at the Land of the Dead, his audience stands in rapt attention, as though spellbound (11.333-34).[35] One final example demonstrates how Odysseus combines his speaking ability with his deceptive nature. Antenor the Trojan relates how, when Odysseus and Menelaus come to Troy as a part of an embassy, Odysseus seems like a fool, with his eyes staring at the ground, but his words are like snowflakes, and "no other mortal would have vied with Odysseus" (*Il.* 3.216-24). The

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[32] Wheeler (1988) xiv.
[33] Cf. Hainsworth (1993) 102, where he notes that the line characterizes Odysseus as indirect, but Agamemnon as the "candidate for a charge of duplicity…[his] generosity…is tainted by self-interest."
[34] Cf. Stanford (1964) 18, 249 n. 22.
[35] On the Homeric Odysseus and similar uses of silence, see Montiglio (2000a) 256-75.

Odysseus-like figures of the *Lives* will commonly share a skill in manipulating men through oratory.[36]

Odysseus' craftiness both in deed and word grants him an adaptability that enables him to survive his perilous journey home. Most importantly, he earns the "friendship" of the Cyclops, winning the perverse gift of being the last man to be eaten (*Od.* 9.355-70). On Circe's island, due to his piety and comprehension in following the orders of Hermes, he saves his comrades, who have been transformed into animals, and becomes the sorceress' lover, remaining there feasting on meat and drinking sweet wine until he receives important instructions (10.274-478).[37] Finally, after enduring a shipwreck upon a foreign land, Odysseus is welcomed at the court of Alcinous and the Phaeacians, who eventually ferry him back to Ithaca with a polished chest full of treasures (13.10-12). His intelligence and flexibility grant both survival and profit, and culminate in his final victory which involves fooling the suitors, affording him and his son Telemachus the time they need to plan their vengeance with the aid of Athena. Plutarch's Odyssean models in the *Lives* will become sojourners who succeed on foreign soil beyond expectation.

As a result of these traits and deeds of Odysseus, Plutarch peppers praise for him throughout the *Moralia*. Most importantly, Odysseus controls his passions with reason, much in the manner that Plutarch describes in his *De morali virtute* (442C-D). In his essay *De garrulitate*, for instance, he praises Odysseus' self-control:

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[36] Cf. also *Phaedrus* 261B-C, where Socrates perhaps confuses Nestor with Gorgias and Odysseus with Thrasymachus or Theodorus as writers of rhetoric.

[37] Though Circe seems to have drugged Odysseus somehow, as he forgets about his *nostos* for a year (*Od.* 10.467-68).

αὐτὸς δὲ τῇ Πηνελόπῃ παρακαθήμενος
θυμῷ μὲν γοόωσαν ἑὴν ἐλέαιρε γυναῖκα,
ὀφθαλμοὶ δ' ὡς εἰ κέρα ἔστασαν ἠὲ σίδηρος,
ἀτρέμας ἐν βλεφάροισιν.
οὕτω τὸ σῶμα μεστὸν ἦν αὐτῷ πανταχόθεν ἐγκρατείας, καὶ πάντ' ἔχων ὁ λόγος εὐπειθῆ καὶ ὑποχείρια προσέταττε τοῖς ὄμμασι μὴ δακρύειν, τῇ γλώττῃ μὴ φθέγγεσθαι, τῇ καρδίᾳ μὴ τρέμειν μηδ' ὑλακτεῖν.

And (Odysseus) himself sitting beside Penelope,
"Pitied his weeping wife in his heart,
but his eyes stood fixed as if they were horn or iron,
motionless in his eyelids." (*Od.* 19.210-12)
So completely full was his body of self-control, keeping everything obedient and subordinate, he commanded his eyes not to weep, his tongue not to utter a sound, his heart not to tremble nor bark.

(*De garr.* 506A)

Plutarch praises such control of oneself (ἐγκρατεία), especially control of the tongue, quite frequently.[38] Plutarch also applauds Odysseus for his self-control when the hero refuses to address his mother at the Land of the Dead until he converses with Teiresias.[39] When Odysseus later boasts of his accomplishments (*Od.* 12.209-12), Plutarch says that he does so not "from the hope to provoke praises or applause," but rather to offer his "virtue and understanding" to his friends in order to increase their confidence (*De se laud.* 545C). Similarly, Plutarch demonstrates how Odysseus employs his free speech correctly when addressing Agamemnon – that is, not on his own behalf, as Achilles does, but on behalf of the Greeks (*Quom. adul.* 66F-67A). Finally, when relating the triumph of his and Diomedes' triumph in the night attack of Book 10 of the *Iliad* (10.558-60), Odysseus gives credit to everyone else before himself (*Praec. ger.* 808A). Plutarch

[38] Cf. *De cap. ex inim.* 90B, *De tuend. sanit.* 126B, *De tranq. animi* 476A; for ἐγκράτεια in a list of other good qualities, see *De fort. Alex.* 332C, 337B, 342F.
[39] *De curios.* 516A, referring to *Od.* 11.84-89. Compare to Stanford's (1964) 79 statement that Odysseus "had a remarkable power of taking the long view, of seeing actions in their widest context, of disciplining himself to the main purpose in hand."

consistently outlines the sensibility that guides Odysseus' actions and tempers his passions.

The prudence that Odysseus exhibits in controlling his emotions extends to controlling the cleverness and intellect that Pindar and the sophists so hated. As Stanford notes, "Intelligence...is a neutral quality. It may take the form of low and selfish cunning or of exalted, altruistic wisdom."[40] Plato's Socrates makes a similar statement in the *Hippias Minor*, arguing that the man who is more false is also closer to the truth, and he therefore favors the voluntary deceit of Odysseus over the involuntary fallaciousness of Achilles (*Hipp. Min.* 371A-E). Plutarch seems to share this view that Odysseus is, in a sense, greater than Achilles, for he never criticizes anything Odysseus says or does, but always describes his actions in a positive manner. Achilles will not receive such blameless praise. As Stanford notes, Odysseus' deceitful ways are tolerated because he uses them on behalf of the public good.[41] Plutarch considers Odysseus "φρόνιμος," or "prudent,"[42] and also calls him the "wisest" (σοφώτατος) of Homer's heroes (*De exil.* 603D). In every example, Plutarch describes an Odysseus dictated by reason: his intelligence is not "low cunning" but a trait employed for the altruistic purpose of offering virtue and understanding.

There are several other instances in which Plutarch generally discusses Odysseus, and all are favorable. For proof that one's heritage does not predict one's character,

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[40] Stanford (1964) 7.
[41] Stanford (1964) 39, 74. Cf. also 61, where Stanford notes of Odysseus' actions in the Land of the Dead, "The common weal must take precedence over private affections: prudence must prevail over emotion."
[42] *Conj. praec.* 140E, *Quaest. conv.* 642A; also cf. *Conj. praec.* 139A where Plutarch admits that Odysseus is more worth loving to Circe because he has a mind (νοῦν ἔχοντα) and while with her he adores her prudently (συνόντα φρονίμως ὑπερηγάπησεν).

Plutarch lists Odysseus as a good man sprung from a wicked line (*De sera num.* 553D).[43] In proving that exile to unsophisticated Greek islands is not completely devastating, Plutarch reminds his reader that Odysseus was the wisest man despite coming from rocky Ithaca (*De exil.* 603D). The marriage of Odysseus and Penelope is much more likely to be happy than that of Paris and Helen because of the virtue of Odysseus opposed to only the physical beauty of Paris (*Conj. praec.* 140F). Finally, Theocritus in Plutarch's *De genio Socratis* compares the *daimon* of Socrates to Odysseus' constant companion Athena (580C), demonstrating that a divine, moral wisdom directs each man. Like Diomedes, who chooses Odysseus when he makes a night sortie in the *Iliad*, Plutarch chooses Odysseus when he is faced with his own choice of which hero to emulate.

In the *Moralia* there is no question that he considers Odysseus the Homeric hero most worthy of imitation.[44] As the following chapters will attempt to demonstrate, the closer a statesman's actions and characteristics are to Odysseus', the more Plutarch will approve of him. Conversely, the further a statesman veers from the qualities of self-control and reason, the more Plutarch will implicitly disapprove of him. Plutarch's answer to the question, "Is Odysseus a wicked deceiver or a man determined to accomplish anything – no matter the cost – for the good of the state?" will invariably be that Odysseus is the latter.[45] Odysseus uses his wits not merely for survival, but for the

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[43] Cf. *Od.* 19.394-96. Autolycus, Odysseus's maternal grandfather, is a notorious horse thief.
[44] On the importance to Plutarch of imitating virtuous men, see Duff (1999) 50.
[45] Plutarch never lists an episode that questions whether working on behalf of *pro bono publico* is ever morally incorrect, as Sophocles does in the *Philoctetes*. When he cites Odysseus throughout the *Moralia*, the hero represents beneficence to the state in a morally appropriate manner.

good of his men and his nation,[46] and his men do not return home due to their own folly, not Odysseus'.[47] Though Odysseus occasionally endures tragic and inhuman sufferings, he continues to struggle in an unwavering effort to succeed, never giving in to passion or despair. Odysseus is Plutarch's consummate hero.

Achilles in the *Moralia*

Plutarch's citations of Odysseus' actions leave little room for doubt on his opinions of the epic wanderer. His views on the other characters are not always completely favorable. Whereas Plutarch's admiration for Odysseus is steadfast and obdurate, he wavers between expressing both censure and praise for the other Homeric characters.[48] Achilles, in particular, is a difficult character to evaluate. Traditionally, of course, he is renowned for his bravery and strength.[49] Plutarch also credits him with several virtuous attributes. For example, Plutarch praises Achilles for his foresight and self-control in several matters, as when Achilles prohibits Priam from seeing Hector's body – an act that surely would have caused unwanted passions to flare up,[50] or when Achilles demonstrates his willpower by avoiding sex and grief in favor of accomplishing required tasks.[51] Plutarch also considers Achilles' ransom of the body of Hector to be a magnanimous gesture.[52] Finally, Plutarch states that it is not without good cause that

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[46] The theme of patriotism seems vital to Plutarch. His reason for writing the Lucullus (*Cim.* 2.3) is driven by patriotism, and he derides Herodotus for his denigration of the Boeotians (*De Herod. malign.* 854E) and also prefers, as Jones (1971) 88 states, "patriotism to impartiality."
[47] Cf. *Od.* 1.7-12, which most likely refers to the episodes with Aeolus' magic bag (*Od.* 10.25-55) and the Cattle of the Sun (12.303-425).
[48] Nestor, whom I do not discuss in this study, is an obvious exception.
[49] Cf. *Mul. virt.* 243D, *De tranq.* 471F.
[50] *De aud. poet.* 31A-B. Cf. *Il.* 24.560-84.
[51] *De aud. poet.* 33A. Cf. *Il.* 24.128-32.
[52] *De Alex. fort.* 343B: "μεγαλόψυχος."

Achilles is called "great glory to the Achaeans."[53] Achilles possesses many aspects of prudence that render him an admirable hero.

Yet Plutarch clearly shows that reason has a weaker hold on Achilles than it has on Odysseus, for Achilles is much more prone to rashness and anger.[54] Achilles' submission to passion frequently results in the worst of crimes: danger to his friends. As mentioned above, Achilles rebukes Agamemnon for his *own* sake rather than on behalf of his comrades. Their row, of course, has terrible results for the rest of the Greeks. Achilles stands as an example of what happens when one speaks with rage, "for nothing beneficial seems to be spoken with anger or severity" (*De aud. poet.* 19C). Plutarch adds that Achilles was not a sweet-hearted or pleasant-minded man (οὐ γλυκύθυμος...οὐδ' ἀγανόφρων), but terrible, able to blame even the blameless (δεινὸς ἀνήρ, οἷος καὶ ἀναίτιον αἰτιάασθαι, *Quom. adul.* 67A). To the calm, even-keeled philosopher, the warlike Achilles serves as a valuable *negative* lesson for a lack of self-control.

No scene better illustrates Plutarch's complicated opinion of Achilles than the argument between Achilles and Agamemnon in the *Iliad.* Plutarch describes the faults, virtues, and lessons of this scene in the *De audiendis poetis*.[55] At first, Achilles, impatient at the slowness of the war (ἀσχάλων μὲν ἀργοῦντι τῷ πολέμῳ) does not attempt to play the demagogue (οὐ δημαγογεῖ πρὸς τὸν ὄχλον) but wishes to counsel the king (τῷ βασιλεῖ γίγνεται σύμβουλος). He proceeds to speak moderately and

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[53] *De aud. poet.* 35B, quoting *Il.* 19.216: "ὦ Ἀχιλεῦ Πηλέος υἱέ, μέγα κῦδος Ἀχαιῶν." Lattimore (1951) 48 also calls Achilles "a man of culture and intelligence" for his gentlemanly conduct to heralds and estranged friends.

[54] In fact, Achilles seems to be more vulnerable to all the passions. Cf. *Amat.* 761A, where Plutarch considers him one of the heroes "most susceptible" to love.

[55] Specifically, from *De aud. poet.* 26B-27A.

appropriately (μετρίως καὶ πρεπόντως), playing the role of a noble warrior, concerned above all with victory and the success of the expedition. Then, however, before the seer Calchas names the cause of the plague as Agamemnon, whom he is loathe to accuse out of fear (*Il.* 1.74-83), Achilles swears that no one shall touch Calchas, "not even should you name Agamemnon" (οὐδ' ἢν Ἀγαμέμνονα εἴπῃς), an announcement that Plutarch says is no longer correct and moderate (οὐκέτ' ὀρθῶς οὐδὲ μετρίως), as Achilles reveals his contempt and disdain (ὀλιγορίαν καὶ περιφρόνησιν) for his leader.[56] Angered by Agamemnon's order to seize his mistress Briseis (1.181-87), Achilles intends to murder Agamemnon "not correctly, neither for what is noble nor for what is decent" (οὔτε πρὸς τὸ καλὸν ὀρθῶς οὔτε πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον). Achilles succumbs to his own pride and emotion, forsaking the respect required for his commander.

And yet, Achilles halts his disgraceful behavior at its summit, changing his mind (μετανοήσας), again behaving both rightly and nobly (ὀρθῶς πάλιν καὶ καλῶς). Plutarch continues:

> ὅτι τὸν θυμὸν ἐκκόψαι παντάπασι μὴ δυνηθείς, ὅμως πρὶν ἀνήκεστόν τι δρᾶσαι μετέστησε καὶ κατέσχεν εὐπειθῆ τῷ λογισμῷ γενόμενον.
>
> Because though he was unable to restrain his anger completely, nevertheless before he did something incurable he checked and halted it by making it obedient to reason.
>
> (*De aud. poet.* 26E)

This tidy synopsis of the feud between Achilles and Agamemnon from the *Iliad* demonstrates how Plutarch views Achilles. The hero is susceptible to unprofitable

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[56] Plutarch's pro-monarchy stance has much to do with his respect for Agamemnon; see *De unius in rep. dom.* 827B-C.

passions, but has the wherewithal and virtue to overcome them when he so wishes.[57] Achilles has the greater nature and thus more capacity for reason than Agamemnon, so the blame for the feud and its resulting evils rests primarily with him. But unlike Odysseus, he cannot stop his passions before they create some measure of evil. Lattimore states, "Achilles is prescient beyond others, but his knowledge has limitations, and his character can be invaded by the human emotions of grief..., fear..., and, above all, anger."[58] The character of Achilles contains a great nature that philosophy and self-control have not yet thoroughly tamed.

Still, Plutarch generally considers Achilles intelligent and admirable.[59] Yet Achilles' trait of allowing his passions to get the better of him lessens his stature in Plutarch's eyes.[60] Achilles, after all, brings catastrophe upon both comrades and himself. Lattimore notes of the Homeric Achilles, "As a hero of tragedy, he is great, but human and imperfect. His tragedy is an effect of free choice by a will that falls short of omniscience and is disturbed by anger."[61] The tragic character of Achilles is not lost on Plutarch. As Mossman has discussed, the *Lives* of both Alexander and Pyrrhus, which she has argued draw heavily upon connections to Achilles, have a fair degree of tragic imagery.[62] Achilles closely represents Knox's definition of the standard Sophoclean tragic hero: "to those who face him, friends and enemies alike, the hero seems

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[57] In *De cohibenda ira* 455A-B, Plutarch adds one final judgment. If either man, he says, checked himself earlier on, as Socrates admits to have done whenever emotions ran high, the quarrel would not have reached such a fevered pitch. "For the way to release the tyranny of anger from one's heart is not to obey nor listen to it as it urges us to yell and look terrible or stir it further, but to be silent and not to intensify it – like a disease – by tossing about and screaming."

[58] Lattimore (1951) 47.

[59] Cf. *De aud. poet.* 31A-B, 33A; *De Alex. fort.* 343B. See also Hainsworth (1993) 99-100: "[Achilles] is presented as a powerful speaker whose skill is concealed by a free rhetorical style."

[60] See *Quom. adul.* 67A, for Plutarch's discussion of Achilles' hard-hearted manners.

[61] Lattimore (1951) 46.

[62] See Mossman (1988) and (1992). Cf. also Chapter 5, pp. 152-68.

unreasonable almost to the point of madness, suicidally bold, impervious to argument, intransigent, angry; an impossible person whom only time can cure."[63] Homer's Achilles is a precursor to Classical tragedy,[64] and the line between the "epic" and "tragic" Achilles is somewhat indistinct. The tragic view of Achilles is important for Plutarch, for, as de Lacy has noted, he generally disdains heroes or actions that he considers tragic.[65] Thus, Achilles, as a man who straddles the boundary between the definitive epic *and tragic* hero, is often just a hair's breadth from both great glory and great disaster. When a Plutarchan hero is modeled on Achilles, the reader will expect – and almost always be rewarded with – a tragic development.

Unlike Odysseus, then, models on Achilles will anticipate an imminent tragedy to be brought about by the hero's own actions. Achilles is known for his rage (μῆνιν), as the first line of the *Iliad* portends: "Μῆνιν ἄειδε θεά, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος." (*Il.* 1.1).[66] Characters like Achilles are imperfect. Achilles' fury causes him to refrain too long from the fight and to send his dear friend Patroclus off to die in his place. Similar events will befall the subjects Plutarch links to Achilles, though the tragic trait need not always be anger.[67] As Hainsworth notes, the Homeric heroes "embody one trait of character, and, being supermen, embody it to excess."[68] Great heroes like Achilles and his parallels become potentially the most dangerous. As Gribble notes, the super-human

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[63] Knox (1966) 28.
[64] *Ibid.* 50-52. See also Rutherford (1982).
[65] de Lacy (1952) 159-66.
[66] See also Ford (1997) 402, where he states that Homer and other oral poets would have recognized the title of the *Iliad* as "The Wrath of Achilles" and that of the *Odyssey* as "The Man of Many Turns."
[67] For example, see my discussion of the *Pyrrhus* in Chapter 5, pp. 152-68.
[68] Hainsworth (1993) 45.

warrior exists outside of society.[69] He is in many ways both too heroic and too godlike for his compatriots. Unable to suborn his passions to a king or government, the Achilles-like hero will eventually feel slighted and invoke or perform some form of vengeance upon his homeland. As such acts invariably become tragic both for the hero and his friends, Achilles models hint of disaster to come. Like fire, grief, the threshold of old age, and fetters, Achilles too earns the dire epithet of ὀλοός, "destructive."[70] As Duff notes, Plutarch implies that souls "may produce great virtues under some circumstances and great vices under others."[71] Achilles stands as Plutarch's Homeric paradigm for such thought. He is the hero to excess: he brings great success as well as great devastation.

Methodology: Clues to Homeric Modeling in the *Lives*

The suggestion that Plutarch would employ some aspects of Homeric epic within his *Lives* should not, on the surface, be remarkably surprising. Ancient historiography originates, as has been argued, with Herodotus' attempt to become a second Odysseus.[72] He also relates the events of the Persian War in a manner meant to compete with Homer's account of the Trojan War. Thucydides also engages with this tradition, stating that the Peloponnesian War was a greater struggle than both the Trojan and Persian Wars.[73]

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[69] Gribble (1999) 13.
[70] For the "destructive heart" of Achilles" see *Il.* 14.139 and 24.39 (of Achilles himself). For fire, *Il.* 13.629, 15.605; grief, *Il.* 16.568; old age, *Il.* 24.487; fetters, *Od.* 22.200.
[71] Duff (2004) 281.
[72] Cf. Herod. 1.1. See Marincola (1997), Montiglio (2005) 126-46, Hartog (1988) 276. Montiglio (2005) 126 notes that "The reference to Odysseus is made explicit only in later historiography, by Polybius and Diodorus Siculus, who both refer to the much-wandering hero in their opposite approaches to the writing of history." See also Lucian *Ver. hist.* 2.1, who notes that foolish history stems from Odysseus, and the comments of Perry (1967) 50-53, 325-26, who argues that Homer feels "the responsibility of an historian" in writing the *Odyssey*.
[73] Thuc. 1.21.

Historiography and tragedy are descendants of epic,[74] and in many ways Plutarch's method of biography stands even closer to Homeric epic than historiography,[75] since a biography claims to be the tale of a single man, just as the opening of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* proclaim.

Before a reader may conclude that a *Life* contains elements suggesting that the text has an Odyssean or Achillean model, we must determine how these models are established. As mentioned in the Introduction, most of the evidence for Homeric models in the *Lives* is implied and almost nowhere explicit. When the parallel is explicitly drawn, of course, there is no problem in coming to the conclusion that Plutarch is comparing his statesman to the Homeric character. Still, it is the implied, less obvious hints of modeling that the bulk of this study examines. I believe that the evidence shows that Plutarch wrote three pairs of *Lives*, *Themistocles-Camillus*, *Coriolanus-Alcibiades*, and *Pyrrhus-Marius*, in such a way that, he paired a *Life* modeled on Odysseus with a *Life* modeled on Achilles.

Possibilities that a *Life* may be based on a Homeric model are nearly countless. First, there may be Homeric quotations. As stated above,[76] the sheer abundance of Homeric quotations in the *Lives* and the *Moralia* is staggering. By my count, there are quotations or variations thereof in twenty-seven of the extent forty-four *Lives*. Many of them are hardly essential to the narrative. As Alexiou states, many are used merely to

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[74] Walbank (1960). Cf. also Wiseman (1993) 133 and Woodman (1988) 95-101, who both each state that poetry, oratory, and historiography are all closely interrelated with rhetoric.
[75] Of the two types of biography noted by Momigliano (1971) 19-20, Plutarch's are of the kind "nearer to political historiography" and more distant from the antiquarian approach of Suetonius. He later adds that "the borderline between fiction and reality was thinner in biography than in ordinary historiography" (56).
[76] See Chapter 1, p. 7 n. 2.

color the narrative.[77] Also, Plutarch's use of Homeric allusion is incredibly rare. Though several of the *Lives* discussed in the following chapters contain allusions to such significant Homeric words as πολύτροπος, I have omitted just as many *Lives* that do not contain them. Also, a focus on Homeric themes is not particularly fruitful, as Plutarch tends to intertwine several themes within a *Life*, many of which one might be considered at least tangentially Homeric, such as warfare,[78] exile,[79] or anger.[80]

Thus, I have cross-referenced my examination of the above methods – namely, Homeric quotation, allusion, and theme – with two additional criteria in order to determine that a *Life* contains consistent and meaningful Homeric modeling. First, one must recall that Plutarch is writing his *Lives* about men who have been fairly well delineated within historiographical traditions. I have found that, wherever the sources, both primary and secondary, suggest that the historical tradition considers a statesman an Odysseus or Achilles-like figure, Plutarch seems to incorporate such an image, most likely intentionally, but perhaps unawares. In each case when this is so, Plutarch employs his sources in a manner that adheres conspicuously well to an image of the Homeric Odysseus or Achilles. In fact, of the six *Lives* I discuss, four of them

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[77] Alexiou (2000) 59, 65.

[78] Plutarch tends to describe campaigns even of statesmen one does not consider soldiers or military men. Cato the Elder conquers 400 cities in Spain, gains a triumph, and aids Aemilianus against Antiochus; Cato the Younger of course, dies when he is besieged by Caesar in Utica, but as a youth he volunteers to fight against Spartacus' revolt; later he also commands a legion in Macedon under Rubrius; Tiberius Gracchus serves under Scipio in 137 BCE and is "beloved by the soldiers" (*Gracchi* 4.6). The only heroes without any military service discussed at all include Cicero, Demosthenes, Gaius Gracchus, Numa, and Solon.

[79] Pericles once makes an expedition to the Black Sea (*Pericles* 20) and besieges Samos (26); Philopoemen spends six years in Crete (199-93 BCE) as a mercenary. Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus travel as quaestors to Africa and Sardinia, respectively. Cato the Elder spends his quaestorship in Africa and Sicily in 204 BCE and also aids Ti. Sempronius in the battle of Thermopylae against Antiochus in 191 BCE. The only non-travelers are Fabius, who never leaves Italy, Agis, who never leaves the Peloponnese, and the early Roman statesmen Romulus, Numa, and Poplicola.

[80] The only *Lives* that contain no mention of ὀργή are *Theseus*, *Numa*, *Cato Maior*.

(*Themistocles*, *Camillus*, *Alcibiades*, and *Pyrrhus*) draw upon historiographical traditions that compare the hero to one of the Homeric heroes.

Finally, I have examined each *Life* in the essential context of its pair. As Duff has shown, such an approach is critical,[81] and one would expect one of two things to occur when Homeric modeling is detected or suspected in a *Life*: either the parallel contains similar modeling, such as an Achilles model in one *Life* will be paired with an Achilles model in the other, or a somewhat paradoxical modeling, where a *Life* modeled on Achilles is paired with a *Life* modeled on Odysseus. Each method is common to Plutarchan pairs, and so the suggestion that the appearance of Homeric modeling in one *Life* may anticipate it in the other. As has been noted, Plutarch will commonly take an aspect of a hero and twist or repeat it in the parallel *Life*. Coupling this hypothesis with the previous one, I have discovered that the parallels to *Alcibiades* and *Pyrrhus* have been written in ways that include Homeric models. Both the *Coriolanus* and *Marius*, though their subjects have no intersection with Homeric heroes, have a significant degree of Homeric quotations, allusions, or themes that suggest they are based to some extent on Homeric models.

When a *Life* contains a Homeric model, however, a corresponding one is not always in its parallel – that would ruin the impact and render the technique dull and trite. Rather, he employs these mirror-image models selectively and in a manner that helps delineate the characteristics of his subjects. There are two *Lives* the subjects of which are part of a historical tradition comparing them to Homeric heroes and are written with emphasis on those models, but their parallel *lacks* a Homeric model. For instance, the

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[81] Duff (1999) 10, 250.

references to epic and Achilles in the *Life of Alexander* have been thoroughly and, in my view, convincingly argued for by Mossman.[82] Yet the *Life of Caesar* seems to have hardly any poetic or epic references at all. As Pelling has noted, the interest of explaining Caesar's rise to power is a "historical interest...This interest leads in *Caesar* to the suppression of themes and emphases which elsewhere typify Plutarch's work...There are indeed remarkably few of those 'small matters which illustrate a man's character' which the preface to *Alexander-Caesar* had promised."[83] Plutarch contrasts the over the top, hyper-heroic world of Alexander with the down-to-earth, historical representation of Caesar. The fact that Plutarch's use of Homer and Achilles in the *Alexander* are in no way mirrored in the *Caesar* emphasizes a large difference in his approach to each *Life*.[84]

The *Philopoemen-Flamininus* pair shares a similar pattern. Philopoemen has many connections to Achilles: his education is conducted by two men, as Plutarch notes, "just like Achilles was taught by Phoenix" (*Phil.* 1.1), he fails to imitate the great Epaminondas because of anger (δι' ὀργήν, 3.1), he reads Homer in order to discover ways of increasing one's courage (4.2), he becomes known for killing enemies in face-to-face combat (6), and his troops, decked out with new armor, are compared to Achilles (10). The setting of the entire *Life* resounds with soldiering and battle and centers on an Achilles-like figure who dominates in his prowess and anger. Yet the *Flamininus* contains no such heroic or epic imagery, and the contrast here, as in the *Alexander-Caesar*, seems deliberate and dramatic. Where the Achaean Philopoemen divides the

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[82] See Mossman (1988). Connections between Alexander and epic are unsurprising. According to Moles (1993) 103, "All ancient treatments of Alexander use quasi-epic treatment..."

[83] Pelling (1980) 137 (=1995, 147 and 2002, 104-5).

[84] In a way, my argument for a regular Plutarchan Achilles-Odysseus construction in several pairs of the *Lives* illuminates and creates more questions for the historical and non-epic feel of the *Caesar*.

Greeks, the foreign Flamininus attempts to unite them. Philopoemen becomes, as Plutarch says, "the last of the Greeks" (*Phil.* 1.6). Flamininus is a man of gentleness and kindness, a man of a new era. His brand of mildness and generosity contrasts with the old ethos that Philopoemen represents. Thus Plutarch does not include any explicit or oblique reminiscences to Achilles or Odysseus. Unlike the pairs *Themistocles-Camillus*, *Coriolanus-Alcibiades*, and *Pyrrhus-Marius*, no other set of parallels engages with both heroes extensively in both *Lives*, hence my reasons for choosing them.[85]

Summary: Odysseus and Achilles in the Lives

Once discovered, *Lives* modeled on Odysseus and Achilles seem readily interpreted: Odyssean models generate images of a long-suffering hero with excellent character; Achillean ones evoke the image of a man of unprecedented military prowess, a man of "culture and intelligence,"[86] who cannot control at least one vital aspect of his life – anger, love of strife – and creates a tragedy that overwhelms him and his homeland. However, such straightforward interpretation of these models does not prove to be the case. Instead, the Achillean or Odyssean portraits invite comparison to the heroes: the moral conclusions must be drawn by the reader. Every statesman will both echo and differ from his archetypal Homeric model in ways that emphasize their characteristics: some men will match or even surpass the virtues of Achilles or Odysseus while others will fall well short. In fact, comparisons to a Homeric model serve to connect a pair of *Lives* more closely, for when heroes compare favorably or unfavorably to their Homeric

[85] Though I will note that I have found heroic examples along the lines of Achilles in both halves of the *Pelopidas-Marcellus* pair; also, I believe there are references to Agamemnon in both halves of the *Agesilaus-Pompey* pair.
[86] Lattimore (1951) 48.

counterparts, they do so as a pair. When one statesman's Odyssean model creates a favorable impression, so too will the Achillean model of the other *Life*. Likewise, when the Odyssean model provides a negative portrait, so too will the Achillean model of the other *Life*.

The Odysseus-Achilles scheme that Plutarch employs in the following sets of *Lives*, namely the *Themistocles-Camillus*, *Coriolanus-Alcibiades*, and *Pyrrhus-Marius*, emphasizes and illustrates character. Each of the above statesman is modeled to some extent on Odysseus or Achilles, and each portrait shines or suffers because of it. Though Plutarch's method of basing a *Life* on a Homeric model is varied – Homeric allusions, quotations, and themes are in no way consistent throughout these *Lives* – the evidence, I believe, shows that the texts can be read with an eye on Homer's heroes. I do not wish to state that Homeric imagery dominates and completely dictates the reading these *Lives*, but I do believe that in these six *Lives* an interpretation that includes analysis of Homeric models can be added to the Plutarchan synthesis of philosophy, history, moral instruction, and literature.

Chapter 3

Encomiastic Models in *Themistocles-Camillus*

Of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, the *Themistocles-Camillus* pairing most lends itself to a straightforward Odysseus-Achilles pattern. Historically and rhetorically, Themistocles is commonly known as a cunning strategist who defeats the great Eastern enemy, whereas Camillus is considered a man of battle and command who attains four triumphs and five dictatorships, and saves his city from destruction by returning to the scene at a critical moment. Both statesmen, despite their divergent attributes, become heroes of epic grandeur for Plutarch: he considers Themistocles the savior of Greece for his efforts in the Persian War (*Them.* 4.5) and hails Camillus as the Second Founder of Rome (*Cam.* 1.1).[1] In doing so, Plutarch implicitly seems to employ an Odysseus model for his *Life of Themistocles* while providing Achilles as a model for Camillus. The character of Themistocles closely corresponds to that of Odysseus in Plutarch's *Moralia*, as I described it above.[2] Similarly, Camillus shares many qualities and acts of Achilles, but his character has been tempered by Plutarch to represent that of a more self-controlled statesman. By using Homeric models for his two heroes, Plutarch adds another layer of evaluation, one that illustrates and emphasizes the virtues of his statesmen: Themistocles is the shrewd, self-controlled politician, and Camillus is the valiant but temperate general.

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[1] Plutarch seems to have had a connection in mind for Themistocles and Camillus from an early period. Both men are listed consecutively at *De exil.* 600A in a list of men who did not lose their reputations despite exile. At *De lat. viv.* 1129A, which may have been written later, Plutarch discusses them together again, stating that Athens would not have repelled the Persians if not for Themistocles, and Rome would not have remained a city without Camillus.

[2] In Chapter 2, pp. 39-47.

Before continuing, I should explain why my discussion of the Odyssean elements in the *Life of Themistocles* is substantially longer than my analysis of Achilles in the *Life of Camillus*. There are two main reasons for this discrepancy. First, there is a need to list evidence for the historiographical tradition that associated Themistocles with Odysseus in antiquity, and Plutarch employs many more sources in writing the *Themistocles*. At least twenty-eight are named,[3] and Plutarch also must navigate between both a positive and negative tradition relating to the hero.[4] As Frost notes, in summarizing the sources for Themistocles:

> "By all these diverse paths of communication a corpus of Themistocles stories developed and was passed on during the centuries between the Pentecontetia and the Pax Romana—a corpus with no rigid limits, compounded of various parts of romance, moralizing, political theory, and scholarship around the original core of *historie* provided by Herodotus and Thucydides."[5]

In comparison to Camillus, the amount of sources for the *Themistocles* stands as a veritable cornucopia. Secondly, the elements of the Themistocles suggesting a connection between the statesman and Odysseus include some traditionally epic tones as well as specifically Odyssean ones and are less straightforward than the direct comparisons that exist between the actions of Camillus and Achilles in the *Life of Camillus*, therefore requiring a lengthier explanation. These three reasons—the historiographical tradition, the large amount of sources, and the nuanced links Plutarch employs—largely reinforce one another: Plutarch manipulates the historiographical tradition of the Odyssean Themistocles to guide his use of sources, which, in turn, create more than one epic link to Themistocles.

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[3] Cf. Larmour (1992) 4180, Marr (1998) 5.
[4] For a detailed account of the reception of Themistocles up to Plutarch's time, I recommend Podlecki (1975), esp. 47-142.
[5] Frost (1980) 38-39.

Themistocles and Odysseus

Though I shall attempt to demonstrate that Plutarch wrote the *Themistocles-Camillus* pair in a pattern based on Odysseus and Achilles, the Homeric heroes serve more as emblematic characters than as explicit epic references.[6] At one point, Plutarch explicitly compares Camillus to Achilles, but he makes no such emphatic link between Themistocles and Odysseus. Still, there is a substantial amount of contextual evidence that implies that Plutarch had an Odyssean model in mind when he wrote his *Life of Themistocles*. At the time that Plutarch wrote the *Lives*, there had been a long-standing and well-established connection between Themistocles and Odysseus in both historiography and philosophy, which I shall discuss in detail below. Plutarch was well aware of these views, and by modeling his Themistocles on the figure of Odysseus he emphasizes his positive opinion of the characteristics of Themistocles in comparison to his historiographical and philosophical predecessors. To wit, Plutarch agrees with the generally positive version espoused by Thucydides and Simonides of Ceos, and diverges from the overall negative image portrayed by Timocreon of Rhodes, ameliorates his more ambiguous characteristics as illustrated by Herodotus, and dismisses Plato's verdict that Themistocles is a "false statesman."[7] Plutarch's Themistocles, in addition to possessing his customary flexibility and intelligence, stands as an example of heroic self-control, even when his misfortunes mount. The events of Plutarch's *Themistocles* are therefore colored and shaped by the statesman's traditional, literary connection to the Homeric

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[6] Cf. Chapter 1, pp. 33-34, for Plutarch's use of "integrated characters." See also Chapter 2, pp. 52-55.
[7] For a summary of these authors' stances on Themistocles, among others, see Frost (1980) esp. 3-39.

hero. As a result, the Plutarch's evaluation of Themistocles will prove to echo his opinion of Odysseus: he was a man of philosophical virtue.

Themistocles and Odysseus in the Historiographical Tradition

A literary connection between Themistocles and Odysseus within Plutarch's *Lives* should hardly come as a surprise, as the two traditionally share many characteristics. Herodotus' Themistocles exhibits two primary attributes. The first is his wisdom (σοφία): he interprets the Delphic oracle correctly and is responsible for the stratagem that convinces the Persians to risk a battle off Salamis.[8] But his view of Themistocles is also that of a greedy man.[9] Fornara considers Herodotus' construction of Themistocles to be a "fifth-century Odysseus,"[10] an evaluation that emphasizes deceit and avarice.[11] A similar view is also shared by Frost, who states that Herodotus' Themistocles has two primary characteristics, "his *euboulia* – his uncanny cleverness at predicting what would happen and devising the most appropriate response; and his *pleonexia* – his knack for turning matters to his own financial advantage."[12] These qualities of good counsel and greediness correspond to the defining characteristics of Odysseus. For instance, as Nestor says:

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[8] On Themistocles' character in Herodotus, cf. Fornara (1971) 72-73. On his wisdom, see Herodotus 8.110, 124; for the episode with oracle, see 7.143; for his ploy in fooling the Persians, 8.73-83. Cf. Frost's (1980) 3, comment that the characteristic good counsel and greed were established by the poets Simonides and Timocreon.

[9] Cf. *Histories* 8.112, "οὐκ ἐπαύετο πλεονεκτέον."

[10] Fornara (1971) 72.

[11] For views of Odysseus in the fifth century, see Stanford (1964), esp. 102-17.

[12] Frost (1980) 9. Cf. also Perrin (1901) 32, commenting on Themistocles' ostracism: "Selfish cunning, rather than the self-sacrificing statesmanship which really characterized his course, came to be the popular trait in the tradition of his career."

ἔνθ' ἦ τοι ἦος μὲν ἐγὼ καὶ δῖος Ὀδυσσεὺς
οὔτε ποτ' εἰν ἀγορῇ δίχ' ἐβάζομεν οὔτ' ἐνὶ βουλῇ,
ἀλλ' ἕνα θυμὸν ἔχοντε νόῳ καὶ ἐπίφρονι βουλῇ
φράζομεθ' Ἀργείοισιν ὅπως ὄχ' ἄριστα γένοιτο.

And indeed while we were there I and glorious Odysseus
never did we speak in opposition in the assembly nor in council,
but of one mind with wisdom and shrewd counsel
we advised the Argives how all things might come out for the best.
(*Odyssey* 3.126-29)

This aspect of Odysseus the counselor, though, is countered by a characteristic acquisitiveness. As Stanford notes, "The post-Homeric tradition was inclined to censure Odysseus for unheroic cupidity."[13] In the *Iliad*, as well, Agamemnon chides Odysseus, "you who excel in wicked tricks, greedy of heart."[14] The characteristics of Themistocles, as expressed by Herodotus, correspond to the traditional traits of Odysseus, and Plutarch, as I shall attempt to demonstrate below, challenges these charges and re-interprets Themistocles' actions in a positive manner.

Thucydides' image of Themistocles is similar, but he focuses heavily on Themistocles' virtuous qualities. His Themistocles shares the cleverness of Herodotus' hero, but Thucydides omits his alleged greed. Instead, he praises Themistocles' natural intelligence (σύνεσις) and his flexibility in a crisis (κράτιστος δὴ οὗτος αὐτοσχεδιάζειν τὰ δέοντα ἐγένετο, 1.138.3).[15] Hornblower classifies Thucydides' image of Themistocles as a "type of the 'trickster' hero [which] goes back...to the Homeric Odysseus,"[16] and Gribble remarks how "Thucydides clearly admires

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[13] Stanford (1964) 76.
[14] *Il.* 4.339: "καὶ σὺ κακοῖσι δόλοισι κεκασμένε, κερδαλεόφρον."
[15] Cf. Martin (1961) 327-31.
[16] Hornblower (1991) 136-37; cf. also Hornblower (1987) 22. Marincola (1997) concurs that Themistocles is associated with Themistocles in both Herodotus and Thucydides.

Themistocles' Odysseus-like twists and turns."[17] Thucydides seems to make a connection between Odysseus and Themistocles himself, for he notes that Corcyra, whither Themistocles' flight initially leads him, is the land where the Phaeacians of the *Odyssey* once dwelled (1.25.4).[18] The similarities between Themistocles and Odysseus as expressed by the ancient historians extends to modern authors as well. Lenardon, in his biography of Themistocles, calls attention to the hero's traditional literary link to Odysseus, titling his chapter on Themistocles' exile the "Odyssey of Themistocles."[19] Themistocles and Odysseus are demonstrably closely connected in the views of both ancient and modern historians.

There is further contextual evidence that may suggest another relationship between the two heroes. The *Histories* of Herodotus possess a unique connection to Homeric epic. As Woodman notes, "The ancients believed that he imitated Homer," and it seems "that Herodotus wanted his own work to be seen in terms of Homer's work, and his own subject in terms of Homer's subject."[20] Woodman here elaborates upon the arguments of Fornara, that Homer was a "real model or catalyzing influence" for Herodotus, and that "the heroic antecedents of the conflict between East and West figured too large in the consciousness of the Hellenes, educated as they were by Homer, to have been ignored" in a fashion that denies heroic elements.[21] Themistocles, as Plutarch's

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[17] Gribble (1999) 27.
[18] For scholarly discussion of Thucydides' description of Corcyra, see Mackie (1996), 104 and Hornblower (1991) 70; furthermore, see Howie (1989) for a discussion on the connection between Homer's Scheria and Corcyra. For the Phaeacians, see *Odyssey* 6-8, 13.
[19] Lenardon (1978) 126-39. In fact, all his chapter titles allude to Themistocles as a sort of Homeric hero, a technique he does not elaborate upon, though Stadter (1982) 358 n. 3 states that Lenardon's view of Themistocles derives from Plutarch's conceptions of the hero.
[20] Woodman (1988) 1, 3. For Homer's impact on history, see also Strasburger (1972).
[21] Fornara (1983) 8, 31. He continues on page 32: "What Achilles' anger was to Homer, the Persian war represented to Herodotus." Cf. also Vandiver (1991) 50-51, 65-66, 202.

preeminent hero of the Greco-Persian conflict, more than Miltiades, Aristides, or Pausanias,[22] thereby becomes the equivalent of the victor of the Trojan War. Where the hero who brings about the end of the Trojan War was Odysseus, Plutarch states that the statesman most responsible for the defeat of the Persians is Themistocles. Plutarch's biography of Themistocles is written at a time when Greek pride in the Persian Wars is still pervasive: within his lifetime a benefactor who had returned Salamis to the Athenians in the 1st century CE was dubbed "a new Themistocles."[23] Pride and glory in the Greek victory remains strong.

The historiographical links that have been and continue to be established between Odysseus and Themistocles stem not only from the similarity of their Eastern opponents, but also their similar characteristics. Odysseus is the man "of many turns,"[24] who relies on his wit, just like Themistocles. As Perrin notes in his commentary on *Themistocles*, "The best tradition... makes the great triumph of Themistocles due, not to valor, but to wisdom and adroitness."[25] Such, of course, are the characteristics that lead to Odysseus' glory: he depends not upon the customary valor of heroes like Achilles and Ajax, but on his cleverness and wiles. As Lattimore notes, "Odysseus is the antithesis of Achilles. Achilles has a fine intelligence, but passion clouds it...Achilles, Hector, and Agamemnon, magnificent as they are, are flawed with uncertainty and can act on confused motives; Odysseus never."[26] Themistocles, too, shares this singleness of

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[22] The assertion that Themistocles was Plutarch's hero of the Persian Wars should be uncontroversial. Plutarch insists that the Battle of Salamis was the battle that won the war (*Them.* 4.6). Cf. Podlecki (1975) xiii, who, in explaining his researches into Themistocles, considers him "the man who had (or so at least it seemed to me) single-handedly altered the course of Greek, and thus world, history."
[23] Spawforth (1994) 243-44. Cf. 244 n. 42 for the date.
[24] *Od.* 1.1.
[25] Perrin (1901) 46.
[26] Lattimore (1951) 50.

purpose. For Herodotus, Themistocles' objective is actually twofold: to defeat the Persians and to derive financial benefit while he does so; for Thucydides and Plutarch, Themistocles' purpose is much more focused and patriotic: he seeks exclusively to benefit Athens.

It is important to note that Plutarch is aware of a traditional connection between Themistocles and Odysseus, one still famous over 500 years after the Athenian statesman's death. In his *De Herodoti malignitate*, while discussing one of Herodotus' many examples of bias, Plutarch records that Themistocles used to be called Odysseus:

> ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον τῶν Ἑλλήνων καταγελῶν, Θεμιστοκλέα μὲν οὔτε φησὶ φρονῆσαι τὸ συμφέρον ἀλλὰ παριδεῖν, ὃς Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐπωνομάσθη διὰ τὴν φρόνησιν.
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> And mocking the Greeks still more, [Herodotus] says that Themistocles, who was nicknamed Odysseus because of his prudence (φρόνησιν), did not take heed of (φρονῆσαι) what was necessary, but overlooked it.
>
> (*De Herod. malign.* 869F)

Plutarch is thus not only aware of the traditions that associate the two men, but underscores the positive aspects of Themistocles in light of his view of Odysseus, the prudent (φρόνιμος) hero who acts sensibly rather than emotionally or reactively.[27] As I hope to demonstrate, Plutarch maintains this positive interpretation, one that portrays the character and deeds of Themistocles in a manner that has Odysseus as a part of the theme and background. Most notably, he re-interprets Themistocles' downfall, exile, and death to show that he is an excellent and worthy example of a statesman.

Stadter, in his review of Frost's commentary, seems to suggest just such a reading as well. He states that Plutarch presents Themistocles as "a hero and savior of his

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[27] For other places where Plutarch associates Odysseus with prudence, see *Conj. praec.* 139A, 140E, *Mul. virt.* 243A, and *Quaest. conv.* 642A.

country, who suffers from envy, yet nevertheless wins great and well-deserved glory…All Plutarch's literary skill and rhetorical training will be used to build up a convincing portrait of Themistocles' greatness; what weaknesses or faults remain will be used to keep the image lifelike and human."[28] The portrait of Themistocles is primarily laudatory.[29] I intend to show that this positive, heroic interpretation that Stadter has described stems from the qualities that Themistocles shares with Odysseus. In contrast to Herodotus, who depicts Themistocles as a fifth-century version of Odysseus, the self-serving schemer, Plutarch's image of Themistocles corresponds to a positive portrait of Odysseus as outlined in the *Moralia*.[30] Plutarch therefore re-interprets the negative aspects of Themistocles and generally mollifies their impact. He accentuates his hero's use of cunning and his manipulation of money in order to help the city. This adaptation of Themistocles mirrors Plutarch's philosophical depiction of Odysseus, who is also traditionally charged with deception and greed.[31]

Themes and Narrative Structure in the *Life of Themistocles*

As mentioned above, Themistocles traditionally is associated with the qualities of *euboulia* and *pleonexia*. Plutarch re-frames these qualities, calling Themistocles intelligent (συνετός) and a keen money-maker (σύντονον χρηματιστήν, 5.1).[32] These traits, which correspond to traditional characterizations of Odysseus as "πολύμητις" and

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[28] Stadter (1982) 358; the emphasis is mine.
[29] I do not mean to assert that the *Life of Themistocles* is *completely* favorable. Plutarch himself notes that human nature "cannot create a personality wholly and absolutely directed toward virtue" (*Cim.* 2.3). Cf. also Stadter's (1988) 285 discussion of this passage.
[30] See Chapter 2 above, pp. 39-47.
[31] On the traditional, negative views of Odysseus, see esp. Stanford (1964) 90-117.
[32] In fact, Plutarch mentions a third quality, his φιλοτιμία. On this, see below.

"κερδαλεόφρων,"[33] are handled in a more positive manner by Plutarch than by Herodotus: Plutarch gives full credit to Themistocles' intelligent nature for many of his successes, omitting his more self-serving deceptive acts, and tempers the traditional aspects of his greed to make them publicly rather than privately beneficial.

These qualities of Themistocles are stressed frequently within the first few chapters. First, Plutarch relates how Themistocles, though illegitimately born, or a *nothos*, "cunningly" (πανούργως) lures the noble-born children (γνήσιοι) to wrestle at the Cynosarges gymnasium, which had been traditionally used only by the *nothoi*. In persuading the noble youths to wrestle with the illegitimate children, Themistocles effectively erases the distinction between the classes (1.3). This tale of Themistocles' early cunning is immediately followed by an assertion of Themistocles' being naturally intelligent (συνετός, 2.1) and how he always sought to develop his intelligence (σύνεσις) and his knowledge of practical matters (πρᾶξις, 2.3).[34] Themistocles, as Plutarch notes, is taught by Mnesiphilus, a "physical philosopher"[35] who claims to be a student in a tradition stretching back to Solon (2.6). Under this man's tutelage, Themistocles is taught "political cleverness and practical intelligence" (δεινότητα πολιτικὴν καὶ δραστήριον σύνεσιν, 2.6). The stage becomes firmly set for a hero who relies on his wit.

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[33] For Odysseus as πολύμητις: *Od.* 2.172, 5.213, etc.; as κερδαλεόφρων: *Il.* 4.338.

[34] Cf. also *De fort. Alex.* 343A, where Plutarch suggests that Alexander had the "intelligence" (σύνεσις) of Themistocles, along with customary traits of several other statesmen, such as the "skill" (εμπειρία) of Philip, the "daring" (τολμή) of Brasidas, and the "cleverness and political ability" (δεινότης καὶ πολιτεία) of Pericles, among several others.

[35] *Them.* 2.6, "φυσικῶν κληθέντων φιλοσόφων": appropriate for Themistocles, who trusted in his nature (φύσει, 2.3).

In fact, very few subjects of Plutarch's *Lives* contain as much stress on intelligence as Themistocles. One exception is Alcibiades, whom I discuss in the following chapter. Two others are Sertorius and Eumenes.[36] These two men make up their own pair, of course, and also face long odds: Sertorius resists the army of Pompey for a surprisingly long time, and Eumenes manages to hold his own in a battle for power contrary to all expectations after the death of Alexander. When Plutarch stresses the term of intelligence, it generally surrounds men who are facing long odds, which applies to both Themistocles and Odysseus. As further examples of this point, "σύνεσις" is the primary characteristic of Spartacus (*Crassus* 8.1) as well as the Parthian who beguiles Crassus in the East (21.9). Themistocles is not just clever, the Athenians desperately need his cleverness: against such odds, strength alone will now succeed.

As Plutarch maintains the tradition of Themistocles' intelligence, he also reveals his knowledge of the tradition of Themistoclean avarice. In fact, he discusses the subject, if not with purely positive interpretations, at least with some ambiguity. Plutarch notes that Themistocles' ability at making money is due, as some say, to his excessive generosity (ἐλευθεριότης), though others say he is a man of miserliness (γλισχρότης) and meanness (μικρολογία, 5.1). Though Plutarch here avoids exonerating Themistocles of the charge of greediness altogether, his view is much less critical than the traditional, anti-Themistoclean view, of which Herodotus' is the most famous example. In fact, the only explicit criticism of Themistocles' avarice comes from the pen

[36] See *Sert.* 1.9, 3.4; *Eum.* 1.2, 16.1.

of Timocreon (21.3-4), who is poet renowned for his vices and hardly seems to serve as a reliable witness.[37]

Plutarch, in fact, counters many of the charges of Themistoclean avarice consistently and subtly. Whereas Herodotus says that Themistocles keeps twenty-two talents of the thirty talent bribe meant for Eurybiades (8.4-5),[38] Plutarch simply states that Themistocles "gave [the money] to Eurybiades' friends" (*Them.* 7.6), implying that all of the funds made their way into the Spartan's pockets. After the Battle of Salamis, Plutarch also tones down the Herodotean claim that Themistocles "extorts the Greek islands after the war without the knowledge of any other leader" (8.112). Plutarch, again lightening the deceptive image of Herodotus' Themistocles, notes that he became "grievous to the allies, as he sailed about the islands taking money from them" (21.1). Plutarch also notes a famous Themistoclean proverb, that he would rather his daughter wed a man without money than money without a man (18.9).[39] Though Plutarch frequently mentions the surprising amount of Themistocles' wealth – and enjoyment of it – he never makes the acquisition of money a selfish concern of his hero.[40] In fact, three terms for the love of wealth, πλεονεξία, φιλοπλουτία, and φιλαργυρία, are never

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[37] For more on Themistocles and Timocreon, I highly recommend McMullin (1997) and Zadorojnyi (2006). Perrin (1901) notes that Timocreon becomes a source for the tradition of Themistocles the Medizer and traitor.

[38] As Marr (1998) 88 notes, "The story as it appears in Herodotus is flagrantly anti-Themistocles, part of the hostile tradition which strongly colors his narrative throughout Book 8 of the Histories." Perrin (1901) notes that the period in which Herodotus wrote was "malevolently hostile to Themistocles" (34).

[39] Plutarch changes the tale from the version told in Diodorus 10.32, where he encourages him to wed his daughter to the poor, imprisoned, but noble Cimon. The story is also told at *Ap. reg. et imp.* 185E.

[40] Though Themistocles does make money-making a *public* concern, especially at 10.6-7.

used of Themistocles, despite the hostile tradition.[41] Themistocles' money-hoarding becomes a means to an end, not an end in and of itself.

The defense of Themistocles' acquisition of wealth corresponds to Plutarch's defense of Odysseus. As Stanford notes, the post-Homeric tradition commonly censures Odysseus for his cupidity.[42] Aelian notes that Theophrastus praised Democritus of Abdera for obtaining better treasures on his travels than Menelaus and Odysseus, who "differed in no way from Phoenician merchants; for they heaped up money, and made this the excuse for their wandering and sailing" (*Var. hist.* 4.20). Horace, too, engages with the aspect of Odysseus as a legacy-hunter.[43] Plutarch, in seeing Odysseus as a more philosophical hero, defends him from the charge of cupidity when he checks the Phaeacians' gifts after his return to Ithaca and when he rejoices at Penelope's receiving of gifts from the suitors (*De aud. poet.* 27A).[44] These actions may have been done, states Plutarch, out of a desire to see if the Phaeacians are just and honorable and out of relief that the suitors are overconfident.[45] The defense of Odysseus is mirrored in *Themistocles* by Plutarch's more favorable views of Themistocles' acts.

To these traditional traits of Themistocles, Plutarch adds the trait of φιλοτιμία, commonly translated as "ambition" or "love of honor." This quality, which Plutarch

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[41] I believe that Plutarch uses the term πλεονεξία to denote a general "desire for more," rather than solely for monetary gain. Still, whatever its meaning, it is not used in *Themistocles*. For some examples of it the *Lives*, see *Lycurgus* 9.1, *Pyrrhus* 7.3, *Marius* 34.6, *Lucullus* 17.8, *int. al.* For φιλοπλουτία, "love of wealth," see e.g. *Lycurgus* 30.1, *Agis-Cleomenes* 13.1, *Lysander* 2.4, *Comp. Aem.-Tim.* 2.4, *Lucullus* 17.6, 33.5, *Crassus* 1.5, 2.1, 14.5, *Cato Maior* 52.6, *Demetrius* 32.8. For φιλαργυρία, "love of money," see *Pericles* 22.4, *Aemilius* 8.10, 12.2, 26.7, *Cato Maior* 10.5, *Lysander* 17.4, *Pompey* 31.4, *Caesar* 51.3, *Cicero* 25.4. It is also a characteristic of the flatterer. See *Quom. adul.* 60A.

[42] Stanford (1964) 76.

[43] Horace *Sat.* 2.5. Cf. Rudd (1966) 228-30. For more on the acquisitiveness of Odysseus, esp. in Homer, see Montiglio (2005) 108-13.

[44] These episodes occur at *Od.* 13.215-219 and *Od.* 18.281-82.

[45] Stanford (1964) 255 n. 18, considers these excuses "rather weak," which may be testament to how far Plutarch will go to defend his hero.

portrays both positively and negatively throughout the *Lives*,[46] appears early and often in the *Life*. Like his intelligence and money-making, Themistocles' φιλοτιμία tends to be a beneficial quality. First, and most importantly, Themistocles is encouraged by his φιλοτιμία to aspire to great deeds after he witnesses the success of Miltiades (3.4).[47] His love of honor subsequently leads to the defeat of the Persians, for, as Plutarch notes, "he said to those who asked about the change in his way of living, that the trophy of Miltiades was not allowing him to sleep" (3.4). The trait also reappears three times soon after (5.2-5) in a more ambiguous sense of wishing to be more popular and competing ambitiously as a *choregos*. Lastly, at the height of his success, Plutarch presciently stresses one last time his love of honor (φιλοτιμότατος, 18.1) just before his downfall and ostracism, the abuses and purpose of which Plutarch maligns with open scorn (22.4-5).[48]

Of course, the quality of φιλοτιμία is not an Odyssean one for Plutarch.[49] As Stanford notes, "the Homeric Odysseus...was much less under the influence of the desire to win glory than any other hero."[50] Yet the quality is a pervasive one in Plutarch, appearing in almost every extant *Life*.[51] Also, I am attracted to an interpretation of φιλοτιμία that Martin proposes, who notes that it "found its chief expression in services and benefactions to the state and developed the meanings 'zeal' and 'generosity...'" and

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[46] As Swain (1988) 344 notes, φιλοτιμία may be good as well as bad. For examples of it as beneficial, see *De virt. mor.* 452B, *Ages.* 5.5, *Lys.* 2.4. For the bad, cf. *Ages.* 5.7, *Agis-Cleom.* 2.3, *Comp. Arist.-Cato* 5.4, *Praec. ger.* 819A, 825A, 825E, 819F-820F, 825F.

[47] Cf. similar instances of motivation at *Caes.* 11.5 and *Thes.* 3.3-5. On inspiration from great deeds in a more general way, see *Per.* 2. For Plutarch's approval of Themistocles' need for glory upon seeing this statue, cf. *Prof. in virt.* 84A and *De cap. ex inim.* 92C.

[48] For Plutarch's view of ostracism, see Beneker (2005).

[49] Though Odysseus is never called "φιλότιμος" by Sophocles or Euripides, there is one episode where he appears to be acting for the sake of honor (τιμή), as when he claims Philoctetes' bow (*Phil.* 1061-62).

[50] Stanford (1964) 115-16.

[51] It appears in every *Life* but two, *Romulus* and *Timoleon*, and in all others at least twice except for *Numa* and *Sertorius*.

the adjective φιλότιμος "eventually became a title in the sense of the English 'benefactor.'"[52] In fact, this optimistic view of φιλοτιμία may be allowable given that Themistocles forsakes a chance at further honor while in Persia rather than allowing it to dictate his actions without restraint. His φιλοτιμία, too, will prove to be subject to his characteristic, philosophical restraint.

As I have argued, the character of Themistocles shares many similarities, both thematically and traditionally, with Odysseus. He is commonly connected to Odysseus in historiographical and rhetorical circles, and the characteristics portrayed in Plutarch's *Life* are delineated in a manner that ameliorates the negative tradition surrounding him in favor of a more positive – or at the very least, less negative – reading. The positive spin that Plutarch places upon Themistocles' actions becomes emblematic of the *Life*. Themistoclean wiles will inevitably render beneficial effects for the Athenians and Greeks. He will forego conventionally virtuous acts in favor of Odyssean methods, yet not in the traditionally self-serving manner as expressed by Herodotus.

Themistocles' Heroism

Part of the significance of Plutarch's heroic, epic Themistocles derives from the structure of the *Life*. As Stadter states, the *Themistocles-Camillus* pair belongs to a set he calls the "heroic lives, before Plutarch had decided that every sort of virtue – or its corruption – could be the theme for a book."[53] The heroic tone to the *Life* also explains the abrupt division in the middle of chapter 17, which has caused commentators like

[52] Martin (1961) 327 n.4.
[53] Stadter (1982) 359.

Frost some agony.[54] When the Greeks have defeated Persia at Salamis, Plutarch drops all discussion of the Persian Wars and even passes over the Battle of Plataea. "The victory at Salamis was the great achievement of Themistocles' career," says Stadter.[55] With Themistocles' role in the war over, Plutarch stresses his subject's heroism by omitting the end of the war and focusing exclusively upon Themistocles' honors.

The heroic aspects to Themistocles are as important as his more characteristic clever and strategic ones. In the *Aratus*, Plutarch notes that "there is a sort of human cleverness (δεινοτής) and understanding (σύνεσις) which by its nature is easily perturbed in open and public encounters, but gains courage when it comes to secret, undercover initiatives. This sort of inconsistency is created in gifted people by a lack of philosophical training..." (*Arat.* 10.4-5). As Pelling notes, Aratus is "the politician who prefers guile to the dangers of open fighting, who shows daring in one sphere but not in *a different one*."[56] Themistocles, though renowned, like Aratus here, for his σύνεσις,[57] is not a character in the unphilosophical vein of Aratus. Unlike the clever Aratus, Themistocles fights for his country both subtly *as well as* boldly. He pairs stratagem with military valor, as does Odysseus in the *Iliad.* This combination is essential to the success of a Plutarchan hero.

Before I examine the events surrounding Salamis, it is essential to look at an earlier anecdote in the *Life* which may serve as a signpost to deeds of Odysseus. In the chapters discussing Themistocles' early career, Plutarch relates an anecdote about a certain horse-rearer named Diphilides, who, after refusing to give Themistocles a colt, is

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[54] Frost (1980) 168.
[55] Stadter (1982) 361; cf. also Gribble (1999) 4.
[56] Pelling (1988a) 265 (=2002, 290). Italics in original.
[57] *Them.* 2.1-3.

told that his home would quickly be made into a "wooden horse" (δούρειον ἵππον), suggesting that the man's own family would stir up trouble from within (*Them.* 5.2).[58] The same phrase is used by Plutarch in the *Sertorius* to explain the method by which the Greeks defeated Troy under Agamemnon (*Sert.* 1.6). This tale, aside from the play on the horse-rearing Diphilides and the thematic link it makes between Themistocles' family and horses,[59] may provide a verbal link to the Trojan Horse of mythic legend, which is described by Odysseus as a "ἵππου δουρατέου" (*Od.* 8.492-93), and is famous for being the invention of Odysseus that leads to Greek victory at Troy.[60] Stanford, in fact, calls the ruse of the Trojan Horse "Odysseus's greatest military triumph."[61]

Themistocles' scheme to persuade the Athenians to abandon their city for their ships is similar to the ploy of the Trojan Horse. In convincing his fellow citizens to adopt his interpretation of the oracle's command to take shelter behind the "wooden wall" (ξύλινον τεῖχος, 10.3),[62] he accomplishes a very similar means of defeating the Persians as Odysseus does the Trojans. Both stratagems are constructed of wood, are initiated and brought about under the guidance of a wily leader, and lead to eventual success over an Eastern enemy: the Trojan Horse allows the Greeks to infiltrate Troy, the ships of Athens lead to Greek victory at Salamis. As Odysseus receives credit for the Trojan Horse, Plutarch here credits Themistocles. But unlike Herodotus, who states that Themistocles

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[58] Perrin (1901) 189 calls Themistocles' reference a "far-fetched allusion to the famous wooden horse."
[59] cf. *Them.* 32.1 and Plato's *Meno* 93C-D.
[60] Called a "polished horse" (ἵππῳ ξεστῷ) at *Od.* 4.272 and a "hollow ambush" (κοῖλον λόχον) at *Od.* 4.277 by Menelaus. For the necessity of the Horse for Troy's fall, see Stanford (1964) 25. On Odysseus as the leader, cf. *Od.* 4.266-89, 8.487-98; On the Horse as Odysseus's idea (though Odysseus calls Epeius its creator at *Od.* 8.493, 11.523), Stanford (1964) 257 n. 10 states, "Neither Homer nor the cyclic writers explicitly state that Odysseus devised the stratagem of the Horse...But the later tradition assumes that it was Odysseus's invention and any other inventor among the remaining Greeks seems inconceivable."
[61] Stanford (1964) 85.
[62] Cf. Herodotus 7.141.

only urged the Athenians to abandon the city after the oracle was proclaimed (7.143), Plutarch's Themistocles has already conceived of the idea as soon as he had taken command (*Them.* 7.1). Thus, it is only after the prophecy of the oracle that the *demos* allow Themistocles to enact his original plan. The description surrounding the abandonment of Athens thus shows Themistocles at his heroic and wily best.

Still, the bulk of the heroic feel to the *Life* centers on the events that take place during Themistocles' great triumph: the defeat of the Persians at the Battle of Salamis. Plutarch creates an image of a great war in which Themistocles is the cunning strategist, an Odysseus on the field of battle. After the Athenian retreat to Salamis, the Persians draw near, and the Spartan leader Eurybiades, who is in charge of the Greek allies, wants to continue the fight behind the Isthmian wall rather than at sea near Salamis. Plutarch here relates how a portent appears to aid Themistocles as he attempts to convince the Spartans via threat and persuasion to stay and fight. "An owl appeared, flying from the right of the ships and perching upon the rigging" (*Them.* 12.1). Swayed by the omen, the Greeks follow Themistocles' advice. The owl, or "γλαύξ," was the bird of Athena, who is called "γλαυκῶπις" throughout the Homeric poems,[63] and has significant symbolic ties to the city of Athens.[64] The goddess is famous for the aid she bestows upon several heroes, in particular Odysseus,[65] whom she aids several times in the *Iliad* and almost constantly in the *Odyssey*.[66] The presence of her sacred bird just before Themistocles'

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[63] E.g. *Od.* 1.44, 80, etc. The word is more commonly translated as "shining-eyed."
[64] Cf. *Pericles* 26.4, where the Samians tattoo owls on the heads of the captive Athenians. Also cf. *Lysander* 16.2, where owls have a further connection to Athens. Also, Demosthenes rhetorically asks why Athena associates herself with the most dire beasts, the owl, the serpent, and the demos (26.6).
[65] Cf. Stanford (1964) 25-42: the title of the Chapter is "The Favourite of Athene."
[66] In the *Iliad*, she urges him to stem the rush of Greek soldiers heading for the ships after Agamemnon's test (2.167-87); she intervenes to help Odysseus in the night raid of book ten, resulting in the death of

greatest triumph is notable for its heroic theme. Like the Homeric Odysseus, Themistocles has the goodwill of the heroes' goddess Athena and in a sense becomes the protagonist of his own epic.

Plutarch's description of the Battle of Salamis likewise contains strong heroic images. The battle focuses for the most part on two opponents: Themistocles, whom the Greek forces look to as a guiding champion (14.3), and the Persian admiral Ariamenes, a noble man (ἀγαθός) and by far the strongest and most just of the king's brothers (πολὺ κράτιστός τε καὶ δικαιότατος, 14.3). The Persian, in essence, serves as an example of a standard Homeric hero. The image is of two men engaged in combat, like two warrior leaders, and the use of the superlatives in describing Ariamenes builds up the man as a worthy Persian counterpart to Themistocles, the great Greek hero.[67] The Greeks watch Themistocles, for he was the one who "sees what especially needed to be done" (14.3).[68] As if to stress Themistocles' heroism, Ariamenes attempts to rain arrows and javelins upon him rather than to attack him in close conflict (14.3).[69] The description is reminiscent of Homeric battle scenes, recalling several attempts of archers to slay heroes

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Dolon (10.272-95); she also helps him and trips up Oïlean Ajax in the foot race in book twenty-three (23.768-83). In the *Odyssey*, she convinces the gods to let Odysseus return home (1.58-95), she transforms his heroic form into that of a beggar (13.429-40), helps him in his battle against the suitors (22.205-309), and ends the vengeful thoughts of the suitors' relatives (24.528-36).

[67] In fact, the epithet δικαιότατος is used twice by Homer, once to describe Cheiron the "most just of the Centaurs" (11.831), and once to describe the Abii, "the most just people" (13.5). Also, though the superlative "κράτιστος" is never used by Homer, he uses variations of "κρατερός" several times as epithets to gods and warriors. E.g. *Il.* 2.514 of Ares, 2.621 of Diores, 3.178 of Agamemnon, 4.400 of Diomedes, etc. For the images of Homeric warriors in battle, see Fenik (1968).

[68] The phrase, "ὡς ὁρῶντι μάλιστα τὸ συμφέρον," recalls *De Herod. malign.* 869F of Themistocles, when he is explicitly compared to Odysseus.

[69] Cf. similar attacks on heroes with missiles at *Il.* 12.44, 14.422, and *Alex.* 63, where Alexander actually is wounded by an arrow to the ribs.

from afar.[70] When Ariamenes falls at the spears of two Athenians, Ameinias and Socles, his body falls into the sea (14.4), like any of a number of corpses left in the Scamander by the Homeric Achilles.[71] The lofty description of the warriors and the death of the Persian leader add to the resemblance of the Battle of Salamis with the epic battles of the *Iliad.*

Further images re-shaped by Plutarch establish the image of the sea battle as an Iliadic one. As the fervor of the fight reaches its zenith, a cloud shifts from the sky over the ships, and shapes (εἴδωλα) of armed men appears to protect the Greek ships. "The Greeks supposed that [the shapes] were the Aeacides, which had been summoned by prayers for help before the battle" (15.2). The Aeacides refer to both Achilles and Ajax, the grandsons of Aeacus, whose family was closely connected to the island of Salamis. That ghosts of an ancient hero's ancestors and descendants should aid the Greeks adds a lofty, epic sentiment to the battle.[72] Also, the sudden movement of a cloud during the battle recalls the opening of hostilities in Book 3 of the *Iliad*, where the Greeks and Trojans create a roiling dust cloud that rises like a mist (*Il.* 3.10-14). Clouds also have close connections to divine aid, as Zeus has the epithet of "cloud-gatherer" (νεφεληγερέτα) and the gods and goddesses frequently make use of them to save their favorites on battlefield and to demonstrate their power.[73] Aided by divine assistance in the form of ghosts, the mysterious cloud, and the heroic figure of Themistocles, the

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[70] On archers in the Iliad, there is Teucer, who manages to kill many Trojans but not their great hero Hector in two opportunities (*Il.* 8.309-34, 15.442-70). Also see the episode of Pandarus, who shoots Menelaus at *Il.* 4.104-40, and of course, the prophecy that Achilles himself will be slain by an arrow (*Il.* 22.359-60).
[71] Cf. *Il.* 21.122-35. The image is also used much more elaborately by Statius in his *Thebaid* (9.256-539).
[72] Cf. the appearance of the Dioscuri during and immediately after the battle of Lake Regillus (*Cor* .3.5-6).
[73] E.g. *Il.* 5.344, 15.308, 21.6-7; also cf. *Od.* 12.404, where Zeus surrounds Odysseus's ship with a cloud before blasting it to smithereens. Cf. also Herodotus 8.65, where the cloud does not occur during the battle but was viewed as an omen well before it by Demaratus the Spartan and Dicaeus the Athenian, exiles who were sided with Xerxes.

Greeks defeat the Persians as Xerxes watches from his lofty seat (13.1), a second Priam from the *Iliad*, who observes the glorious Greeks from the walls and witnesses his greatest son's death.[74] Likewise, Xerxes helplessly watches his greatest brother Ariamenes die at the hands of the Athenians (14.3). The entire battle is portrayed as a dramatic conflict: the Greeks face (and eventually defeat) wicked transgressors who initiate an immoral war,[75] the scene contains several allusions to common events in the *Iliad*, each side has a heroic representative, and the divine demonstrate an active presence. Plutarch creates an epic battle.

Plutarch's vivid description of a heroic Themistocles at war on a battlefield of the sea is unique. In Herodotus, Themistocles gives a long speech and then drops from the narrative, as the historian primarily discusses the deeds of individual Persians (8.83-92).[76] Regarding the appearance of the divine cloud, Marr notes how in Herodotus it appears "on some unspecified day shortly before the battle, whereas Plutarch says it occurred on the same day, during the course of the fighting."[77] In Plutarch's narrative the cloud's appearance within the battle itself along with the ghosts of the Aeacides heightens the heroic effect of its appearance, for in Herodotus, no spirits aid the Greeks, though a ship is sent to fetch the images of Aeacus and his sons (8.64), which arrive with little fanfare (8.83). Herodotus merely mentions their return. Plutarch's portrait of Xerxes' brother is also quite different from Herodotus'. Plutarch highlights the man's excellence compared

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[74] Cf. *Il.* 3.153-244, where Priam watches the Greeks battle, asking Helen to identify them, 21.526-30, where Achilles slaughters the Trojans in his wrath, and 22.25-89, where Priam watches Achilles approach from the walls and begs Hector to return to the city.
[75] For the Trojans as the transgressors, morally responsible for the war, see Schein (1997) 353-54.
[76] The *Persae* of Aeschylus contains one or two lines possibly alluding to Themistocles (355, 402), but, as Hall (1996) 12 has noted, the work contains no names of any Greek commander.
[77] Marr (1998) 109.

to the rest of Xerxes' siblings,[78] whereas Herodotus only mentions that the king's brother Ariabignes dies (8.89), a man nowhere else mentioned in his work.[79] Plutarch's description of Xerxes watching the Battle of Salamis is a more vivid portrayal of Herodotus's statement that the Persians fought their best "fearing Xerxes, as each one thought that the king was watching him."[80] In each instance, Plutarch has enlivened Herodotus's narrative, giving a more vivid and heroic overtone.

Themistocles: Cleverness *pro bono publico*

Yet the story of Themistocles the hero is not a straightforward tale of a Homeric type of virtue over the inferior barbarians. He is a manipulator *par excellence* and a cunning strategist like Odysseus. The renown that Themistocles earns traditionally arises from his intelligence and trickery. It is the image of Themistocles as an Odysseus-like trickster that triumphs, thus making him susceptible to later denunciations as, in Plato's words, "a pretending statesman."[81] Far from conventional heroism and unveiled speech, Themistocles employs any means necessary to accomplish his victory over the Persians. Like Odysseus, Themistocles has the foresight and character not merely to win today's battles, but also tomorrow's. He is not a reactive and deadly fighter like Achilles, but he is also not the selfish, greedy manipulator of Herodotus. The deeds of Themistocles are

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[78] See above.
[79] Also, the brother that Plutarch mentions as having perished was Ariamenes, not Ariabignes (*Them.* 14.3).
[80] Herod. 8.86: "Πᾶς τις προθυμεόμενος καὶ δειμαίνων Ξέρξην, ἐδόκεέ τε ἕκαστος ἑωυτὸν θεήσασθαι βασιλέα." Plutarch's image of Xerxes watching the battle parallels Herodotus' description of the King's presence at the Battle of Thermopylae (7.212).
[81] Plato *Gorgias* 519A-C: "πολιτικοὶ προσποιοῦνται," like Miltiades, Cimon, and Pericles. For further scathing opinions of Pericles, see also Plato's *Alcibiades I.*

continually portrayed in a laudatory manner that corresponds with the positive view of Odysseus revealed in Plutarch's *Moralia*.

Plutarch demonstrates Themistocles' foresight by emphasizing how he is the first Athenian to recognize the threat of the Persians. While the rest of Greece celebrates the victory over the Persians at Marathon, Themistocles is more constrained:

> οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλοι πέρας ᾤοντο τοῦ πολέμου τὴν ἐν Μαραθῶνι τῶν βαρβάρων ἥτταν εἶναι, Θεμιστοκλῆς δ' ἀρχὴν μειζόνων ἀγώνων, ἐφ' οὓς ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τῆς ὅλης Ἑλλάδος ἤλειφε καὶ τὴν πόλιν ἤσκει, πόρρωθεν ἔτι προσδοκῶν τὸ μέλλον.
>
> The others thought that the besting of the barbarians at Marathon was the end of the war, but Themistocles considered it the start of greater struggles, for which he began to oil himself as a wrestler for the whole of Greece and to train his city, anticipating what was to come though it was a long way off.
>
> (*Themistocles* 3.5)

Themistocles here resolves upon his ultimate goal: the long-term success of Greece over Persia. The importance of the coming conflict is emphasized by the metaphor of the wrestler. His preparation as an athlete who oils and prepares himself for intense training suggests the anticipation of a great and climactic battle.[82] Themistocles takes the Athenians (and eventually all of Greece) under his wing and will guide them to victory. His heroic efforts and successes at Salamis become the after-effect of his early foresight.

Themistocles' political prudence is demonstrated almost immediately. He dares to come forward and passes a decree that employs the funds from the Laurean silver mines for the construction of Athens' first navy (4.1). Herodotus (7.144) and Thucydides (1.14.3) also credit Themistocles with this inspiration, though Plutarch adds that the war

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[82] Cf. *Pompey* 53.6, where Caesar and Pompey line up against each other after the death of Crassus. "When fate took away a potential successor to their struggle" (ἀγῶνος),

> "ἄτερος πρὸς τὸν ἕτερον
> ὑπαλείφεται τῷ χεῖρε θ' ὑποκονίεται."

with Aegina is only a pretext for preparing for the Persians, interpreting the actions of Themistocles more positively; Herodotus makes Themistocles' plan appear reactionary, while Thucydides implies that everyone knows the Persians were coming. Only Plutarch gives the full weight of foresight and preparation to Themistocles.

In fact, Plutarch further demonstrates Themistocles' foresight by relating how he urges the Athenians to abandon the city for the sea immediately (7.1), even before the oracular response of the "wooden wall" has been uttered (10.2).[83] As Frost notes, Plutarch's reading of the Athenians' abandonment of their city follows Herodotus' "except that he makes Themistocles responsible for the interpretation of the omen."[84] Themistocles' foresight becomes the cause of several subsequent clever ploys. But unlike the greedy Themistocles of Herodotus, who abuses his power to extort Athens' allies and his manipulation of words to make Xerxes beholden to him, Plutarch's Themistocles only schemes to aid his city. When the Athenians are about to leave the Piraeus, he devises a stratagem (στρατήγημα) that enables him to obtain the money needed to fund the war, confiscating it while pretending to look for a missing aegis of Athena (10.7). Here, Plutarch eschews the account of Aristotle, who claims the funds were allotted by the Areopagus, in favor of Cleidemus' account of a Themistoclean connivance.[85]

The most famous tricks that Themistocles utilizes are those directed against his enemies, which, like the ruses of Odysseus, attain victory and ensure survival. Stanford

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[83] Cf. Herodotus 7.143, where he credits Themistocles with the correction interpretation only *after* the oracle is uttered.
[84] Frost (1980) 116. Also cf. Marr (1998) 92.
[85] Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 23.1; cf. Frost (1980) 120.

considers such deceptions those "told to avoid a greater evil."[86] At Salamis, Themistocles sends Sicinnus to persuade Xerxes to surround the Greek navy, convincing the king to commit to a battle in narrow straights (12.3). When Xerxes falls for the gambit, he allows Themistocles and Aristides to work together in order to prepare the Greeks for the coming battle (12.8). After the battle, Themistocles devises a plan (μηχανᾶσθαι) to convince Xerxes to flee (16.3). He sends Arnaces with the false message that the Greeks are about to destroy the bridge at the Hellespont (16.5). Plutarch's version of these events greatly differs from Herodotus', who both deprives Themistocles of credit and makes him guilty of far more self-serving motivations. In his version, the plan to battle at Salamis is the brainchild of Mnesiphilus, but Themistocles presents the idea to Eurybiades as if it were his own (8.57-58). Also, after the Greek fleet's victory, Herodotus states that Xerxes has already decided to flee, and Themistocles, discovering that, contrary to his advice, the Greeks will not destroy the bridge at the Hellespont, tells his companions that it would be a bad decision to destroy the bridge after all – again as if it were his own idea (8.109). He subsequently sends a false message to Xerxes, via Sicinnus, who informs Xerxes that Themistocles has turned back the Greeks (8.110). Herodotus thus deprives Themistocles not only of his good-spirited cooperation with Aristides, but turns him into a conniving manipulator, who only cares for himself. In contrast, Plutarch's Themistocles lies for the benefit of the people, *not* himself.

When the war is over and Athens turns her inimical eye upon the rival Spartans, Themistocles instructs the Athenians to rebuild the city walls and misleads

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[86] Stanford (1964) 20.

(παρακρουσάμενος) the Spartan ephors in order to effect their completion (19.1). As Frost notes, Themistocles "chose to sacrifice [his status as a "friend" to Sparta] in one moment for the advantage of his city."[87] Plutarch's Themistocles is willing to forfeit not only personal honors, but even his life on behalf of the state, as the possibility of punishment at Spartan hands is quite real (19.2-3). His self-sacrificing image in Plutarch could not be more different from his selfish, manipulative image in Herodotus. Themistocles' desire for success at the possible expense of his life and heroic reputation are similar to Odysseus, who frequently uses underhanded methods in his attempts at victory and success – as in, for example, his defeat of the Cyclops and the ruse of the Trojan Horse – instead of the standard Homeric *tête-à-tête* heroism, which, though bolder and more eminently respected, may not accomplish total victory; in fact, such conventional virtue leads only to death in the *Iliad.*

In fact, these ruses of Themistocles have Odyssean echoes. When Themistocles sends Sicinnus and Arnaces to the Persians to fool Xerxes into doing what benefits the Greeks, one recalls the similar role of Sinon, who was sent – presumably by Odysseus[88] – to persuade the Trojans that the Greeks had fled, leaving the Wooden Horse as a dedication to Athena.[89] Also, Themistocles' risky gambit at Sparta that allows the Athenians to complete the city walls recalls the tale of when Odysseus went into Troy with Menelaus in an embassy to ask for the return of Helen (*Il.* 3.204-24). Themistocles

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[87] Frost (1968) 119. Marr (1998) 119 also notes that "Plutarch does not supply us...with the names of the other envoys, and the impression he gives is that Themistocles alone was responsible for this act of gross deception of Athens' recent ally." Marr is taking this act negatively, whereas I believe that Plutarch, like Thucydides (1.90-93), finds it admirable, and foresees the very real probability of Athens-Sparta conflict in the future. Cf. Hornblower (1991) 136-37.

[88] See note 60 above.

[89] Cf. *Aeneid* 2.77-198, [Palaephatus] 16, Quintus Smyrnus *Posthomerica* 12.242-13.29, Scholiast on Lycophr., 344.

shares not only the tactics of Odysseus, but also his goals: as Lattimore states, "A single purpose guides Odysseus in the *Iliad.* The expedition against Troy must succeed.... [T]his is the end toward which the demoralized army must be rallied, Thersites chastened, Achilles propitiated, Agamemnon braced...Not the noblest or stateliest of Homer's heroes, he is the one who survives."[90] Themistocles' acts recall not only an Odysseus-like craft and cunning, but also an Odysseus-like effort to help the public good.[91] Thus, when Themistocles meets with misfortune, the reader will have these positive qualities of flexibility and an self-sacrificing affinity for his fellow citizens in mind.

Themistocles' Exile and Death

Eventually, the successes and φιλοτιμία of Themistocles breed their inevitable envy, and he is ostracized from Athens (*Them.* 22.4). Thus begins, in the words of Lenardon, Themistocles' odyssey,[92] as Plutarch's hero is compelled to wander from land to land seeking peace and is forbidden to return. Yet, his tale of woe never becomes tragic or lamentable. As Duff notes, "One should, even in misfortune, concentrate on the good things that are still at hand, rather than on what has been lost."[93] Such will prove to be Plutarch's Themistocles in exile. At first he resides in Argos, content to wait out his

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[90] Lattimore (1951) 50-51.
[91] Cf. Marincola (1997), "[Odysseus'] fundamental concern with the soldiers in the *Iliad* stands in stark contrast to the disdain of Achilles which is responsible for the deaths of so many."
[92] See note 19 above. Also called "Themistocles' Romance" by Frost (1980) 209; Marr (1998) 147. Cf. also Podlecki (1975) 41-42, who notes, "The last part of the story, Themistocles in Asia, encouraged writers, including the usually level-headed Thucydides, to discard historical reporting for romantic fantasy."
[93] Duff (1999) 106. Cf. *De tranq. animi* 468F-469D.

ten-year ostracism (23.1), but is approached by the Spartan Pausanias to join him and the Persians in an effort to take revenge on the Greeks (23.2-3). In Plutarch's account, Themistocles refuses, but becomes unworthily implicated with Pausanias as a Medizer anyway (23.3-6),[94] and must flee to Corcyra, then to Epirus, where he begs for asylum from his former enemy, King Admetus (24.1-2). Persecuted by his political enemies, he eventually arrives at the court of the Persian king (26-28).[95] Plutarch's account of Themistocles' arrival and prostration before the king – which diverges from that of Thucydides, who claims only that Themistocles sends a letter[96] – shares a pattern with the episodes in the *Odyssey* surrounding the Phaeacians (*Od.* 7.142-78).[97] The two men arrive by sea, they keep their names secret for a period of time, and their appearances and revelations amaze (θαυμάζω) their respective royal benefactors.[98]

Furthermore, when the king presses Themistocles for information, the exile insists that he needs to learn the Persian language first, since words are like "varied tapestries (ποικίλοις στρώμασιν): they display their pictures only when spread out, but leave them incomprehensible when rolled up" (29.4).[99] The word "ποίκιλος" may recall the

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[94] Thucydides 1.135.2-3 records his implication in the crime without comment. Herodotus 8.111, seems to know about it, and states that Themistocles suspected he might be in trouble with the Athenians someday. Ephorus rejects Themistocles' guilt (cf. *De Herod. malign.* 855A, *FGrH* 70 F 189), as does Diodorus (11.54.3-4). On the subject of Themistocles' pre-exiling Medizing, see McMullin (2001).

[95] Plutarch is particularly tentative to say whether the king is Xerxes or Artaxerxes, and though he seems to agree with Thucydides that it is the latter (*Them.* 27.1), he never refers to him by name.

[96] Thuc. 1.137.3-4. Cf. Nepos *Them.* 9.1-4.

[97] Other scholars consider Themistocles' humble begging before Admetus more akin to Odysseus' prostration before Arete and Alcinous. The scene, however, with child and no verbal echoes, seems less likely to me. Cf. Lenardon (1978) 129. Larmour (1992) 4199 considers this scene similar to the confrontation between Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, and Telephus.

[98] Cf. *Them.* 28.6, where the king is described as θαυμάσας, and *Od.* 7.145, where the court of Alcinous look upon him and wonder (θαύμαζον).

[99] At 29.2, the Persian Roxanes also calls him a "cunning Greek snake" (ὄφις Ἕλλην ὁ ποίκιλος).

Homeric term "ποικιλομήτης" of Odysseus, the only hero to receive such an epithet.[100] The king approves of Themistocles' simile and grants Themistocles request for a year's delay (ἐνιαυτός) to learn Persian (29.5). Similarly, Odysseus, when at the court of Alcinous, cunningly asks to remain among the Phaeacians for a year (ἐνιαυτός), so that he might acquire more gifts (*Od.* 11.355-59). Themistocles thus manipulates the king and adapts to the situations well enough to be welcomed. Though he finds himself in the court of two of his former enemies, Admetus and the Persian king, by relying on his Odysseus-like intelligence and flexibility he not only survives but flourishes, as evidenced by the amount of wealth and power he acquires in Persia, gaining one city each for his "bread, wine, and fish"(ἄρτον καὶ οἶνον καὶ ὄψον), a phrase which also recalls a line from the *Odyssey*.[101]

In fact, Themistocles' success in the Persian court becomes proverbial. As Plutarch notes, Persian kings later would promise in writing that a Greek adviser would have more influence with them than Themistocles did (29.9). His success proves to be connected to that of Odysseus by the Stoic philosopher Musonius Rufus:

> ὁ γοῦν Ὀδυσσεὺς παντὸς φυγάδος ὡς ἄν τις εἴποι ἀθλιώτερον διακείμενος καὶ μόνος ὢν καὶ γυμνὸς καὶ ναυαγός, ὅμως ἀφικόμενος εἰς ἀνθρώπους ἀγνῶτας τοὺς Φαίακας ἐδυνήθη χρηματίσασθαι ἀφθόνως. Θεμιστοκλῆς δ' ἐπεὶ ἔφευγεν οἴκοθεν, οὐ παρὰ μὴ φίλους μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ πολεμίους καὶ βαρβάρους ἐλθὼν τοὺς Πέρσας, τρεῖς ἔλαβε πόλεις δῶρον, Μυοῦντα καὶ Μαγνησίαν καὶ Λάμψακον, ὥστε ἀπὸ τούτων βιοῦν.
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> "Thus Odysseus being placed most wretchedly, as someone might say, than every exile, being alone and naked and shipwrecked, nevertheless arriving among the obscure Phaeacians he was able to make money aplenty. And Themistocles, when he fled from home, going among the Persians, he received three cities as a

[100] *Il.* 11.481, *Od.* 3.162, 7.167, 13.292, 22.114, 201, 280.
[101] *Od.* 3.479-80: "σῖτον καὶ οἶνον ἔθηκεν | ὄψα τε...

> gift, namely Myus and Magnesia and Lampsacus, not from friends, but from enemies and barbarians, so that he might make a living from them."
>
> (*Discourse* 9.65)

Themistocles' exile and success in Persia are connected rhetorically to Odysseus' success with the Phaeacians. Similar patterns, diction, and successful financial results contribute to making Themistocles' exile in Persia resemble that of Odysseus.

Still, despite Themistocles' Odyssean-like cleverness, foresight, and self-control, he will not share Odysseus's happy homecoming, yet the end of his life proves to be far from tragic or disgraceful. The Athenians, who are aiding an Egyptian revolt against the Persians, send their ships under Cimon as far as Cilicia and Cyprus, and so the king commands Themistocles to repay him (31.4). But, as Plutarch notes:

> οὔτε δι' **ὀργήν** τινα παροξυνθεὶς κατὰ τῶν πολιτῶν, οὔτ' ἐπαρθεὶς **τιμῇ** τοσαύτῃ καὶ δυνάμει πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον, ἀλλ' ἴσως μὲν οὐδ' ἐφικτὸν ἡγούμενος τὸ ἔργον, ἄλλους τε μεγάλους τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἐχούσης στρατηγοὺς τότε καὶ Κίμωνος ὑπερφυῶς εὐημεροῦντος ἐν τοῖς πολεμικοῖς, τὸ δὲ πλεῖστον αἰδοῖ τῆς τε δόξης τῶν πράξεων τῶν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν τροπαίων ἐκείνων, ἄριστα βουλευσάμενος ἐπιθεῖναι τῷ βίῳ τὴν τελευτὴν πρέπουσαν.
>
> "Neither was he provoked by any **anger** towards the citizens, nor stirred by so great **honor** and power for war, but perhaps not considering the deed possible, as Greece had other great generals then and Cimon was incredibly successful in war. What is most likely, though, feeling shame for the reputation of his deeds and trophies, considering the matter in the best possible way he put a fitting end to his life."
>
> (*Themistocles* 31.5)

Themistocles, denied the *nostos* that Odysseus receives, exhibits no anger towards his fellow citizens, and would rather die than oppose them. Plutarch's Themistocles possesses the cleverness, intelligence, determination, and foresight of Odysseus as well as the hero's harmony of spirit, where the rational and irrational coexist happily, the most

important of all qualities for a statesman to possess.[102] What perhaps expresses this fact most of all is that Themistocles, renowned for his φιλοτιμία, is *not* induced by a desire for more τιμή to take up arms against his homeland. Unlike many other statesmen, he avoids the pitfall that leads to disgrace. He is content with his lot, and, like a philosopher, rationally counsels with himself (βουλευσάμενος), and sets a fitting end (πρέπουσαν) upon his life and accomplishments.[103]

The death of Themistocles, then, is depicted in a favorable manner. Plutarch's version of his death differs from that of Thucydides and Nepos, who both assert that Themistocles dies as a result of illness.[104] Plutarch, in contrast, portrays Themistocles as a patriotic Athenian: he never truly betrays Athens, and when summoned to repay the Persian king in order to aid his efforts against the Athenians, Themistocles avoids this shameful service by killing himself.[105] As Socrates states in the *Apology*, it is better to seek death rather than disgrace, if the state so decrees (28C-D). Themistocles, unable to accomplish an Odyssean homecoming, does the next best thing by resolving upon a peaceful, Socratic death. He prefers to die with his principles and patriotism intact than to live with the disgrace of harming his countrymen.[106] In death, Plutarch's Themistocles reveals himself to be not the self-serving money-monger of Herodotus, but a self-

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[102] Cf. *De virt. mor.* 446D. See also Duff (1999) 89-92.
[103] Contrast Themistocles' suicide to Marius' embarrassing efforts to regain his lost youth out of a desire to get the Mithridatic command (*Mar.* 34.5-7). See also below.
[104] Thuc. 1.138.4, Nepos *Them.* 10.4. Nepos admits to having heard the "bull's blood" rumor.
[105] As Podlecki (1975) 138 notes, "Ambition at the last gives way to patriotism."
[106] Cf. the boast of Pericles at *Per.* 38.4, that "no Athenian has dressed in mourning because of me"; Themistocles also compares favorably in that his dispute with Aristides is not irreconcilable, as Plutarch also notes of Pericles, who "never considered a foe an incurable enemy" (*Per.* 39.1). See also Stadter (1989) 345-46.

controlled, philosophical statesman. It is this aspect of Themistocles that most resembles Odysseus.

Themistocles' heroism – due to both cleverness and virtue – is devoted to the benefit of Athens to the end of his life. Faced with the choice of opposing his beloved city or killing himself, Themistocles chooses the latter and merits Plutarch's explicit praise. In fact, the entire *Life* echoes the positive interpretation of Themistocles' suicide. For example, though falsehood and trickery are generally considered in a negative light,[107] Plutarch avoids using derogatory words like "deceptions" (ἀπαταί) or "intrigues" (ἐπιβουλαί) when discussing the ploys of Themistocles.[108] The plan to send Sicinnus to Xerxes in order to persuade him to attack immediately is dubbed with the neutral term of a "πραγματεία," a "business" or "affair" (12.3). When Aristides recommends that the Greeks chase Xerxes out of Europe, Themistocles says that they must "consider and invent" (σκοπεῖν καὶ μηχανᾶσθαι) a way to get the Persians out (16.3). Plutarch states that events prove the "good sense" (φρόνησις) of this scheme when the Greeks barely defeat the smaller force of Mardonius at Plataea the next year (16.5). The sum of Plutarch's interpretations of Themistocles' craftiness is favorable.

These positive images of Themistocles as the cunning general have largely been drawn from both Herodotus and Thucydides, who, as noted above, saw him as an

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[107] For moralistic points of view of military trickery, see Wheeler (1988) 93-110; also see Detienne and Vernant (1978) 12, on the association of cleverness (specifically μῆτις) with "despised" actions, and Plato *Laws* 823D-824A, where certain types of clever hunting are associated with laziness.

[108] For some examples of Plutarch's negative views of the words "ἀπαταί" or "ἐπιβουλαί," see *De Herod. malign.* 854E and 861E, respectively. Plutarch does equate Themistocles at one point to a tragedian making use of machinery (μηχανή) to convince the people to side with him (10.1-2). This comparison seems to me ambiguous, though it should be noted that the "tragic" in Plutarch has long been considered negative. See de Lacy (1952) 62, and Plutarch's denunciation of Herodotus as being a "tragic" writer at *De Herod. malign.* 870B.

Odysseus-like character.[109] Still, Plutarch more closely adheres to the positive image of Themistocles portrayed by Thucydides. Thucydides admires him for his intuitive foresight (1.138.3), whose accomplishments, notably the building of a fleet in anticipation of the Medes (1.14.3) and the building of Athens' walls in defiance of Sparta's wishes (1.90-91), are mentioned without negative terms. Yet Plutarch's image of Themistocles diverges from Thucydides in two ways: first, he credits Themistocles with some form of education or reformation.[110] Secondly, Plutarch describes the death of Themistocles as a noble suicide rather than through disease, presenting his death as a willful, beneficial choice. Plutarch thus gives all possible credit to Themistocles for Athens' success against Persia and Sparta, expanding upon the interpretation of Thucydides and emphasizing his own positive view of Themistocles' career and death.

The salvation of Greece is Themistocles' greatest accomplishment, the magnitude of which echoes the victory of the Greeks at Troy. As Herodotus and Thucydides vie with Homer in the importance of their works, so too does Plutarch rival them in his *Life of Themistocles*.[111] Influenced by the historiographical and rhetorical tradition, Plutarch composes a portrait of Themistocles that possesses the characteristics of Odysseus in a similarly positive aspect. Instead of the deceptive and greedy swindler of Herodotus, Plutarch has taken the revered Thucydidean hero, glorifying and defending him in a manner similar to his defense of Odysseus in the *Moralia*, adding many dramatic and colorful elements to an already positive portrait endorsed by Thucydides, elements, I believe, that suggest an Odyssean influence. Like the crafty, long-suffering, and

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[109] Martin (1961) 330.
[110] Cf. Martin (1961) 330-31, esp. n. 21. Duff (forthcoming) does not attribute any complete education to Themistocles.
[111] Plutarch is far more conscious of Thucydides, however, in his *Nicias* (1.1-5) and *Pericles* (9.1-5).

beneficent Odysseus, Themistocles too becomes a hero decidedly worthy of emulation. This emulation reaches its peak at the end of the *Life*: when Themistocles must choose between betraying his nation or committing suicide, he prefers the honorable, fitting death over the disgrace of harming his homeland. For Plutarch, Themistocles compares favorably to his traditional, Homeric predecessor. Plutarch will model the parallel *Life of Camillus* on Achilles to similar effect.

Camillus and Achilles

Plutarch's *Camillus*, as opposed to his *Themistocles*, is a more conventionally heroic figure. The two statesmen make for an odd comparison in many ways.[112] Themistocles' life occurs with the rise of Athens in the Classical Age, and Camillus is part of a nigh-mythic Roman past. Yet, as Larmour notes, Plutarch draws five main parallels between the two men, insisting that Plutarch manipulated the source material to make them match.[113] Both heroes are from undistinguished families,[114] both effect reconciliations between citizens and other groups, both save nations in time of crisis and accomplish post-war rebuilding, both excite envy in their people, and both are connected with oracles, portents, and female divinities.[115] Whereas the historical tradition had attached Themistocles to Odysseus,[116] Camillus' siege and destruction of Veii have been

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[112] In fact, Cicero prefers to compare Themistocles with Coriolanus at *Brutus* 41-43, in part because their respective wars (Persian and Volscian) were occurring at roughly the same time. Cf. also Podlecki (1975) 116.
[113] Larmour (1992) 4180.
[114] For discussion of Themistocles' allegedly humble birth, see Marr (1998) 69, Frost (1980) 61-63, Larmour (1992) 4181-82, and the contradictory account in Nepos, *Them.* 2.1.
[115] Larmour (1992) 4177-78.
[116] See above, pp. 62-67.

connected to the destruction of Troy,[117] and Livy also compares Camillus to Achilles after this war (5.32.9). Plutarch draws upon this tradition, making Camillus a doublet of Achilles. Unlike Themistocles, whose banishment occurs after his greatest triumph, Camillus effects his greatest triumph, like Achilles, *after* his return. As Themistocles frequently draws parallels to Odysseus, Camillus just as often recalls Achilles. Still, the comparison is not altogether straightforward, for Plutarch's portrait of Camillus features several episodes of restraint which will oppose the overweening and excessive passion of Achilles. Though Camillus possesses many traits of Achilles, his character will prove to be tempered with moderation.

The references to Iliadic, heroic imagery pervade the *Life*. In the second chapter, Plutarch records how Camillus fights a battle, and despite a terrible missile wound he not only engages but routs the best (ἀρίστοις) the enemy had to offer (2.2). More significant is Camillus' siege against Veii. As stated above,[118] traditionally the Roman-Veii conflict was related in a Homeric context. In fact, Plutarch's description of Veii is quite lofty indeed:

> ἦν δὲ πρόσχημα τῆς Τυρρηνίας ἡ πόλις, ὅπλων μὲν ἀριθμῷ καὶ πλήθει τῶν στρατευομένων οὐκ ἀποδέουσα τῆς Ῥώμης, πλούτῳ δὲ καὶ βίων ἁβρότητι καὶ τρυφαῖς καὶ πολυτελείαις ἀγαλλομένη πολλοὺς καὶ καλοὺς ἀγῶνας ἠγωνίσατο περὶ δόξης καὶ δυναστείας πολεμοῦσα Ῥωμαίοις....ἐπαράμενοι δὲ τείχη μεγάλα καὶ καρτερὰ καὶ τὴν πόλιν ὅπλων καὶ βελῶν καὶ σίτου καὶ παρασκευῆς ἁπάσης ἐμπλήσαντες, ἀδεῶς ὑπέμενον τὴν πολιορκίαν, μακρὰν μὲν οὖσαν, οὐχ ἧττον δὲ τοῖς πολιορκοῦσιν ἐργώδη καὶ χαλεπὴν γενομένην.
>
> The city was a bulwark for Etruria, on the one hand in its number and abundance of warriors not inferior to Rome, but exulting in their wealth, daily opulence, licentiousness, and luxuries they fought many excellent contests for reputation

[117] See Livy 5.4.11, also Larmour (1992) 4199, Ogilvie (1965) 637, Kraus (1994) esp. 271-73
[118] See previous note.

> and glory in making war with the Romans...building up great and mighty walls and filling the city with weapons, missiles, wheat, and every provision, without want they endured the siege, though it was long and became no less toilsome and difficult for the besiegers.
>
> (*Camillus* 2.6-7)

So might one have prosaically described Troy as she warded the Greeks from her walls. As Achilles notes in the *Iliad*, once too Priam's Troy had been pre-eminent by reason of its "wealth and sons" (πλούτῳ τε καὶ υἱάσι, 24.545). Also, the stress upon the lofty walls of Veii recall the epithets of Troy as "well-walled" (εὐτείχεος) and "high-gated" (ὑψίπυλος)[119] as well as the fact that Troy's walls were never scaled but rather infiltrated. The prolonged siege of Veii thus establishes an epic context for the eventual accomplishments of Camillus, who as the hero of Veii becomes the equivalent of a hero of Troy.

In fact, while the Romans besiege Veii, a prodigy occurs that perhaps further implies a connection to the *Iliad*: the Alban lake overflows its banks in spite of the incredibly dry weather, causing terror among the Romans situated there (3.1-3). The prodigy may correspond to the rising of the river Xanthus against the destruction of Troy. Like Xanthus, who attempts to destroy Achilles, the Alban Lake, according to a soothsayer, is the only thing preventing the Romans from sacking Veii. According to the soothsayer apprehended by the Romans, Veii will stand so long as the river emptying out of the lake reaches the sea (4.4).[120] In the *Iliad*, Xanthus complains of being choked off from the sea (*Il.* 21.213-18), and it is not until his defeat at the urging of Hera and Hephaestus that his attempt to kill Achilles and prevent the sacking of Troy is staved off.

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[119] For εὐτείχειος, see *Il.* 1.128, 2.112, 2.287, 5.715, 8.240, 9.19, 16.56; for ὑψίπυλος, see 16.697, 21.543.

[120] Plutarch's account here differs from Livy's, in which the soothsayer says that the lake must be drained rather than diverted from the sea (5.16.9-11).

The river actually swears an oath not to aid the Trojans in their last days (21.368-75). The possible connection of the flood of the Alban Lake to the Xanthus not only underscores the Iliadic tones of *Camillus*, but also adds echoes of epic divinities to the war, much like the omen of the owl before the Battle of Salamis does in the *Life of Themistocles*.[121]

After the Romans divert the river from the lake, the Senate appoints Camillus dictator in the tenth year of the war (5.1). Once more Plutarch suggests a parallel with the Trojan War, for in the tenth year Troy was doomed to fall.[122] Veii falls, and Camillus' men then plunder the city, ravaging Veii with abandon (5.7), recalling the dramatic and deadly sacking of Troy.[123] Yet instead of the mindless anger and retribution that Achilles visits upon the Trojans after Patroclus' death in the *Iliad*, Camillus takes no part in the pillage and instead begs for no misfortune to happen to his men nor to his enemies, but that whatever the gods decree as punishment may fall upon himself for the devastation of Veii (5.7-9). Plutarch tempers his portrait of Camillus after sacking Veii after a ten-year siege in order to foreshadow his later calmness. Unlike the *Iliad*, which culminates in the disgraceful desecration of Hector behind Achilles' chariot, the war against Veii ends peaceably due to the piety and self-control of Camillus. Plutarch's hero demonstrates restraint towards his enemies.

Despite his victory, just as in the case of Themistocles, Camillus' success excites the citizens' envy – in this instance, he simulates a tyrant when he enters Rome driven by

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[121] *Them.* 13.1; also see above, p. 76.
[122] Cf. *Il.* 2.328.
[123] Cf. Vergil *Aen.* 2.259-805.

four white horses (7.1-3).[124] He also commits the sin of allowing the soldiers to take all the plunder from Veii, though he had promised a tithe of one-tenth to Apollo (7.6-7). As Mossman notes, Camillus is "guilty of going to extremes" in forgetting to donate the plunder to Apollo,[125] and angers the citizens, who Plutarch admits have a "logical, though not very just ground" (οὐκ ἄλογον, εἰ καὶ μὴ πάνυ δικαίαν ἀρχήν) for complaint (7.6). When Camillus recalls the booty from the soldiers, they grow angry and contentious with him (8.1-2). These complaints against Camillus are somewhat valid, but ultimately illegitimate, as are the accusations of the Athenians against Themistocles.[126] Plutarch describes a Rome whose citizens are about to have a row with her greatest man, as the *Iliad* presents a confrontation between the monarch of the Greeks and his greatest hero Achilles (1.57-244). Yet the Achilles figure of Camillus will be maltreated not by a tyrannical and foolish Agamemnon, but by the foolish *demos*, which cares more for its own profit than whether or not it behaves justly.

In fact, Rome's confrontation with Camillus comes after an act of incredible justness and kindness. Having decided to avert Roman civil strife with a war against the Falerians (9.2-3), Camillus creates hope of further plunder among the citizenry. As the siege progresses, however, a perfidious pedagogue approaches him from the city with the Falerians' children in hopes of earning a reward (10.3-4):

> δεινὸν οὖν ἀκούσαντι τὸ ἔργον ἐφάνη Καμίλλῳ· καὶ πρὸς τοὺς παρόντας εἰπὼν ὡς χαλεπὸν μέν ἐστι πόλεμος καὶ διὰ πολλῆς ἀδικίας καὶ βιαίων περαινόμενος ἔργων, εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ πολέμων τινὲς ὅμως νόμοι τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ἀνδράσι, καὶ τὸ νικᾶν οὐχ οὕτω διωκτέον ὥστε μὴ φεύγειν τὰς ἐκ κακῶν καὶ ἀσεβῶν ἔργων χάριτας – ἀρετῇ γὰρ οἰκείᾳ τὸν

[124] The horses and the chariot may also recall Achilles' chariot in the *Iliad* (16.145-54), though Achilles' only has three horses: the immortals Xanthus and Balius, and the mortal horse Pedasus in the side-traces.
[125] Mossman (1991) 112.
[126] Cf. pp. 84-85 above.

μέγαν στρατηγόν, οὐκ ἀλλοτρίᾳ θαρροῦντα κακίᾳ χρῆναι στρατεύειν.

> Camillus found this a terrible deed, and saying to those that were present that war is a difficult thing and is accomplished through much injustice and violent deeds, nevertheless noble men adhere to some customs in war, and victory is not to be sought in such a way that we do not avoid the favors of evil and unholy men – and furthermore, that a great general campaigns by using his own virtue and not presuming to employ another man's baseness.
>
> (*Camillus* 10.5)

Camillus then sends the teacher back to the city, whipped by the very children he had attempted to betray (10.5). The Falerians, overwhelmed with admiration, sign a peace treaty and avoid suffering the sack that marked the fall of Veii. The Falerians confess that they were "bested rather in virtue than might" (10.7). The Roman citizens, in contrast to the relieved and generous response of the Falerians, are distraught that Camillus denies them another opportunity for pillaging. Plutarch notes that the Romans, already angered at the return of Apollo's tithe – similar to how Agamemnon is incensed at the loss of Chryseis after her father Chryse prays to Apollo[127] – now seek any sort of pretext to punish their successful general (12.2). Despite victory and just actions, Camillus becomes a pariah. The sacker of Veii, who wishes for misfortune to befall him rather than his citizens, and the general who convinces the Falerians to make peace without bloodshed, finds himself maltreated, much like not only his parallel Themistocles but especially Achilles of the *Iliad*. Like Achilles Camillus is disgusted that though he is the greatest boon to his city, his actions and virtues are brushed aside: rather than become a laughing-stock (καταγέλαστον) "he decided to leave the city and go into

[127] For Chryse's prayer to Apollo and Apollo's reaction, see *Iliad* 1.37-54.

exile out of anger" (ὀργήν, 12.3).[128] Camillus' rage foretells disaster for Rome, much like the anger (μῆνιν) of Achilles portends disaster for the Greeks in the *Iliad.*

The comparison of Camillus to Achilles now reaches its zenith; as Camillus leaves Rome, he makes the following prayer:

> ἐκεῖ δ' ἐπέστη, καὶ μεταστραφεὶς ὀπίσω καὶ τὰς χεῖρας ἀνατείνας πρὸς τὸ Καπιτώλιον ἐπεύξατο τοῖς θεοῖς, εἰ μὴ δικαίως, ἀλλ' ὕβρει δήμου καὶ φθόνῳ προπηλακιζόμενος ἐκπίπτει, ταχὺ Ῥωμαίους μετανοῆσαι καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις φανεροὺς γενέσθαι δεομένους αὐτοῦ καὶ ποθοῦντας Καμίλλον.
>
> And there he stood, and turning back around and stretching his hands towards the Capitoline he prayed to the gods, if not justly, but with the violence and envy of the people he was now being driven out, that the Romans might quickly change their minds and it would become clear to all the people that they have need of him and would yearn for Camillus.
>
> (*Camillus* 12.4)

Plutarch immediately notes how Camillus' prayer and subsequent events that happen at Rome echo both Achilles' invocation to his mother Thetis and the disasters that prevail upon his fellow Greeks (*Cam.* 13.1). Achilles says:

> "τῶν νῦν μιν μνήσασα παρέζεο καὶ λάβε γούνων,
> αἴ κέν πως ἐθέλῃσιν ἐπὶ Τρώεσσιν ἀρῆξαι,
> τοὺς δὲ κατὰ πρύμνας τε καὶ ἀμφ' ἅλα ἔλσαι Ἀχαιοὺς
> κτεινομένους, ἵνα πάντες ἐπαύρωνται βασιλῆος,
> γνῷ δὲ καὶ Ἀτρεΐδης εὐρὺ κρείων Ἀγαμέμνον
> ἣν ἄτην, ὅ τ' ἄριστον Ἀχαιῶν οὐδὲν ἔτισεν."
>
> "And recalling these acts of yours to [Zeus] sit beside him and take his knees,
> that he might somehow intend to give aid to the Trojans,
> but for the Greeks, to pen them in among their ships and the sea
> as they are killed, so that all may have benefit of their king,
> and also that Atreides, broad-ruling Agamemnon, might know
> his folly, and what he paid the best of the Achaeans was nothing."
>
> (*Iliad* 1.407-12)

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[128] Cf. Livy 5.32.8-9. Plutarch explicitly adds that Camillus was angry, though anger and resentment are certainly implied in Livy's tale.

As Plutarch states, though the prayer of Camillus immediately becomes true, the result was "not sweet to him, but painful" (*Cam.* 13.2), much as the fulfillment of Achilles' own curse will cause him the pain of losing Patroclus.[129] Yet the prayer of Camillus contains the condition that he only wishes for misfortune to befall Rome *if they had driven him out unjustly*. Camillus thus differs from Achilles, who cares not for justice or consequences, only for his own reputation and honor. Camillus' invocation of the gods, though perhaps rash and fueled by anger, is more moderately and carefully stated.

In fact, Camillus' prayer recalls one made by Themistocles' great rival Aristides. Aristides, upon his ostracism from Athens at the instigation of Themistocles, makes a prayer that stands in stark contrast to that of Achilles. As Aristides leaves Athens, he too extends his hands (χεῖρας ἀνατείνας) and begs the opposite of Achilles (ηὔξατο τὴν ἐναντίαν ὡς ἔοικεν εὐχὴν τῷ Ἀχιλλεῖ), that at no time should it happen to the Athenians that the people might have need to remember Aristides (*Arist.* 7.8). There is therefore a sort of double mirror reflecting around Themistocles. Both Camillus and Aristides invoke the Achilles prayer, but Camillus makes the curse more moderate – requiring that the supplicant had been unjustly wronged – whereas Aristides makes an invocation begging that the city *not* be punished at all. As discussed above, when Camillus begs that the gods may focus the punishment for the unjust and intemperate looting of Veii upon him, he again prays for justice and retribution. Camillus, in drawing a comparison to Achilles as well as Aristides, represents a man of justice and one who looks to the gods to dictate fate as they see fit.

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[129] Esp. *Il.* 18.21-35.

Plutarch's image of Camillus at this point diverges from that of Livy. The image of Camillus as adversary of the plebeans is heartily affirmed by Livy,[130] but is completely dropped by Plutarch. As Coudry notes the image "se trouve intégrée dans une image différente et plus riche, celle d'un Camille incarnation de la *moderatio*, qu'elle contribue à mettre en valeur."[131] In contrast to Livy's Camillus, who consciously provokes and openly rails against the people,[132] Plutarch creates a Camillus who is primarily wronged by the people, a man who consciously does well by his city and is driven into exile, despite every attempt to be moderate. His prayer is more moderate than the dire prayer of Achilles, and his exile, too, will have results far different from those brought about by the self-serving and destructive anger of Achilles.

The events that follow Camillus' prayer continue to correspond to the events of the *Iliad*. First, like Homer's Achilles, Camillus vanishes from the action for several chapters as Plutarch describes the origins and early events of the war with the Gauls.[133] It is not until the Romans have endured several disasters at the hands of the Gauls and are hemmed within the Capitol that they finally approach Camillus with an offer to return to Rome and take command against the Gauls (*Cam.* 24.3). At this point Camillus resembles Achilles (*Il.* 9.345-429) in refusing the Romans' first request that he return. But Camillus insists that his appointment as dictator must be officially passed by the senate, according to custom (κατὰ τὸν νόμον, *Cam.* 24.3) – again, he refuses the Romans not out of concern for his reputation, but that he is appointed rightly and

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[130] Cf. Livy 5.25, 29-30.
[131] Coudry (2001) 79.
[132] See above note 130.
[133] *Cam.* 13-23.2. Cf. Frost (1980) 168, who laments the fact that Plutarch's *Themistocles* abruptly ends all discussion of the Persian War in the middle of a chapter. See also Stadter (1982) 359, who discusses the differences in historical detail of the two *Lives*.

lawfully. Upon receiving news of his official designation as dictator, Camillus rushes to Rome's defense and salvation, quickly destroying the Gallic forces and routing them from Italy (29). As Livy notes, Camillus was the only man who could have warded off defeat at the hands of the Gauls (5.33.1). In drawing a comparison between Camillus and Achilles, Plutarch more subtly stresses the same interpretation.

Throughout the *Camillus*, other events contain small echoes to the *Iliad.* For example, as Camillus makes his way to Rome to dislodge the Gauls, Plutarch notes that disease was affecting the enemy (*Cam.* 28.1) while they besiege the Romans in the Capitoline, much like how the besieging Greeks of the *Iliad* are struck down by the plague of Apollo (*Il.* 1.42-52). Also, Camillus himself is frequently aided by Hera, who, along with Athena and Thetis, is among the most ardent divine supporters of Achilles in the *Iliad*, frequently sending Achilles messages or calling upon her fellow gods to aid him.[134] Within the *Camillus*, she aids the Romans twice, once upon the sacking of Veii (5.6) and again when Camillus transfers the image of Hera to Rome and hears her speak to him (6.1). Also, the geese that warn the Romans of the Gallic assault at night are the geese of Hera (27.1). The prominence of the goddess Hera's aid, almost wholly unique to the *Camillus*,[135] adds to the epic flavor of his actions and deeds, and also echoes and reinforces the aid of Athena within the *Themistocles*.[136]

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[134] E.g. *Il.* 18.168, where she tells Iris to tell Achilles to aid Patroclus; 20.112-32, she calls upon Athena and Poseidon to help her in aiding Achilles, who will soon be opposing Aeneas possibly with Apollo's help; 21.328-41, she begs Hephaestus to save Achilles from the river Xanthus.

[135] The only instance of Hera aiding other heroes is at *Aristides* 18.1, where the Spartan Pausanias prays for aid against the Persians at the Battle of Plataea and receives favorable auspices. Yet it is probable that this battle also has epic overtones within the *Life of Aristides*.

[136] Athena and Hera, in fact, are paired seven times (Ἀθηναίη τε καὶ Ἥρη) in the *Iliad*: 4.20, 5.418, 8.444, 447, 457, 9.254, 11.45.

The combination of heroic imagery and Camillus' tempered desire for vengeance illuminate Camillus' virtue as a statesman, which is demonstrated when he is once again named dictator (40.2). He again appeals to the gods, this time in the name of Harmony:

> μεταστραφεὶς εἰς τὸ Καπιτώλιον εὔξατο τοῖς θεοῖς κατευθῦναι τὰ παρόντα πρὸς τὸ κάλλιστον τέλος, ὑποσχόμενος ναὸν Ὁμονοίας ἱδρύσασθαι τῆς ταραχῆς καταστάσης.
>
> Turning towards the Capitol he prayed to the gods to complete the present issues to the best possible end, promising to build a temple of Harmony when the confusion was ended. (*Camillus* 42.4)

A link between the two prayers – and presumably their similar success – is illustrated by use of the same participle, μεταστραφεὶς. As his earlier prayer to punish Rome is honored by the gods, so too is his prayer for peace, and like Themistocles, Camillus too becomes a power for unity rather than divisiveness and argument.[137] His anger at the populace has been abated, they have returned to treating him fairly and justly, and now that Rome has suffered for her injustices against Camillus, he leaves behind the anger he held as an Achilles figure and keeps her from splitting apart again.

Plutarch's Achilles-like pattern for the *Camillus* demonstrates several characteristics about his subject: first, Camillus exhibits the standard type of military virtue, not the Odyssean-like cunning of Themistocles. Second, Camillus, though compared to Achilles, does not allow his anger to consume him. When he prays to the gods to punish Rome, he only wishes for retribution in the case of injustice. To accentuate his more restrained anger, Camillus actively assists the Romans while at Ardea by slaughtering the Gauls who attack that city (23.6-7). As Plutarch notes, though

[137] Cf. Larmour (1992) 4178, *Them.* 6.5; note also Themistocles' putting aside of his rivalry with Aristides for the good of Athens at 11.1.

he keeps to himself, Camillus looks forward to destroying the enemy, should the right opportunity arise (23.2). Far from the indolent and unhelpful Achilles, Camillus actively defeats the Gauls and aids Rome despite his rejection and self-exile to Ardea. Most importantly, his anger does not prevent him from saving Rome before salvation of his homeland is impossible. When the Romans request his aid, he comes to their rescue and destroys the Gallic invaders. Unlike Achilles, whose excessive rage at his maltreatment results in the irreparable death of his best friend Patroclus, Camillus returns in time to save the Romans not only from the Gauls, but from the abandonment of her land. Like Themistocles, he rebuilds the city and re-establishes the foundations for her future greatness.

Conclusion

Plutarch's parallel *Lives of Themistocles* and *Camillus* are the paradigmatic example of his use of the Odysseus-Achilles pattern. Themistocles is a characteristic Odysseus: a clever hero whose passions never overcome him, who succeeds by means of trickery, and upon his exile finds welcome and, eventually, wealth. Camillus, in contrast, mirrors Achilles: he constantly wars with enemies, defeats the city of Veii under echoes recalling the Trojan War, prays like Achilles in anger when he feels he is abused, and eventually returns to accomplish his greatest deed[138] by driving off the Gauls who have sacked his homeland. In many ways, the two men do not have much in common. As Larmour has noted, Themistocles' "suspect" methods contrast with Camillus' simpler

[138] Cf. Larmour (1992) 4178-79.

ones.[139] In modeling these two *Lives* upon characteristics and themes of Odysseus and Achilles, Plutarch strengthens the connections between the two men. They both accomplish heroic, near-epic victories in difficult circumstances. The one becomes the savior of Greece, the other the second founder of Rome.

Thus, the Odysseus-Achilles scheme that Plutarch employs in this pair explains many of the differences found in the two *Lives*. Not only does the pattern explain the trickster image of Themistocles as opposed to the martial one of Camillus and the calmness of Themistocles in contrast to Camillus' anger, but it also illuminates the paradoxical differences in their exiles. As Larmour notes, both men "are victims of the envy that arrives from preeminence," but Themistocles' is "more provocative."[140] Camillus incites envy from those who are in power strictly because of his success. Themistocles, like Odysseus, whose boast to the Cyclops determines his sufferings for ten years, also is decreed to spend ten years abroad, but his monster is the *demos*, a creature that Plutarch has little if any respect for.[141]

The Odysseus-Achilles patterning of *Themistocles-Camillus* also helps to explain the deaths of each man. As Gribble notes, "the death of the hero is often deeply suggestive of his character as a whole."[142] Whereas Themistocles, unlike Odysseus, "fittingly" commits suicide in a foreign land, Camillus, like Odysseus, dies peacefully at home "having lived a full life" (43.1). Themistocles, in contrast, dies before his time, opting to commit suicide rather than to hurt his fellow Athenians. His actions contradict

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[139] *Ibid.* 4189. Cf. *Comp. Cor.-Alc.* 3.1.
[140] Larmour (1992) 4197.
[141] E.g. *Quaest. conv.* 719A; *Marius* 28; *Camillus* 36; *Theseus* 25; *Timoleon* 37; cf. also Russell (1966b) 143 (=1995, 80).
[142] Gribble (1999) 291.

the view of Larmour, who concludes that Themistocles betrays his city.[143] There is no hint here of a tragic death – the description reinforces a heroic reading.[144] Camillus, in dying peacefully of old age, becomes the chiastic pair to Themistocles. Themistocles, the Odysseus-like hero, dies a hero's death far from his homeland. Camillus, an Achilles-like figure, dies an Odysseus-like, peaceful death. The endings of both men emphasize their grand, virtuous heroism and also demonstrate the subtle ways that Plutarch intertwines and draws together these two *Lives*. He repeats the process, to very different effect, in the *Coriolanus-Alcibiades* and *Pyrrhus-Marius*. In each of these pairs the heroic models help to illustrate the weaknesses in his statesmen rather than their strengths.

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[143] Larmour (1992) 4178.

[144] On the denigration of tragic imagery in Plutarch, see de Lacy (1952), Mossman (1988), Braund (1993), Duff (2004), Wardman (1974) 168-79; of tragedy and history in general, see Walbank (1955) and (1960).

Chapter 4

Heroes without Limit: *Coriolanus-Alcibiades*[1]

A similar Odysseus-Achilles pattern recurs in *Coriolanus-Alcibiades*.[2] Whereas Plutarch's modeling of Themistocles and Camillus upon Odysseus and Achilles resounds to the credit of those heroes, the Achillean and Odyssean depictions in the *Coriolanus* and *Alcibiades* illustrate the negative along with the positive. Traditionally, the character of Coriolanus is portrayed as that of a heroic, uncompromising figure who disdains the masses of Rome. In contrast, Alcibiades is a dynamic figure taught philosophy by the incomparable Socrates who becomes responsible for a substantial portion of Athens' post-Pericles agenda and success in the Peloponnesian War.[3] The similarities between the two men hardly run further than the fact that each treacherously aids the enemies of his native city.[4] Plutarch's biographies of the two men, as I shall attempt to demonstrate, are enhanced by their implied similarities to Achilles and Odysseus. The character of Coriolanus is modeled on the purely martial and wrathful aspects of Achilles in a manner that explains his failure as a statesman. In contrast to his sources, Plutarch's portrait depicts a man whose sole traits are those of anger and unsurpassed military valor.

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[1] The *Coriolanus-Alcibiades* is one of three pairs (along with *Sertorius-Eumenes* and *Aemilius-Timoleon*) in which the Roman comes before the Greek, contrary to Plutarch's standard practice. For discussion of this variation in general, see Pelling (1986) 94 (=2002, 357). For discussion of the switch with respect to this pair, see Duff (1999) 205-6.

[2] I say "returns," as most scholars agree that the *Coriolanus-Alcibiades* pair was written after the *Themistocles-Camillus*, though I do not consider the point essential for my argument. On the chronology of the *Lives* see esp. Jones (1966). Stadter (1989) xxiv-xxix, who only dates the first ten, places *Themistocles-Camillus* eighth, before *Coriolanus-Alcibiades*. Konrad (1994) xxvi-xxix, likewise lists *Themistocles-Camillus* eighth and more ambitiously lists *Coriolanus-Alcibiades* twenty-first.

[3] Though the Sicilian expedition is proposed by him, the failure for that expedition, at least for Plutarch (and most likely Thucydides), rests with Nicias. Cf. Plut. *Nic.* 23-24 and note 115 below.

[4] I am simplifying the pair to some extent. There are other similarities, such as the fact that each lost his father when he was a child.

Coriolanus' parallel, Alcibiades, assumes the characteristics of Odysseus, but only in a superficial manner. Alcibiades adopts Odysseus' guile and flexibility in ways that benefit himself, but ignores Odysseus' concerns for self-control and public benefit. Unlike Themistocles and Camillus, whose positive qualities are reinforced by their Homeric counterparts, the Homeric models in the *Coriolanus* and *Alcibiades* explicate their ultimate failings as men of virtue.

The connection between *Coriolanus-Alcibiades* and *Themistocles-Camillus* is significant. In these two pairs, Plutarch matches a preeminent Athenian statesman with a character from the legendary Roman past, a pattern he employs only in these four *Lives*. Every other pair matches legendary Greeks with legendary Romans[5] or historical Greeks with historical Romans.[6] In fact, there are several significant similarities between Coriolanus and Camillus as well as between Alcibiades and Themistocles. Coriolanus and Camillus are both exceptional soldiers exiled from Rome at the height of their power and reside among the Volscians;[7] importantly, each leaves Rome furious and without companions.[8] Alcibiades and Themistocles, unlike their contemporaries Nicias and Aristides, each employ clever counsel, become the most outstanding leaders of the two greatest wars of Greek history, are exiled, Medize, and die far from Athens. Yet, the characters of Coriolanus and Alcibiades will be shown to be more detrimental to their states: they actually aid enemies against their homelands – conduct to which Camillus and Themistocles never stoop. As the Homeric models of Odysseus and Achilles help to

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[5] I.e. *Thes.-Rom.*, *Lyc.-Num.*, and *Sol.-Popl.*

[6] I.e. *Epam.-Scip.*, *Cim.-Luc.*, *Pel.-Marc.*, *Phil.-Flam.*, *Dem.-Cic.*, *Lys.-Sul.*, *Per.-Fab.*, *Arist.-Cat. Mai.*, *Sert.-Eum.*, *Dion-Brut.*, *Alex.-Caes.*, *Aem.-Tim.*, *Ages.-Pomp.*, *Ag./Cl.-Grac.*, *Nic.-Cras.*, *Phoc.-Cat. Min.*, *Demetr.-Ant.*, *Pyr.-Mar.*

[7] As Ogilvie (1965) 315 notes, Coriolanus "at some indeterminate date offended the people. In this he resembled Camillus, and, like Camillus, he was driven from the city into the arms of the Volsci..."

[8] Also, neither statesman is ever elected consul.

underline the positive qualities of Themistocles and Camillus, in the *Coriolanus-Alcibiades* they also illustrate inferior statesmanship: they will not match the heroic, selfless, and self-controlled characters of Camillus and Themistocles.

Coriolanus: Heroic Warrior Unsurpassed[9]

The *Life of Coriolanus*, as has been commonly argued,[10] demonstrates the potential disaster that can occur when a man of a great nature goes astray due to an absence of education. From the beginning of the *Life* Plutarch notes that Coriolanus proves that "a noble and excellent (γενναία καὶ ἀγαθὴ) nature, if it lacks education (παιδείας), will produce many ignoble things (φαῦλα) along with the useful (χρηστοῖς)" (*Cor.* 1.3).[11] The primary feature of Coriolanus' lack of education results in an uncontrolled spirit (θυμοῖς ἀκράτοις), which transforms his relations with the *demos* into something "oppressive, unpleasant, and oligarchic" (ἐπαχθῆ καὶ ἄχαριν καὶ ὀλιγαρχικὴν, 1.4).[12] Coriolanus' great nature, which has no share in the benefits that derive from the favor of the Muses (1.5),[13] recalls the Platonic theme of the great

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[9] Plutarch refers to the statesman as Marcius. I shall employ the modern convention of calling him by his epithet Coriolanus.
[10] Stadter (1988) 289; Russell (1963) 23, 27 (=1995, 361, 370); Duff (1996) 333.
[11] For more on this sentiment, see Duff (1999) 76-77; Swain (1990) 192; Duff (forthcoming); and especially Plutarch's *De morali virtute.*
[12] Cf. Plat. *Rep.* 8.550C-555B, where Socrates discusses of the oligarchic man (in third position, more unjust than the kingly and timocratic, but less unjust than the democratic and tyrannical). In the *Republic*, Socrates states that the oligarch honors wealth above all, and establishes position solely on the amount of wealth each person possesses. Coriolanus, of course, cares nothing for money, but disdains the plebs. Unlike the oligarch as defined by Socrates, he desires honor and victory, but like Socrates' oligarchic man, irrationally wishes the plebeians to be excluded from governing because they are not patrician.
[13] Cf. *Marius* 2.3-4.

nature that can be turned towards either great good or great evil.[14] Plutarch portrays Coriolanus as a man of many excellent qualities, but he is subject to passion rather than reason.[15] In engaging with this theme – namely, the failure of Coriolanus' nature to overcome passion without education – the *Life of Coriolanus* appears to be implicitly modeled the character of the Homeric Achilles, as Pelling and Freyburger have suggested.[16] Coriolanus, like the paradigmatic epic hero, allows anger to overcome all his other gifts and, in subjecting himself to it, brings suffering upon his fellow citizens. Certainly, the parallel with Achilles is exact. But in the words of Braund, who argues for a reading that hinges on the inconsistent use of Euripides' *Bacchae* in the *Crassus* by stating, "A crude, blow-by-blow transferral would have been both banal and unconvincing,"[17] much of the *Coriolanus* emphasizes the same themes as the *Iliad.* Coriolanus' emotional excess, modeled on Achilles, highlights the flaws that drive Coriolanus' great nature astray.

From a young age, Coriolanus constantly engages in conflict. His life, according to Plutarch, is one devoted to war: "immediately from his childhood he took weapons in his hand" (2.1).[18] Yet Coriolanus also devotes himself to every other form "natural weaponry" (σύμφυτον ὅπλον), and improves his body to such an extent that he becomes a swift runner (θεῖν ἐλαφρόν) – a phrase that recalls Achilles if not in exact

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[14] Plutarch discusses this theme, which looks to Plato's *Republic* 491B-492A, explicitly at *Demetr.* 1.7. Cf. Duff (1999) 47-49. See also Duff (2004).
[15] Cf. Duff (1996) 333, 334.
[16] As Pelling (1997) 5 (=2002, 388) notes, "Achilles' wrath in the *Iliad* is hinted, certainly for Plutarch and probably for Shakespeare too." Cf. also Freyburger (2001) 38, "Nous étudierons donc les occurrences de ces deux mots à propos de notre héros, dont les aventures pourraient s'intituler << la colère de Coriolan >> comme il y a eu la << colère d'Achille>>."
[17] Braund (1993) 469.
[18] Cf. King (1987) 4-7, who notes that Achilles is the youngest warrior at Troy. Cf. *Il.* 9.440-41.

wording then certainly in sentiment[19] – and a tremendous wrestler. No one can contend with him, and his opponents say that the might of his body is "inflexible" (ἄτρεπτον) and "gives way to no hardship" (πρὸς μηδένα πόνον ἀπαγορεύουσαν, 2.2). Plutarch's descriptions of Coriolanus' youth elaborate upon those mentioned by Dionysius of Halicarnassus[20] and closely resemble the childhood of another of Plutarch's subjects, Philopoemen. Plutarch describes Philopoemen as an athlete and a soldier (*Phil.* 3.4) who is famous for his hot temper (3.1). Coriolanus shares the military and athletic prowess of Philopoemen, whose education is notably compared to Achilles' at the hands of Phoenix (1.2).[21] The early life of Coriolanus, though not unique in its stress on his physical gifts, nevertheless accentuates his heroic, nearly super-human physical abilities.

Coriolanus follows up on his early promise by going on his first campaign while still a youth (μειράκιον), where he earns a garland of oak leaves for saving a fellow Roman soldier's life (*Cor.* 3.1-3). To this point, Coriolanus represents the conventionally heroic warrior: he is a straightforward, capable man who possesses the conventionally heroic virtues of bravery and military proficiency. Far from sated with his youthful accomplishments, Coriolanus turns to greater and greater things, a decisionthat Plutarch applauds:

> νέων δ' ὡς ἔοικεν ἀνδρῶν ἐπιφάνεια καὶ τιμὴ τὰς μὲν ἐλαφρῶς φιλοτίμους φύσεις πρωϊαίτερον παραγενομένη σβέννυσι, καὶ ἀποπίμπλησι ταχὺ τὸ διψῶδες αὐτῶν καὶ ἀψίκορον· τὰ δ' ἐμβριθῆ καὶ βέβαια φρονήματα αὔξουσιν αἱ τιμαὶ καὶ λαμπρύνουσιν ὥσπερ ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἐγειρόμενα πρὸς τὸ φαινόμενον καλόν. (2) οὐ γὰρ ὡς

[19] Cf. King (1987) 3. Also cf. *Il.* 13.324-25, where Idomeneus states that no one can run faster than Achilles. No one else in the *Lives* is said to "run fast." A similar phrase, "ποδῶν τάχε[σ]ι," (see below) appears only in one other context, when Plutarch describes the heroic age of Theseus (*Thes.* 6.4).
[20] As noted by Russell (1963) 23 (=1995, 361). Cf. Dion. Hal. 8.294-95, where Coriolanus recalls his excellence in more general terms. Nothing of Coriolanus' childhood is mentioned by Livy (cf. 2.34).
[21] See also above, Chapter 2, pp. 55-57.

μισθὸν ἀπολαμβάνοντες, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐνέχυρον διδόντες αἰσχύνονται τὴν δόξαν καταλιπεῖν καὶ μὴ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἔργοις ὑπερβαλέσθαι. (3) τοῦτο παθὼν καὶ ὁ Μάρκιος αὐτὸς αὑτῷ ζῆλον ἀνδραγαθίας προὔθηκε, καινός τε ἀεὶ βουλόμενος εἶναι ταῖς πράξεσιν ἀριστείαις ἀριστείας συνῆπτε καὶ λάφυρα λαφύροις ἐπέφερε, καὶ τοῖς προτέροις ἀεὶ τοὺς ὑστέρους ἡγεμόνας εἶχε περὶ τῆς ἐκείνου τιμῆς ἐρίζοντας, καὶ μαρτυρίας ὑπερβαλέσθαι. (4) πολλῶν γέ τοι τότε Ῥωμαίοις ἀγώνων καὶ πολέμων γενομένων, ἐξ οὐδενὸς ἀστεφάνωτος ἦλθεν οὐδ' ἀγεράστος.

It seems that the appearance and honor of young men arriving too early quenches lightly ambitious natures, and quickly satisfies their thirst and fastidiousness; but honors increase and illuminate the stately and steadfast spirits just as being stirred by a wind for the manifest good. (2) For not as if they are receiving pay, but as if giving a pledge that they are ashamed to abandon their reputation and not to surpass it in deeds themselves. (3) Experiencing this feeling Marcius set out to be a rival to himself in manly valor (ἀνδραγαθίας), and he added exploits to glorious deeds and brought spoils upon spoils in a wish to be ever fresh with honor, and he had later leaders always striving with his earlier ones to honor him and to surpass them in praising him. (4) There being at that time many struggles and wars for the Romans, from none of them did he emerge ungarlanded nor unrewarded.

(*Coriolanus* 4.1-4)

Coriolanus here embodies the concept of Iliadic virtue: glory through bravery. Despite the explicit praise for Coriolanus as a man determined to prove himself, Plutarch presents a dire warning as well. Within the context of the *Life* and the theme that great souls create either great glory or great destruction, his unyielding push for honor and praise will soon be tainted by his intransigence and anger. When victory depends solely on his own actions, Coriolanus proves successful; yet, when his honors depend on the good-will of others, the uncompromising Coriolanus will fail, and will not possess the character to adapt to his failure.

Still, Coriolanus' military successes on behalf of Rome continue to dazzle and impress. In fact, Plutarch elevates his actions at Corioli to a legendary level, creating a

much more dramatic and exceptional narrative than that portrayed in Livy or Dionysius. Livy notes:

> *is cum delecta militum manu non modo impetum erumpentium rettudit, sed per patentem portam ferox inrupit in proxima urbis, caedeque facta ignem temere arreptum imminentibus muro aedificiis iniecit. clamor inde oppidanorum mixtus muliebri puerilique ploratu ad terrorem, ut solet, primum orto et Romanis auxit animum et turbauit Volscos utpote capta urbe cui ad ferendam opem venerant. Ita fusi Volsci Antiates, Corioli oppidum captum.*
>
> With a chosen band of soldiers he not only blunted the assault of the sortie, but fiercely rushed through the open gate of the city into the nearest area, and with some slaughter he boldly cast a seized firebrand upon the buildings that loomed over the wall. Then the clamor of the townsfolk, mixed with the shrieking of the women and children as it rose in terror, as is customary, increased the spirit of the Romans and confused the Volscians so that the city to which they had come to bring aid to was captured. Thus the Volscians of Antium were routed and the town of Corioli taken.
>
> (Livy 2.33.7-9)

Though Coriolanus certainly merits praise for his exemplary deed in this action,[22] Livy lacks much of the detail found in Plutarch's more vivid account:

> ἔνθα δὴ Μάρκιος ἐκδραμὼν σὺν ὀλίγοις καὶ καταβαλὼν τοὺς προσμίξαντας αὐτῷ μάλιστα, τοὺς δ' ἄλλους στήσας ἐπιφερομένους, ἀνεκαλεῖτο μεγάλῃ βοῇ τοὺς Ῥωμαίους. καὶ γὰρ ἦν, ὥσπερ ἠξίου τὸν στρατιώτην ὁ Κάτων, οὐ χειρὶ καὶ πληγῇ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τόνῳ φωνῆς καὶ ὄψει προσώπου φοβερὸς ἐντυχεῖν πολεμίῳ καὶ δυσυπόστατος. ἀθροιζομένων δὲ πολλῶν καὶ συνισταμένων περὶ αὐτὸν ἀπεχώρουν οἱ πολέμιοι **δείσαντες**. (4) ὁ δ' οὐκ ἠγάπησεν, ἀλλ' ἐπηκολούθει καὶ συνήλαυνεν ἤδη προτροπάδην φεύγοντας ἄχρι τῶν πυλῶν. (5) ἐκεῖ δ' ὁρῶν ἀποτρεπομένους τοῦ διώκειν τοὺς Ῥωμαίους, πολλῶν μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ τείχους βελῶν προσφερομένων, τὸ δὲ συνεισπεσεῖν τοῖς φεύγουσιν εἰς πόλιν ἀνδρῶν πολεμικῶν γέμουσαν ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις ὄντων οὐδενὸς εἰς νοῦν ἐμβαλέσθαι τολμῶντος, ὅμως ἐπιστὰς παρεκάλει καὶ παρεθάρρυνεν, ἀνεῳχθαι βοῶν ὑπὸ τῆς τύχης τοῖς διώκουσι μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς φεύγουσι τὴν πόλιν. (6) οὐ πολλῶν δὲ βουλομένων ἐπακολουθεῖν, ὠσάμενος διὰ τῶν πολεμίων ἐνήλατο ταῖς πύλαις καὶ συνεισέπεσε, μηδενὸς τὸ πρῶτον ἀντισχεῖν μηδ' ὑποστῆναι τολμήσαντος, ἔπειτα δέ, ὡς κατεῖδον ὀλίγους παντάπασιν ἔνδον ὄντας, συμβοηθούντων καὶ

[22] This passage is rather unremarkable for Livy. Compare, for example, the episode with Horatius at 2.10. For more on exemplarity in Livy, see Roller (2004).

προσμαχομένων, ἀναμεμιγμένος ὁμοῦ φίλοις καὶ πολεμίοις ἄπιστον ἀγῶνα λέγεται καὶ χειρὸς ἔργοις καὶ ποδῶν τάχει καὶ τολμήμασι ψυχῆς ἀγωνιζόμενος ἐν τῇ πόλει, καὶ κρατῶν ἁπάντων πρὸς οὓς ὁρούσειε, τοὺς μὲν ἐξῶσαι πρὸς τὰ ἔσχατα μέρη, τῶν δ' ἀπειπαμένων καὶ καταβαλόντων τὰ ὅπλα.

Then Coriolanus, running out with a few men and slaying those who came in his range, and halting the rest that were coming against them, called to the Romans with a great shout. For, just as Cato deemed worthy of a soldier, he happened to be terrifying and unendurable not only in ability and might, but in tone of voice and appearance of face to the enemy. Once many were gathered round and were supporting him, the enemy retreated in terror. (4) Yet he was not content, but followed after them and drove them as they fled headlong up to the gates. (5) And there seeing the Romans turning back from pursuit, and with many missiles coming forth from the wall, and although it entered the mind of no one to dare to think of bursting into a city filled with weapons and those who fled, nevertheless taking a stand he summoned and encouraged his men, shouting that the city, by fortune, had been opened more for the benefit of the pursuers than those who fled. (6) Though not many wished to follow, pushing his way through the enemy he leaped upon the gates and burst into the city beside the fugitives, no one at first daring to oppose or hinder him. But then, when they saw that he was inside with altogether only a few men, encouraging one another the Volscians attacked them. Surrounded at the same time by friends and foes, he is said to have fought an unbelievable struggle in feats of arm, speed of foot, and daring of soul in the city, and overpowering all whom he opposed, driving some to the farthest areas of the city, while others gave up and cast down their weapons."

(*Coriolanus* 8.3-6)

These exploits at Corioli, the Volscians' city of highest rank (8.1), though not explicitly compared to the events of the *Iliad*, share characteristics with some Iliadic battle scenes. The Romans, pressed in their camp, resemble the Greeks who are pressed by the onrush of Hector and the Trojans (*Il.* 15-16). Coriolanus' subsequent eruption through the Volscian forces and his rout of the enemy to the gates are similar to Patroclus' counter-attack against the Hector-led Trojans (16.257-697) or Achilles' own destructive march to the walls of Troy (20-21). At the walls of Corioli, Plutarch's Coriolanus throws himself

against the city gates and breaks them down, simulating the attempt but not the failure of Patroclus to do the same in the *Iliad* (16.698-711).[23]

Plutarch's vivid description of this battle differs in several subtle ways from that of his primary source, Dionysius of Halicarnassus,[24] whose account contains much more detail than Livy's, but lacks the more dramatic exploits contained in Plutarch's version. First, Plutarch describes how Coriolanus makes a counter-attack only when the Volscians have reached the Roman camp; in Dionysius, he is standing his ground in an unspecified location (6.92.4). Plutarch adds an epithetical description of Coriolanus as "fearful and irresistible" that is also unmentioned in Dionysius.[25] The Volscians are struck with terror in Plutarch's version (*Cor.* 8.3), but fight bravely in a losing cause in Dionysius (6.92.6). Plutarch then loads his account with the dramatic detail that Coriolanus leaps against the gates and defeats the Volscians with "feats of arm, speed of foot, and daring of soul."[26] Coriolanus' accomplishments at the battle of Corioli are raised to a much more heroic level than that portrayed in Dionysius, a level that perhaps invokes an image of an Iliadic hero, who, irresistible, dominates his enemy through greatness, speed, and fear.[27] Like an epic hero, Coriolanus possesses an aura of invincibility.[28]

Plutarch further accentuates the heroism of Coriolanus in describing the subsequent battle against the Antiates, a battle that Livy has either omitted or merged into

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[23] Cf. the similar deed of Alexander against the Malli at *Alex.* 63.
[24] On this, see Russell (1963) 21 (=1995, 357).
[25] For fear on the battlefield, cf. *Il.* 3.37, 5.298, 20.279. *int. al.*
[26] Pelling (1997) 9 (=2002, 391) notes that "Plutarch turns Coriol[i] into a more individual feat of Mar[c]ius' heroism."
[27] On Achilles' designation as the greatest, see *Il.* 1.244, 1.412, 16.274, and *Od.* 8.77, paired with Odysseus. For his swiftness, see *Il.* 1.58, 1.84, 1.148 et passim. For an example of Achilles causing fear, cf. *Il.* 20.44-46, 22.136-37.
[28] Especially like Achilles in his armor, cf. *Il.* 20-22.

the capture of Corioli.[29] First, Coriolanus chides the men for sacking Corioli and fighting for treasure when they should be battling. This rebuke recalls an episode in the *Iliad*, where Achilles, impatient to fight, rejects Agamemnon's promised gifts in an effort to reach the battlefield (*Il.* 19.146-53). Plutarch's version again differs from Dionysius', who states only that Coriolanus "did not think it right to be absent from this battle" (6.93.1). Again Coriolanus proves zealous and irresistible: he asks to be lined up opposite the mightiest troops (*Cor.* 9.6)[30] and makes a charge that the enemy cannot withstand (9.7). Eventually surrounded and wounded, Coriolanus is relieved by the Romans, who tell him to retire to camp while they continue the fight (9.8). Indignant, Marcius proclaims that "weariness is not for victors" (νικώντων οὐκ ἔστι τὸ κάμνειν) and immediately pursues the fleeing enemy (9.9); his actions and rebuke recall the determination of Achilles, who attempts to incite his fellow Greeks to battle despite the arguments of the weary and hungry Odysseus[31] and Agamemnon (*Il.* 19.199-208).[32] Plutarch's image of Coriolanus is that of an invincible warrior whose deeds mirror those of epic heroes.

Coriolanus' unyielding and indomitable nature leads to accomplishments that rival those of the Homeric Achilles. Like Achilles, whose military virtue is a disaster to his enemies, Coriolanus becomes an indefatigable force against the enemies of Rome. Still, this stubbornness and constant urge to succeed will prove to be disadvantageous in times of peace. As the *Moralia* and other *Lives* such as the *Alexander* warn, hereos who

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[29] Cf. Livy 2.33.
[30] Cf. Dion. Hal. 6.93.1-2.
[31] Odysseus, at *Il.* 19.155-83, stresses the weariness (βαρύνεται γυῖα, βλάβεται...γούνατα, κάμνει) of the soldiers.
[32] The parallel is not perfect, however. Achilles only wants to spread destruction and avenge Patroclus, while Coriolanus wishes for Rome to be victorious.

emulate Achilles all possess a tragic flaw. Like Achilles, who "may be better in the spear by far, howbeit in wisdom" he is no match for Odysseus (*Il.* 19.216-219), soon Coriolanus will demonstrate the defects in his character; like Achilles, his lack of reasonable compromise will lead to anger and calamity. Plutarch's Coriolanus, depicted as a Roman Achilles, foreshadows his ultimate failure in the political sphere: where Achilles' military accomplishments are disdained and ignored by Agamemnon, in the case of Coriolanus, the haughty tyrant shall prove to be the Roman *demos*.

Coriolanus as Statesman

Regrettably but perhaps predictably[33] Coriolanus' glorious success in war is followed by infamous shame and rejection at home. The determination that marks his exemplary military career mar his efforts as a statesman. Coriolanus' political enemy has already been hinted at, notably when Plutarch describes Coriolanus' disappointment that the Senate had given in to the plebeians' earlier dissension by awarding them five tribunes (*Cor.* 7.4). After the plebs are granted their political power, he insists that his fellow aristocrats should "demonstrate that they were superior to the people in valor rather than political power" (τῇ ἀρετῇ μᾶλλον ἢ τῇ δυνάμει φαίνεσθαι διαφέροντας αὐτῶν, 7.4). For Coriolanus, every act should be dependent on bravery and virtue; his impatience at those who are concerned with other methods generates excessive haughtiness and rigidity, qualities that betray his political aspirations. He

[33] Pelling (1997) 10 (=2002, 391) states that the "aggressiveness, impatience, and pride" of his military exploits "will be catastrophic rather than glorious" in civic life.

applies the behavior of the soldier to the realm of the orator and statesman.[34] As Duff notes, "Coriolanus...considered that ἀνδρεία (the only form of virtue he understood: *Cor.* 1.6) consisted only in τὸ νικᾶν καὶ κρατεῖν πάντων. In fact, in much Greek thought, it is in mastery of *oneself* (κρατεῖν ἑαυτοῦ) that virtue lies."[35] Unlike the excellent statesman, who like Odysseus exhibits self-mastery, Coriolanus succumbs to the spirited aspect of his soul and gives way to anger.[36]

Coriolanus' obvious dislike of the people soon turns into open confrontation. After compelling many of the people to inhabit the city of Velitrae against their will (13.5), and enlisting his friends to plunder Antium, thereby rewarding them with booty for their service, he creates further envy and hostility among the people. According to Plutarch, many of the citizens "were not able to endure the reputation and power of the man, which was growing, as they thought, to be detrimental to the people" (13.6).[37] Thus, when he runs for consul, though he is on the verge of being elected (15.1), he enters the forum pompously (σοβαρός) and the Senate, correspondingly, rather zealously desire his victory (σπουδασάντας, 15.2). Plutarch's description of Coriolanus' failure to attain the consulship creates a more intense and dramatic tension, one that anticipates his imminent failure and serves as an important turning point. While Dionysius mentions Coriolanus' humiliation at not being elected consul in passing and

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[34] Cf. Pelling (1997) 8 (=2002, 390), who notes that the people, like Coriolanus "confound battle and politics."
[35] Duff (1996) 335. Italics in original. This concept is heavily Platonic. See Plat. *Rep.* 430E-431D; cf. also *Phaedrus* 231D, *Gorgias* 491D-E.
[36] Cf. Duff (1999) 211-12, and Chapter 2, esp. pp. 44-46 above.
[37] Cf. Dion. Hal. 7.6.

paints him as a victim of the manipulations of the tribunes (7.21),[38] Plutarch places Coriolanus' unsuccessful bid for the consulship in its chronologically correct place and summarizes his hero's reaction more elaborately:

> αὐτὸς δ' ἐκεῖνος οὐ μετρίως ἔσχεν οὐδ' ἐπιεικῶς πρὸς τὸ συμβεβηκός, ἅτε δὴ πλεῖστα τῷ θυμοειδεῖ καὶ φιλονείκῳ μέρει τῆς ψυχῆς, ὡς ἔχοντι μέγεθος καὶ φρόνημα, κεχρημένος, τὸ δ' ἐμβριθὲς καὶ τὸ πρᾷον, οὗ τὸ πλεῖστον ἀρετῇ πολιτικῇ μέτεστιν, ἐγκεκραμένον οὐκ ἔχων ὑπὸ λόγου καὶ παιδείας, οὐδὲ τὴν ἐρημίᾳ ξύνοικον, ὡς Πλάτων ἔλεγεν, αὐθάδειαν εἰδὼς ὅτι δεῖ μάλιστα διαφεύγειν ἐπιχειροῦντα πράγμασι κοινοῖς καὶ ἀνθρώποις ὁμιλεῖν, καὶ γενέσθαι τῆς πολλὰ γελωμένης ὑπ' ἐνίων ἀνεξικακίας ἐραστήν. (5) ἀλλ' ἁπλοῦς τις ὢν ἀεὶ καὶ ἀτενής, καὶ τὸ νικᾶν καὶ κρατεῖν ἁπάντων πάντως ἀνδρείας ἔργον ἡγούμενος, οὐκ ἀσθενείας καὶ μαλακίας, ἐκ τοῦ πονοῦντος καὶ πεπονθότος μάλιστα τῆς ψυχῆς, ὥσπερ οἴδημα, τὸν θυμὸν ἀναδιδούσης, ἀπῆει ταραχῆς μεστὸς ὢν καὶ πικρίας πρὸς τὸν δῆμον.
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> "He did not handle the misfortune moderately nor seemly, for he had indulged the passionate and contentious side of his nature, with the idea that there was something great and exalted in this, and had not been imbued, under the influence of reason and discipline, with that gravity and mildness which are the chief virtues of a statesman. Nor did he know that one who undertakes public business must avoid above all things that self-will which, as Plato says, is the "companion of solitude," must mingle with men, and be a lover of that submissiveness to injury which some people ridicule so much. (5) But since he was ever a straightforward man and obstinate, and since he thought that conquest and mastery in all things and at all times was the prerogative of virtue (ἀνδρείας),[39] rather than of effeminate weakness (which explodes in anger, like a sore, from the especially pained and suffering soul), he went away full of indignation and bitterness at the people."
>
> (*Coriolanus* 15.4-5)

His excellence in war and battle, which brings admiration and an ardor for glory among his comrades,[40] is regrettably balanced with an inability to comprehend basic political tactics. As Plato notes in the *Republic*, such a man may become braver, but by avoiding

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[38] Cf. Pelling (1997) 7-8 and 11 (=2002, 390, 392), where he notes that "Dionysius does not make much of the consulship. For him, the rift centers on corn."
[39] Cf. note 35 above.
[40] Cf. *Cor.* 10.6-7, 15.7

the Muses[41] he will become weak, deaf, and blind, and attempt to attain all his ends "like a beast through violence and savagery" (βίᾳ δὲ καὶ ἀγριότητι ὥσπερ θηρίον πρὸς πάντα διαπράττεται, *Rep.* 3.411D-E). Denied what he believes is his due,[42] Coriolanus resembles Achilles, who initiates the conflict of the *Iliad*[43] and allows passion – instead of reason – to control his actions. Though perhaps Coriolanus is treated unjustly, like Achilles,[44] the ultimate fault, as with Achilles,[45] lies in his inability to ignore slights on his honor that should be endured patiently, much as how Odysseus submits temporarily to his enemies in the episodes with the Cyclops and the suitors.[46] In fact, when Plutarch later relates the people's willingness to accept a moderate proposal of the Senate (18.1), Coriolanus is rendered even more culpable in comparison.[47]

Denied the honor of the consulship, Coriolanus opposes the people at every opportunity and with bitter vengeance. First, he urges the Senate to keep the price of grain high rather than succumb to the needs of the people (*Cor.* 16), a feud that results in his attempted arrest and eventual banishment as a man aspiring for tyranny (20-21).

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[41] Cf. *Cor.* 1.5, also *Mar.* 2.4.

[42] Pelling (1997) 12 (=2002, 393) states that Coriolanus' anger "centers on merits, honors, and desserts." These are the same themes that Achilles bases his own anger on in the *Iliad* (1.244-45: "σὺ δ' ἔνδοθι θυμὸν ἀμύξεις | χωόμενος ὅ τ ἄριστον Ἀχαιῶν οὐδὲν ἔτισας").

[43] Cf. Chapter 2, pp. 48-50 above. For Plutarch, Achilles receives the culpability because he is the greater hero.

[44] On the ambivalence attached to Coriolanus' haughty reproach of the people, cf. Livy 2.34-35, where the historian concedes that Coriolanus' opinions may have been correct, but that his excessive harshness was counterproductive and anathema to the Republic.

[45] Cf. *De aud. poet.* 19C, in which Plutarch analyzes the feud that arises between Agamemnon and Achilles in *Iliad* 1.

[46] *Od.* 9; 17.234-53, where Odysseus endures a kick to the hip from Melantheus; 17.460-91 and 18.394-404, where Odysseus is assaulted with a footstool; 18.88-107, where Odysseus, in his fight with Irus, chooses to strike him lightly than kill him, in order to preserve his identity; 18.320-45, where he replies to Melantho with empty threats; 19.65-95, where he responds calmly to the insults of Melantho before Penelope; 20.299-303, where Ctesippus throws an ox-hoof at him.

[47] Cf. Pelling (1997) 8 (=2002, 389).

Plutarch's version subtly diverges once more from that of Dionysius.[48] Dionysius, whose Coriolanus cuts a more sympathetic figure, frequently comments on the unfairness of Coriolanus' accusations and trials. In a speech, Coriolanus calls the actions of the tribunes "aspiring for tyrannical power" (7.22.1), an accusation that is the theme of Appius Claudius' later speech in his defense (7.48-53). Coriolanus' hatred of the *demos* is also matched in Dionysius by the tribune Sicinius' hatred of the aristocracy, who least of all desires the Republic to be harmonious (7.33.1). This man, who "never distinguished himself in war or peace" (7.33.2), initiates the next step in Coriolanus' downfall, provoking him into a scandalous and contemptuous speech against the people (7.34.3). Though Coriolanus is spiteful of the people, Sicinius is the one who "gives loose rein to the people's desires" (7.35.3) and is accused by his fellow tribune of an "act of tyranny" in attempting to make himself the accuser and judge of Coriolanus (7.36.2). Also, before Coriolanus' second trial, he attempts to remove all authority in the matter from the Senate (7.39.1). Dionysius sees Coriolanus and Sicinius as two antagonistic representatives of the civil strife between aristocracy and the people.

Plutarch dilutes Sicinius' impact. His name is only mentioned *after* Coriolanus insults the people, though he tries to have Coriolanus immediately executed (*Cor.* 18.3). Plutarch places the most substantial portion of the blame on Coriolanus, whose lack of gentleness and moderation before the varying responses and reactions of the people leads to his misfortune. Even when Coriolanus is given a second chance, at a trial before the people, Plutarch's Coriolanus is less sympathetic than Dionysius', who describes how

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[48] As Pelling (1997) 4 (=2002, 387) more generally states, Plutarch "develops a stronger sense of the man's character and uses this to unify the material, whereas Dionysius allowed Coriolanus' story to be only one part, though a vital one, of a wider historical theme," which relates to the Struggle of the Orders. Cf. also *ibid.* 4 n. 2 (=2002, 407 n.2).

Coriolanus submits himself to the people, rending his garments and appealing to emotional approval of his virtue (7.62), and is eventually convicted on a charge that Dionysius considers ridiculous (7.64). Though Plutarch relates how the tribunes added surprise charges in order to convict him of wrongdoing (*Cor.* 20.5), the statesman displays no genuine feeling of submission, no repentance, no humility before the people.[49] In Plutarch, Coriolanus' invincible pride and lack of moderation leads to his banishment. The Roman hero should be greater than the *demos*: like Achilles in the *Iliad*, he should have ignored the slights of a more foolish superior.

Coriolanus now becomes the embodiment of anger. Plutarch emphasizes the primary theme of the remainder of the *Life* by discussing the effect of this anger:

> Πλὴν αὐτὸς ὁ Μάρκιος, ἀνέκπληκτος καὶ ἀταπείνωτος, καὶ σχήματι καὶ βαδίσματι καὶ προσώπῳ καθεστηκὼς ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐφαίνετο πεπονθόσιν ἀσυμπαθὴς ἑαυτῷ μόνος, οὐχ ὑπὸ λογισμοῦ καὶ πραότητος, οὐδὲ τῷ φέρειν μετρίως τὸ συμβεβηκός, ἀλλ' ἐμπαθὴς ὢν ὑπ' ὀργῆς καὶ βαρυφροσύνης...
>
> Albeit Coriolanus himself, who was neither daunted nor humbled, but in mien, port, and countenance fully composed, seemed the only man among all the distressed patricians who was not touched by his evil plight. And this was not due to calculation, or gentleness, or to a calm endurance of his fate, but he was stirred by rage (ὀργῆς) and deep resentment...
>
> (*Coriolanus* 21.1)

Consumed by anger Coriolanus "purposes no helpful or good thing at all, but only how he might take vengeance on the Romans" (21.5). Notably, this self-indulgent fury is nowhere attested in Dionysius, and seems invented by Plutarch.[50] Coriolanus' composed bearing doubtlessly comes from Dionysius' version, but Plutarch describes it as an attempt to disguise the all-consuming anger that lies under his breast, which now urges

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[49] Duff (1996) 341 adds, "Coriolanus perhaps deserved what he got."
[50] Cf. Dion. Hal. 7.67; on the theme of anger see Duff (1996) 335, Pelling (1997) 4 (=2002, 388).

him to incite Rome's former enemies against Rome. As anger consumes the reason of Achilles, who, rejected and dishonored by Agamemnon, prays for the destruction of his fellow Achaeans, so too does the passionate Coriolanus, dishonored and banished by the *demos*, turn on his countrymen in an effort to punish them for their folly. Though Plutarch does not make a comparison between Achilles and Coriolanus explicit, he has created a narrative unique to the historical tradition that depends almost exclusively on the themes of military valor and self-destructive anger.

Coriolanus in Exile

Determined to have vengeance, the exiled Coriolanus, dressed to appear as opposite to his aristocratic self as possible, approaches "the town of his enemy"[51] like an Odysseus (22.4). Yet this quotation from the *Odyssey* creates a vivid contrast. Whereas for Odysseus, the quotation describes his devoted, self-sacrificing attempt to infiltrate and kill the enemy, Coriolanus is furiously marching into a hostile town in order to persuade its inhabitants to destroy his fellow citizens. Coriolanus' actions stand in direct contrast to Camillus, who eschews vengeance in favor of waiting for his city to have need of him.[52] Coriolanus, instead, actively seeks vengeance in helping aid his nation's greatest enemy. Like Achilles, his need for vengeance will go too far, and when recanted, will prove to be too late.

Events now – as in the *Iliad* – are dictated by a hero's all encompassing anger. Coriolanus, unstoppable in his rage, conquers several Roman cities, plundering them all

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[51] *Od.* 4.246.

[52] According to Coriolanus' mother in the account Dionysius (8.49.6), Camillus' example is the correct one, though she uses the example of Tarquinius Collatinus.

and putting everyone at the city of Bola to the sword (29.1), an act unmentioned by Dionysius.[53] His anger, as that of Achilles, not only directs its vengeance against the hated masses, but also harms his former allies, the Senate, who are angry that Coriolanus "punishes all alike…" (29.4). In attempts to appeal to reason the Senate sends Coriolanus' esteemed friends to speak with him. The Romans, like the endangered Greeks of *Iliad* 9, beg for the return of their greatest hero (30.3). But as Odysseus' embassy to Achilles fails, inciting only the bitterness and reproach that Achilles feels for Agamemnon (*Il.* 9.308-429), so too do the ambassadors to Coriolanus, though they are his closest friends (30.4),[54] are answered only with anger and disdain (30.7). The wrath of Coriolanus has reached a level of disproportion and over-saturation, and he actively harms his friends and allies, which, as Alexiou notes, puts him in a more culpable position than before.[55]

At last, Coriolanus encircles Rome and is on the cusp of delivering the final stroke. Coriolanus' rejection of the embassy's offer results in more devastation and defeat for the Romans, and the Romans are full of despair, "their spirits full of hesitation" (ὄκνου πλήρεις, 31.5).[56] They try to make peace with Coriolanus a second time and are once again met with insolence (31.6). A third attempt, this one employing the priests and augurs, also fails to influence him (32.2-3). The rejection of an attempt at peace *three*

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[53] Cf. Dion. Hal. 8.18, where he records that he sells the inhabitants into slavery.

[54] As are the members of the embassy to Achilles. See *Il.* 9.197-98:

"χαίρετον· ἦ φίλοι ἄνδρες ἱκάνετον—ἦ τι μάλα χρεώ—
οἵ μοι σκυζομένῳ περ Ἀχαιῶν φίλτατοί ἐστον."

[55] Alexiou (1999) 104. Cf. *Comp. Cor.-Alc.* 2.7.

[56] Cf. the insult of "ὄκνος" in the *Iliad*: 5.817, 10.122, 13.224.

times[57] stresses the completely uncompromising nature of Coriolanus. In comparison to Achilles, who relents enough to allow Patroclus to fight on his friends' behalf, the irrational extreme of Coriolanus' position relegates him to a more destructive, inhuman realm.

Curiously, Plutarch digresses at this point on the nature of inspiration in the face of adversity, quoting six times from Homer, endorsing him as a suitable authority for both divine and human resolution (32.4-7). These quotations, defending as they do the method of Homer, total more than Plutarch uses in any other *Life*.[58] The effect, beyond explaining the Romans' actions, explicitly draws the works of Homer into the *Life*, a pattern that also appears in the *Nicias-Crassus* pairing, where Plutarch writes that the Syracusans free several Athenians who are able to quote from Euripides' works (29.2-5), and draws heavily upon the *Bacchae* in portraying Crassus.[59] Here, as in the *Nicias*, the mention of the poet begs comparison with both the current *Life* as well as its parallel, as I shall describe below. I believe that this invocation and defense of Homer, which is nowhere to be found in the narrative of Dionysius, is a digression employed to connect the *Life* to Homer; thematically, the *Life* already strong relates to Achilles.

Following this digression, Plutarch relates an unexpected but fortunate event. The priestess Valeria,[60] seized with an inspiration from heaven, appeals to the mother and wife of Coriolanus in order that they might supplicate him, and so save the city.

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[57] As Achilles still refuses to return after the three speeches of Odysseus (*Il.* 9.225-306), Phoenix (9.434-605), and Ajax (9.624-42).
[58] Though the number (six) is matched in the *Theseus*.
[59] Cf. Braund (1993), esp. 469.
[60] The daughter of another hero of Plutarch's, the august Poplicola (*Cor.* 33.1).

Volumnia, Coriolanus' mother,[61] betrays her skepticism that he will accept them: "I do not know if that man will have any consideration for us, if he has none for his country, which he once honored before mother and wife and children" (33.9). Her reasons differ from those given in Dionysius, who records that he had told his wife that she no longer has a husband (8.41.3-4). For Plutarch, Coriolanus has actively chosen to turn against his homeland, whereas Dionysius sees him as feeling – somewhat justly – betrayed by it. Again, Plutarch stresses the flaws in Coriolanus' character and the errors in his deeds by emphasizing his dishonorable, destructive role against Rome.

Coriolanus' closeness to his mother, another Achillean hallmark,[62] has already been emphasized by Plutarch (*Cor.* 4.5).[63] It is this devotion to her that brings about Roman peace. Thus, it will be his mother who will end the wrath of Coriolanus, as it is Achilles' mother Thetis who urges her son to relinquish his wrath at the dead Hector (*Il.* 24.128-37). For every morning Achilles binds the Trojan warrior's corpse to his chariot and "in fury he befouled goodly Hector" (24.22).[64] In her appeal to Coriolanus, Volumnia notes that, "to satisfy your anger (ὀργή), you smote your friends and benefactors with the direst disasters" (*Cor.* 35.9). In fact, only in Plutarch is there emphasis on his mother's impact at both the beginning and end of the *Life*. In both

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[61] For the purpose of simplicity, I will refer, as Plutarch does, to Volumnia as Coriolanus' mother and Verginia as his wife. This is in contrast to both Dionysius and Livy, who call Volumnia his *wife*, and *Vetulia* his mother. For discussion of the names, see Pelling (1997) 14 (=2002, 394). Also cf. Russell (1963) 22 (=1995, 359).

[62] The only hero beside Achilles who appeals to his mother is Odysseus, who regardless brushes her aside so that he may first listen to the advice of Teiresias (*Od.* 11.84-89). Were she alive, one hesitates to believe he would not ignore her anyway, as he waits until the end of the *Odyssey* to meet with his father Laertes (*Od.* 24.206-360). Similarly, Hector is a notable example from Homer's epics of one who ignores his mother's wishes (*Il.* 22.79-92).

[63] Plutarch is the only author to put importance on Coriolanus' mother early in the narrative. In doing so, he establishes a ring composition, a technique also common to the *Iliad.* Cf. Schein (1997) and Stanley (1993). It also puts a more logical spin on Coriolanus' decision to end the war.

[64] *Il.* 24.22: "Ὣς ὁ Ἕκτορα δῖον ἀείκιζεν μενεαίνων."

Dionysius' and Livy's accounts, she appears only to make her appeal.[65] The conversation between mother and son, like that between Thetis and Achilles, creates the emotional crux that urges the hero to check the loose reins of his emotions. But whereas Achilles submits to the gods' will,[66] Coriolanus, in relinquishing the war at the passionate plea of his mother, shamelessly continues to obey his emotions. Such is the conclusion of Plutarch in the *Synkrisis*:

> τὸ δὲ δημοσίαις ἱκεσίαις καὶ δεήσει πρέσβεων καὶ λιταῖς ἱερέων ἀπηνῶς χρησάμενον εἶτα χαρίσασθαι τῇ μητρὶ τὴν ἀναχώρησιν, οὐ τῆς μητρὸς ἦν τιμή, ἀλλ' ἀτιμία τῆς πατρίδος, οἰκτῷ καὶ παραιτήσει διὰ μίαν γυναῖκα σωζομένης, ὡς οὐκ ἀξίας σώζεσθαι δι' αὑτήν. (5) ἐπίφθονος γὰρ ἡ χάρις καὶ ὠμὴ καὶ ἀχάριστος ἀληθῶς καὶ πρὸς οὐδετέρους ἔχουσα τὸ εὐγνῶμον· ἀνεχώρησε γὰρ μήτε πεισθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν πολεμουμένων μήτε πείσας τοὺς συμπολεμοῦντας.
>
> But his rough treatment of public supplications, begging of the embassies, and prayers of the priests he then granted a withdrawal for his mother's sake, was not an honor for his mother, but a dishonor for his country, which was saved by pity and intercession of one woman, but not as worthy to be saved in and of itself. (5) For the favor was invidious and ungentle, truly not kind at all, and sensible for neither side; for he withdrew neither being persuaded by his enemies nor having persuaded his fellow soldiers.
>
> (*Comp. Cor.-Alc.* 4.5-6)

The emotional tides that knock Coriolanus about, which he never masters, lead the reader to question his motives and accomplishments throughout the *Life*. There seems no true direction to Coriolanus, as only the whim of passion directs him: though his valor and anger rival Achilles', he seems to the hero's depth of character.

For Dionysius, Coriolanus is the symbol of aristocratic moderation manipulated by a scheming tribune who relies on the whimsical passions of his populist support. For

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[65] At Dion. Hal. 8.39-55; Livy 2.40. In Dionysius (8.42), she gives a speech to the women that heavily sympathizes with her son, recording the injustices done him by the Romans and worrying that she has no foundation for an honorable appeal.

[66] Cf. *Il.* 24.122-40.

Plutarch, the emphasis is on Coriolanus' complete lack of self-control and the inevitable misfortune such a quality brings. As he notes in the *De cohibenda ira*, "To fight passion is difficult; for whatever it wants, it buys at the price of the soul" (457D).[67] In creating his portrait of Coriolanus, Plutarch diverges from or elaborates upon his Dionysius-influenced account in the following ways: he emphasizes the Achilles-like bravery and military exceptionality of Coriolanus; he inserts several Homeric quotations within the narrative; he stresses the connection between Coriolanus and his mother at both the beginning and end of his narrative; and, most importantly, Plutarch highlights the all-consuming wrath that fuels the dishonored Coriolanus. Instead of depicting Coriolanus as a man of character and substance, a hero whose principles dictate his actions, as Dionysius does, Plutarch illustrates the actions of a man whose *emotions* dictate his actions: his *Life*, as Duff has mentioned, stands as a fine counter-argument to his essay *De cohibenda ira*.[68] The man who controls his anger leads a blessed life; he who succumbs to it, no matter his greatness, brings naught but misery.

As Plutarch's version of Coriolanus distances itself from that of Dionysius, it draws nearer to an Achillean model. The ring-narrative structure that hinges upon his relationship to Coriolanus' mother Volumnia is similar to the relationship and dramatic impact between Thetis and Achilles in the *Iliad*.[69] Coriolanus' exceptional abilities as a soldier and warrior, especially his "quick running" and "swiftness of foot" recall the epithets of Achilles. When he storms the gates of Corioli, the town whence he earns his

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[67] Cf. Duff (1999) 214-15. The phrase is actually a quotation of Heraclitus (fr. 70 Marcovich).
[68] Duff (1999) 89.
[69] Cf. note 63 above.

name, he reenacts Iliadic deeds[70] and chides himself and his men for stopping when more fighting is necessary. Like Achilles, Coriolanus fights his superiors – in this case the *demos* – to an excessive degree. These descriptions and deeds, combined with Plutarch's stress on Coriolanus' ubiquitous anger, add up to form an image that is quite congruous with an Achillean pattern. An otherwise admirable, virtuous, and courageous young man of exemplary attributes is dishonored by his leader and desires vengeance; when this vengeance should have been sated, he over-indulges in it. Plutarch's *Coriolanus* frequently appears to mirror an archetypal Homeric model.

As in the *Iliad*, the primary theme is one of the destructive power of anger and its devastating impact upon foes, friends, and self alike. Yet the sole motivation, anger, which parallels Achilles' wrath, is simplified. Achilles is dishonored by the king, goes into an exile that hurts and kills his friends, rejects their attempt to appease him, and, far too late, after death of Patroclus, repents. Coriolanus stands as a Roman Achilles, legendary and wrathful, spurned by the plebs instead of a king. Yet, in comparison to Achilles, Coriolanus comes out far worse. Where Plutarch places the blame for the tragic events of the *Iliad* on both Achilles and Agamemnon,[71] he has manipulated Dionysius' account in order to make Coriolanus overwhelmingly culpable. Unlike the cultured and Greek Achilles, the uncultured and Roman Coriolanus is a more direct and straightforward example of anger. In this, he represents an antithesis to the moderate anger exhibited by Camillus. In the parallel *Life of Alcibiades*, we shall see a character who takes the preeminent quality of Odysseus, his adaptability, and parlays that quality

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[70] Cf. Hector's actions at *Il.* 12.453-71, where he leaps inside after smashing the Greeks' gates with a rock.
[71] Cf. *De aud. poet.* 26B-27A. See also above, Chapter 2, pp. 48-50.

into a different manner of self-destruction. Whereas Coriolanus over-indulges in the primary characteristic of Achilles, Alcibiades will do the same with that of Odysseus.

Alcibiades: Themistoclean and Odyssean Trickster

If, as Duff notes, the *Life of Coriolanus* stands as a counter-argument to Plutarch's treatise *De cohibenda ira*,[72] the *Life of Alcibiades* may very well stand as a counter to his *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur*.[73] In fact, in that work, Plutarch says that Alcibiades is the greatest of the demagogues and flatterers (*Quom. adul.* 52A). In the *synkrisis* of Coriolanus and Alcibiades, Plutarch states that Coriolanus is simple and straightforward (ἁπλοῦς...καὶ αὐθέκαστος), but Alcibiades is "conniving" and "deceptive" (πανοῦργος...καὶ ἀναλήθης, *Comp. Cor.-Alc.* 2.1). As Coriolanus stands as a man driven and directed by his anger, Alcibiades, in contrast, is portrayed as a man of unparalleled adaptability. The link between Coriolanus and Alcibiades is not one of character, but of plot and heroic modeling. The antithesis between their characteristics could not be more stark, and as I shall attempt to demonstrate, the differences between them are accentuated by the Odysseus-like cunning of Alcibiades in contrast to the modeling of Coriolanus on Achilles. As in the *Coriolanus*, the hero of the *Life of Alcibiades* is a somewhat simplified version of his heroic model, one who attains constant success by employing the methods of Odysseus. Yet unlike Odysseus, Plutarch's Alcibiades lacks a philosophic and self-controlled soul. Where Odysseus' cunning and adaptability are devoted to communal goals and public

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[72] See note 68 above.
[73] Cf. Russell (1966b) 147 n. 1 (=1995, 85 n. 33).

safety, Alcibiades is overly concerned with immediate victory, wherever he is. When he benefits the Athenians, he does so only out of self-interest.

From the outset of the *Life of Alcibiades*, the reader is presented with a statesman who stands in stark contrast to that of the *Coriolanus*. Plutarch immediately stresses the importance of education in the *Life* – in the guise of Socrates – as well as the power of Alcibiades' persuasion and charm (πιθανότητα...χάριν, 1.6). Also, after Plutarch discusses family history and physical characteristics, he makes an allusion to the first line of the *Odyssey*:

> τὸ δ' ἦθος αὐτοῦ πολλὰς μὲν ὕστερον, ὡς εἰκὸς ἐν πράγμασι μεγάλοις καὶ τύχαις πολυτρόποις, ἀνομοιότητας πρὸς αὑτὸ καὶ μεταβολὰς ἐπεδέξατο. φύσει δὲ πολλῶν ὄντων καὶ μεγάλων παθῶν ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ φιλόνικον ἰσχυρότατον ἦν καὶ τὸ φιλόπρωτον, ὡς δῆλόν ἐστι τοῖς παιδικοῖς ἀπομνημονεύμασιν.
>
> [Alcibiades'] character later in life, as is apparent in his incredible affairs and much-varying (πολυτρόποις) fortunes, revealed many inconsistencies and changes upon it. But by nature, of his many great passions, there was a devastatingly powerful love of victory (φιλόνικον) and love of being first (φιλόπρωτον), as is clear in these records from his childhood.
>
> (*Alcibiades* 2.1)

The inclusion of "πολυτρόποις" here recalls the opening of the *Odyssey*, where Homer asks the Muse to tell him of the "much-turning" Odysseus.[74] The *Life*, as this programmatic statement hints, emphasizes both the roller-coaster type of ride that Alcibiades will experience in his *Life* as well as the methods he will employ in order to overcome his obstacles. Still, the description of Alcibiades as possessing a "devastatingly powerful love of victory"[75] as well as a "love of being first" among "his

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[74] *Od.* 1.1: "Ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα, πολύτροπον..." The adjective is rare.

[75] As discussed by Stadter (forthcoming) 2-4, I accept that "φιλόνικος" and "φιλόνεικος" are always "love of victory."

many great passions" immediately after the reference to the *Odyssey* weakens any straightforward interpretation that would render Alcibiades as a strictly positive Odysseus, man of philosophical restraint as depicted in the *Moralia*.[76] Though Alcibiades may possess several traits of Odysseus – his intelligence and adaptability in particular – the reader should anticipate these traits being suborned by his need for victory: a quality that reflects the scorned and vilified Odysseus of fifth-century tragedy.[77]

This early allusion to the *Odyssey* is soon tempered with various other connections and allusions to Homer. Plutarch records an anecdote in which Alcibiades, while wrestling, bites his opponent. When his opponent accuses him of biting as women do, Alcibiades responds, "Not at all, but like lions" (*Alc.* 2.3). As Duff notes, "The story illustrates first and foremost Alcibiades' desire to win…as well as his cunning."[78] This tale, also recorded in Plato's *Alcibiades I*,[79] demonstrates the disparate qualities of Alcibiades' character: his strength is his cunning, he is both lion *and* woman. In this, he is the opposite of Coriolanus, who triumphs in his matches strictly from strength.[80] He claims to be a Homeric hero in comparing himself to lions,[81] but his opponent considers

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[76] See Chapter 2 above, pp. 39-47.

[77] The love of victory is a particularly Odyssean quality in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*. Cf. *Phil.* 81, where he expresses victory's sweetness (ἀλλ' ἡδὺ γάρ τοι κτῆμα τῆς νίκης λαβεῖν); 94-99, where Odysseus rebukes Neoptolemus for preferring "to fail with honor than win by cheating"; 133-34, where Odysseus; prays to Hermes of the Trick, Victory, and Athena; 1052-53, where he announces his desire to always win. Cf. also Chapter 3, p. 72 n. 49.

[78] Duff (2005) 159. Cf. also *ibid.* 159 n. 14. This tale may perhaps be meant to recall the cleverness by which Odysseus forces a stalemate with Ajax in the *Iliad* (*Il.* 23.700-39).

[79] Plato *Alc. I* 106E. Russell (1966a) 40 (=1995, 196) notes that Plutarch's details have probably come from Isocrates 16.29.

[80] *Cor.* 2.1. Also, cf. Duff (2005) 160.

[81] E.g. *Il.* 3.22, 5.160, 553, 10.484, 12.41, 16.486, 20.163, etc. My own research has shown that connections to lions occur most commonly of all Homeric similes. There are a few exceptions to the "rule" that lion similes are used exclusively in battle descriptions: at *Od.* 4.790 Penelope worries "like a lion" over her missing cubs; at 6.130 Odysseus emerges from the bushes on Scheria like a maddened lion; at *Il.*

him effeminate. Alcibiades here is dramatically different from Coriolanus, who wins through sheer excellence.[82] This anecdote demonstrates the broad spectrum of Alcibiades' character: he can and may act like anything, relies on cunning to attain victory, and wants to win *now*, regardless of method or opponent.[83]

This dichotomy between woman and lion is stressed again later in the *Life*, when Alcibiades is living in Sparta:

> ἐν γοῦν τῇ Λακεδαίμονι πρὸς τὰ ἔξωθεν ἦν εἰπεῖν·
> "οὐ παῖς Ἀχιλλέως, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνος αὐτὸς εἶ,"
> οἷον ὁ Λυκοῦργος ἐπαίδευσε, τοῖς δ' ἀληθινοῖς ἄν τις ἐπεφώνησεν αὐτοῦ πάθεσι καὶ πράγμασιν·
> "ἔστιν ἡ πάλαι γυνή."
>
> In Sparta, at least, with respect to his obvious manners, one could have said,
> "You are not the son of Achilles, but that man himself,"
> just such a man as Lycurgus educated. But with respect to his true passions and affairs, someone might have added:
> "He is that woman of old."
>
> (*Alcibiades* 23.6).

As Duff has argued, these two quotes not only refer to Achilles, but also to Helen, who is the subject of the second tragic quote.[84] Alcibiades thus once more demonstrates effeminacy as well as the hyper-virile qualities of Achilles. Duff finds another similarity in a common myth: while Achilles hides at Scyros in order to avoid fighting in the Trojan war, he is disguised as a woman. While there, he seduces Diodameia, one of the daughters of Lycomedes, and she gives birth to Neoptolemus.[85] Alcibiades, likewise, is in hiding while at Sparta, and though he is not dressed as a woman, he is called one.

24.571 Achilles springs up "like a lion" to collect the ransom from King Priam. Cf. also Duff (2005) 160-61.

[82] Cf. *Cor.* 2.1.

[83] Contrast this story with that of the other Athenian trickster, Themistocles, whose *Life* contains a tale about using the wrestling ground of the Cynosarges to *unite* the *nothoi* and the *gnesioi* (*Them.* 1.3).

[84] Duff (1999) 236-37.

[85] *Ibid.* 237. Duff records here that the details of this story come from a lost tragedy, "possibly Euripides' *Scyrians*."

Then, he seduces King Agis' wife Timaia, who allegedly has a son by him named Leotychides (*Alc.* 23.7). As Duff concludes, Alcibiades "can cross boundaries of gender, but his character, like Achilles', stays the same."[86] Though Duff believes that his steadfast characteristic is his licentiousness, I believe it is that of the flatterer as described in Plutarch's *Quomodo adulator internoscatur*:

> ὁ δὲ κόλαξ ἅτε δὴ μίαν ἑστίαν ἤθους οὐκ ἔχων μόνιμον οὐδ' ἑαυτῷ βίον ζῶν αἱρετὸν ἀλλ' ἑτέρῳ, καὶ πρὸς ἕτερον πλάττων καὶ προσαρμόττων ἑαυτὸν οὐχ ἁπλοῦς οὐδ' εἰς ἀλλὰ παντοδαπός ἐστι καὶ ποικίλος, εἰς ἄλλον ἐξ ἄλλου τόπον ὥσπερ τὸ μετερώμενον ὕδωρ περιρέων ἀεὶ καὶ συσχηματιζόμενος τοῖς ὑποδεχομένοις.
>
> But the flatterer, since he does not have a single hearth for his character nor lives a life chosen by himself but by another, shaping himself for another person he is not simple but varied and diverse, flowing always into one place from another, like water transferred from vessel to vessel, and conforming to his receivers.
> (*Quom. adul.* 52A)

Though Alcibiades may have possessed – somewhere – a solid and steadfast character, there is never any evidence of it, and Alcibiades over-adapts his exterior to match that of every place he inhabits. The term "ποίκιλος" here recalls Odysseus as "ποικιλόμητις."[87] But Odysseus, as depicted in the *Moralia*, possesses self-control (ἐγκρατεία), unlike the flatterer. Alcibiades, labeled the consummate flatterer by Plutarch, differs significantly from Odysseus, whose methods may change but his goals of victory over the Trojans and a safe return for himself and comrades never alter. Alcibiades instead changes both his habits and goals to match that of his current environment. The only unchanging qualities of Alcibiades are his ambition and need to finish first, no matter whom he defeats. Thus, when he is in Sparta, he will aid the

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[86] *Ibid.* 237.
[87] See Chapter 3, p. 86 n. 100.

Spartans. When in Persia, he will aid the Persians, and when he happens to be in Athens, he will aid the Athenians. There is no solid moral foundation for his actions – his need for victory and success dictate everything.

Plutarch insists that Alcibiades' adaptability is due to his nature. As Alcibiades hides in exile at Sparta, Plutarch notes how Alcibiades is a "chameleon" (χαμαιλέων, 23.4). The word not only makes a play – it is a compound of ground (χαμαί) and lion (λέων) – on Alcibiades' earlier self-identification as a lion, which is the definitive comparison for a virile hero, but it also recalls Plutarch's description of a κόλαξ in the *Moralia*. According to Plutarch:

> ὁ δὲ κόλαξ ἀτεχνῶς τὸ τοῦ **χαμαιλέοντος** πέπονθεν. ἐκεῖνός τε γὰρ ἁπάσῃ χρόᾳ πλὴν τοῦ λευκοῦ συναφομοιοῦται, καὶ ὁ κόλαξ ἐν τοῖς ἀξίοις σπουδῆς ὅμοιον ἑαυτὸν ἐξαδυνατῶν παρέχειν οὐδὲν ἀπολείπει τῶν αἰσχρῶν ἀμίμητον...
>
> But the flatterer has – without skill – come to be subject to the method of the chameleon. For the chameleon makes himself similar to every color except white, and the flatterer, being unable earnestly to make himself similar to worthy things, leaves no shameful thing unimitated.[88]
>
> (*Quom. adul.* 53D)[89]

In fact, the mimicking abilities of Alcibiades actually outstrip those of his animalian counterpart. Plutarch notes:

> ἦν γὰρ, ὡς φασι, μία δεινότης αὕτη τῶν πολλῶν ἐν αὐτῳ καὶ μηχανὴ θήρας ἀνθρώπων, συνεξομοιοῦσθαι καὶ συνομοπαθεῖν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ ταῖς διαίταις, ὀξυτέρας τρεπομένῳ τροπὰς τοῦ χαμαιλέοντος. πλὴν ἐκεῖνος μέν, ὡς λέγεται, πρὸς ἓν ἐξαδυνατεῖ χρῶμα τὸ λευκὸν ἀφομοιοῦν ἑαυτόν· Ἀλκιβιάδῃ δὲ διὰ χρηστῶν ἰόντι καὶ πονηρῶν ὁμοίως οὐδὲν ἦν ἀμίμητον οὐδ' ἀνεπιτήδευτον.

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[88] Compare the "chameleon-like" ability of the flatterer to the man who "puts on foreign colors for his own desires" of Plato's *Phaedrus* (239D).

[89] There are only two other references to the chameleon, both in the *Moralia*: *De call. anim.* 978D and *Ait. phys.* 916A, both of which present discussions of the animal's characteristics.

> "For there was, as they say, in Alcibiades that one exceptional cleverness and mechanism of his chase for men, that he could be like and adapt himself to the customs and daily habits of others, twisting himself upon sharper changes than the chameleon. Except that that beast, as is said, is unable to make itself like one color, white; but there was nothing unimitable nor unpracticeable for Alcibiades in associating with both the useful and scandalous alike."
>
> (*Alcibiades* 23.4-5)

Alcibiades' abilities to transform himself go beyond any attempt at analogy. He can adapt *more than* a chameleon can: his abilities at the aspects of flattery are unmatched even by his animalian counterpart. As Gribble notes, Alcibiades' ability to transform himself like a chameleon reflects "the figure of Odysseus himself, the ultimate *polytropos,* who possessed a dazzling array of stratagems, traveled as an exile to many lands, and adopted a series of lying stories and disguises."[90] Yet the two men share only a superficial comparison. Odysseus' true colors are known to a reader of *Moralia*, but Alcibiades is an enigma. As a chameleon, Alcibiades imitates everything, but he is the "same woman" that he ever was (23.6): there is no guarantee that his actions ever match the true character underneath.

There are further details within the *Life* that suggest links between the *Life* and Homer. While presumably still a youth[91] Alcibiades asks his teacher for a book of Homer. When the teacher responds that he does not have one, Alcibiades punches him (7.1). Plutarch also records an anecdote about another teacher who corrects his own copy of Homer, to whom Alcibiades says, "since you can correct Homer, why do you not educate young men?" (7.2). These two references to Homer's works segue into a Homeric tale of how Socrates saved Alcibiades' life at a battle near Potidaea:

> ἔτι δὲ μειράκιον ὢν ἐστρατεύσατο τὴν εἰς Ποτίδαιαν στρατείαν, καὶ

[90] Gribble (1999) 269-70.
[91] For the use of theme over chronology in the *Alcibiades*, see Russell (1973) 118-22, Duff (2005) 157-58.

> Σωκράτη σύσκηνον εἶχε καὶ παραστάτην ἐν τοῖς ἀγῶσιν. ἰσχυρᾶς δὲ γενομένης μάχης ἠρίστευσαν μὲν ἀμφότεροι, τοῦ δ' Ἀλκιβιάδου τραύματι περιπεσόντος ὁ Σωκράτης προέστη καὶ ἤμυνε, καὶ μάλιστα δὴ προδήλως ἔσωσεν αὐτὸν μετὰ τῶν ὅπλων.
>
> While he was still a youth he served on the campaign against Potidaea, and he had Socrates as a tent-mate and a comrade (παραστάτην) in their struggles. Once, when a fierce battle arose, they both displayed great courage, but when Alcibiades had fallen from a wound Socrates stood over him and defended him, and clearly saved him along with his arms.
>
> (*Alcibiades* 7.3-4)

Though this event is also related in Plato's *Symposium*,[92] Plutarch's description of the scene is more dramatic, adding the verb "προέστη," which hints at a similar event that happens to Odysseus in the *Iliad.* When Odysseus is injured by Socus and is surrounded, Ajax comes to his aid, stands beside him (στῆ δὲ παρέξ), and wards off the Trojans (*Il.* 11.438-88). Also, there may be a verbal connection to the fight over Sarpedon's body. The use of the word "παραστάτην" may recall the shout of Glaucus to his comrades to claim Sarpedon's body, "ἀλλά, φιλοί, πάρστητε, νεσσήθητε δὲ θυμῷ Ιμὴ ἀπὸ τεύχε' ἕλωνται" (*Il.* 16.544-45). This is the only occurrence of "πάρστητε" in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*, and the word "παραστάτης" occurs in the *Lives* only two other times.[93] The recording of this tale from Potidaea, linked as it is by a possible allusion to a Homeric battle and coming immediately after two anecdotes of Alcibiades and Homer, hints at a reading that recalls the *Iliad.*

Alcibiades' intelligence and tactics also recall the proverbial, Odyssean cleverness of Themistocles. When the Spartan embassy arrives to discuss peace in 418 BCE, they are amazed at Alcibiades' shrewdness (δεινότης) and intelligence (σύνεσις, 14.10), a

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[92] At Plat. *Symp.* 220D-E by Alcibiades himself.
[93] At *Marc.* 10.9 and *Phil.* 6.2.

pair of qualities that recall Themistocles.[94] His prudence (φρόνημα), an important trait of Themistocles,[95] is also mentioned (16.1). Also like Themistocles (and Odysseus), he frequently gains his political and military ends through trickery. In the episode with the Spartan embassy, Alcibiades fools them into trusting him rather than their traditional ally Nicias, then completely turns on them the next day (14). This ruse of simulated friendship towards the Spartans echoes the deception of Themistocles when he buys Athenians the time to rebuild their city walls without Spartan interference (*Them.* 19).[96] Later, while on campaign at sea against the Spartans, Alcibiades pretends to have sailed away at the Battle of Cyzicus, "completely deceiving" (ἐξηπάτηντο) the Spartans into thinking the Athenians had fled. Instead, the ploy is a feint, and Alcibiades' sudden reversal and battle engagement devastates the Spartan fleet (28.7-10). Themistocles, of course, uses various schemes both to trick the Persians into the Battle of Salamis (*Them.* 12) and to make Xerxes fear that the Greeks were about to destroy his bridge at the Hellespont (17).[97]

Plutarch also calls Alcibiades πολύτροπον (24.5) once again, referring a second time to the famed epithet of Odysseus, this time as Alcibiades abandons the Spartans,

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[94] Cf. *Them.* 2.6, where Themistocles possesses "political cleverness and capable intelligence" (δεινότητα πολιτικὴν καὶ δραστήριον σύνεσιν). Thucydides does not associate either hero with δεινότης, and does not connect Alcibiades with σύνεσις. Also, at *De fort. Alex.* 343A, in a list of famed attributes of various men, Themistocles is marked for his intelligence (σύνεσις).

[95] Cf. *Them.* 28.6; cf. also his claim to φρόνησις at *De Herod. mal.* 869A.

[96] Cf. Gribble (1999) 27, "[Thucydides'] description of Alcibiades' deception of the Spartan ambassadors is apparently told in the same spirit as his description of Themistocles' deception of the Spartans over the building of Athens' walls (1.89-92), an insider version of a clever piece of political strategy." Cf. also Westlake (1968) 215.

[97] Cf. also Alcibiades' sacking of the city of Selymbria (*Alc.* 30.3-10), where, as Duff (1999) 218 notes, he "wins the day not by force of arms but by a clever stratagem." Duff believes that this antithetically parallels Coriolanus' brave and straightforward sack of Corioli. The dichotomy follows the pattern for which I am arguing: an Odysseus-like trick of Alcibiades and a straightforward, Achillean assault of Coriolanus.

who have now grown cross with him, for Tissaphernes' court, where soon Alcibiades' flatteries so impress and overwhelm the Persian that he decrees that his most beautiful garden be named after the Athenian exile (24.7). Alcibiades' exiles are somewhat paralleled to the events of the *Odyssey*: as Alcibiades is forced to make his way from land to land, his adaptability comes more and more to the fore.

Alcibiades the Flatterer

These verbal connections of Alcibiades to the Homeric Odysseus may result from a historiographical tradition stemming from the negative view of Odysseus in the fifth-century BCE, where the hero's association with cleverness and deception drew close connections to the Sophists of the period,[98] a connection that also seems to have brought him to comparison with Themistocles.[99] The chameleon-like capabilities of Alcibiades demonstrate his adaptability and lack of boundaries. Plutarch renders this aspect more negative, making Alcibiades a flatterer, by ascribing questionable motives to the hero at

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[98] On the negative associations of Odysseus in relation to the Sophists, see esp. Stanford (1964) 95-101. On page 100 he notes, "...austerer moralists would see (sophistical methods) as an additional reason for denouncing the Ulyssean type, whether he appeared in the shape of an aristocratic Alcibiades or of a plebeian Cleon." Of course, as he also notes on p. 96, the Sophists themselves "tended to depreciate [Odysseus], influenced perhaps by the common tendency to be severest on others for one's own faults."

[99] Aeschines of Sphettus' Socratic dialogue called *Alcibiades* – much of it preserved by Aelius Aristides in his *On the Four* – compares Alcibiades, to whom the work is addressed, to Themistocles and generally finds him wanting (Cf. Podlecki (1975) 78, also n. 3; see also Frost (1980) 20-21). McGregor (1965) 27 states, "If you are reminded of Thucydides' Themistocles, that, I think, is appropriate..."; Podlecki (1975) 139, notes that Themistocles "has close analogies with Plutarch's Alcibiades." Cf. also de Romilly (1995) 227-29. Forde (1989) 69-70, 106 considers Themistocles and Alcibiades two bookends who are each more gifted and ingenious than Pericles, but who fail to lead Athens to the same heights. Frost (1980) 22 believes that tales of Themistocles as a troublesome youth (cf. *Them.* 2.8) were added to the historical tradition due to similarities with Alcibiades: "The juvenile delinquent par excellence was Alcibiades, and during his later career and after his death, I believe it was inevitable that he came to compared with Themistocles." Also, Alcibiades is occasionally explicitly compared to both Odysseus and Themistocles, as when Gribble (1999) 202 states that sometimes Alcibiades "takes on the role of the Odyssean or Themistoclean trickster, equipped with cunning intelligence."

key moments in his exile. His desire for victory and being first, as asserted by Plutarch early in the *Life*, continues to recur and to overmatch any firm and loyal nature, unlike his predecessor Themistocles, who is tempered by patriotism. Plutarch, though he endows Alcibiades with all the characteristics that would allow him to match the incomparable accomplishments of Odysseus, continues to stress the lack of stability that would make Alcibiades' successes eternally illustrious.

The first example of Alcibiades' fickle nature is demonstrated when he flees to Sparta. Rather than maintain his fidelity to Athens and merely seek asylum without detriment to his fatherland, as Themistocles had done when he had fled to Persia,[100] Alcibiades "immediately upon his arrival" persuades the Spartans to perform three things that result in Athens' ruin in the war:

> δόντων δὲ τῶν Σπαρτιατῶν καὶ δεξαμένων, παραγενόμενος προθύμως ἓν μὲν εὐθὺς ἐξειργάσατο, μέλλοντας καὶ ἀναβαλλομένους βοηθεῖν Συρακουσίοις ἐγείρας καὶ παροξύνας πέμψαι Γύλιππον ἄρχοντα καὶ θραῦσαι τὴν ἐκεῖ τῶν Ἀθηναίων δύναμιν· ἕτερον δέ, κινεῖν τὸν αὐτόθεν πόλεμον ἐπὶ τοὺς Ἀθηναίους· τὸ δὲ τρίτον καὶ μέγιστον, ἐπιτειχίσαι Δεκέλειαν, οὐ μᾶλλον οὐδὲν διειργάσατο καὶ κατοικοφθόρησε τὴν πόλιν.
>
> When the Spartans had granted him refuge and received him, once present he whole-heartedly compelled them straightaway to one thing, namely, as they were dawdling and postponing help to the Syracusans, he stirred and incited them to send Gylippus as leader and to crush the force of Athenians there; for another thing, he managed to stir up the war against the Athenians in Sparta; and third and most important, he got them to fortify Decelea, nothing more than which destroyed and utterly ruined the city.[101]
>
> (*Alcibiades* 23.2)

The actions of Alcibiades stand in contrast to those of Themistocles, who buys himself a year's delay, and when the year is up, he chooses to kill himself rather than help his city's

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[100] See Chapter 3, esp. pp. 85-89.
[101] Cf. Thuc. 6.15.3-5, 89-92; Diod. Sic. 13.7-9; Nepos 4.7.

enemy.[102] Alcibiades, driven into a similar exile, immediately aids his erstwhile enemy. This vengeance, far from the self-controlled nature of Odysseus, is also hard to reconcile with any aspect of Achilles. There is no mention of any anger in Alcibiades as there was for Coriolanus against his fellow Romans:[103] quite simply, he is now a Spartan, so his ambition and need to be first makes him behave as the Spartans respect.

In fact, Plutarch's interpretation of Alcibiades' behavior among his city's enemies renders him a less sympathetic figure than in his historical sources. First, Plutarch emphasizes *three* ways that Alcibiades ruins Athens' chances in the war: this is unique in the historical tradition. Nepos mentions only the fortification at Decelea and that Alcibiades helps make the Spartans superior (4.7); Thucydides states that Alcibiades is the primary reason that the Athenians loses the war (6.15.3), but mentions this fact well before Alcibiades is in a position of power at Sparta.[104] Diodorus mentions how Alcibiades spurs the Spartans into sending Gylippus to Sicily and aids in a march on Attica,[105] but also states that Alcibiades "did all he could to ingratiate himself with the people of Athens, by doing them some remarkable service at a time when they seemed to be in the lowest ebb of fortune" (13.37.3). In Plutarch, such remorse and desire to please the Athenians exclusively is nowhere to be found: his cleverness and cunning are available to the nearest bidder. Such is hardly the actions of the Odysseus presented in Plutarch's *Moralia*.

Plutarch's description of Alcibiades subsequent behavior in Persia is similarly self-serving. There, he aids the satrap Tissaphernes and the Persians against both the

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[102] *Them.* 31.5.
[103] Cf. Russell (1966a) 39 (=1995, 194).
[104] Thuc. 6.88-92.
[105] Diod. Sic. 13.7; 13.9.

Athenians and the Spartans (25.1). Yet, where Diodorus claims that he does so in order to help the Athenians while in exile (13.37.3-4) and Thucydides states that Alcibiades gives his advice in order to restore his country's fortunes in the war and preserve them while they are weak (8.46.1), Plutarch states that Alcibiades has Tissaphernes play each side against the other so that both sides may fall easy prey to the king (*Alc.* 25.1). Plutarch adds that the Athenians are still suffering (κακῶς πάσχοντες, 25.2), a statement that accentuates Alcibiades' complete disregard for his fellow-citizens. Though, in a bit of foresight, Alcibiades was worried that "if the Athenians were destroyed, he might be captured by the Spartans" (25.2). The community spirit that one sees in Plutarch's view of Odysseus[106] is emphatically denied in the *Alcibiades*. The model of cunning portrayed in the *Life* eschews the public good in favor of unscrupulous self-preservation.

Subsequently, when Alcibiades finds an opportunity to become a player in Athenian politics once more under the rule of the oligarchy, he approaches the Athenians at Samos, not out of any goodwill for democracy, but in an attempt to re-establish his power, as a clever fellow named Phrynichus suspects (25.4-5). Though Phrynichus blows the whistle on Alcibiades, he is betrayed by one Astyochus, and Alcibiades' plan to be recalled succeeds. Here Plutarch, maintaining the self-serving view of Alcibiades, adapts Thucydides view of events, who states that Phrynichus "rightly understood" that Alcibiades' appeal to the men at Samos was merely an attempt to reclaim power in Athens (8.48.4). He thus adopts Thucydides' statement in favor of Diodorus', who stresses Alcibiades' genuine goodwill in diverting 300 Persian ships from the Spartan

[106] Similar to that of Homer, who notes (*Od.* 1.5-6) that Odysseus "fought for his life and the homecoming of his companions."

navy (13.41), an act that Plutarch explicitly says Alcibiades has nothing to do with, though both sides think he is responsible (*Alc.* 26.8-9). Again the emphasis remains on Alcibiades' self-serving, non-Odyssean approach.

Once back in power, Alcibiades returns to his deceptive and cunning standard of excellence. First, he refuses to give in to the Athenian urge to assail the Piraeus immediately, but instead, as Plutarch notes, he behaves with exceptional clear-headedness:

> ὁ δ' οὐχ οἷον ἄν τις ἐξαίφνης χάριτι τῶν πολλῶν μέγας γεγονὼς ἔπαθε καὶ ἠγάπησε, πάντα δεῖν εὐθὺς οἰόμενος χαρίζεσθαι καὶ μηδὲν ἀντιλέγειν τοῖς ἐκ πλάνητος καὶ φυγάδος αὐτὸν νεῶν τοσούτων καὶ στρατοπέδου καὶ δυνάμεως τηλικαύτης ἀποδείξασιν ἡγεμόνα καὶ στρατηγόν, ἀλλ' ὅπερ ἦν ἄρχοντι μεγάλῳ προσῆκον, ἀνθίστασθαι φερομένοις ὑπ' ὀργῆς, κωλύσας ἐξαμαρτεῖν, τότε γοῦν τὰ πράγματα τῇ πόλει περιφανῶς ἔσωσεν.
>
> Any other man, having suddenly become great by the grace of the masses would have been compliant and would have been happy, thinking that he must immediately gratify them and say nothing in opposition, as they had made him the leader of so many ships and the army and such an armed force from having been a wanderer and exile, but he as befit a great leader, opposed them being borne by their anger and kept them from erring; and at this moment he clearly saved the affairs of the city.
>
> (*Alcibiades* 26.4)

Now, his eyes on the prize of saving Athens instead of opposing her, by "not only persuading and teaching the mob, but supplicating some and seizing others one by one" he prevents the Athenians at Samos from initiating a civil war and leaving all their gains in Ionia unprotected (26.5). Here, Alcibiades becomes a masterful Odysseus, speaking with gentle words to some and restraining others, to keep the foolish masses from rushing home (26.5-6).[107] At last his ambition and desire to be first coincide with aid for his

[107] Cf. Odysseus' similar actions, urging the chiefs with "pleasant words" and smiting and restraining the brawlers, at *Il.* 2.188-210.

fatherland, as he sails from victory to victory on his slow return home from Samos to Athens, winning the Battle of Abydos thanks to a clever stratagem that swings victory from the Spartans to the Athenians (27) and "completely deceives" the Spartans at the Battle of Cyzicus by using a feint to draw them into an unexpectedly difficult battle (28.7).

At this point, Alcibiades' actions echo the capabilities and success of Themistocles:

> πολὺ δὲ καὶ ⟨τὸ⟩ δακρῦον τῷ χαίροντι τῆς πόλεως ἀνεκέκρατο καὶ μνήμη πρὸς τὴν παροῦσαν εὐτυχίαν τῶν πρόσθεν ἀτυχημάτων λογιζομένοις, ὡς οὔτ' ἂν Σικελίας διήμαρτον, οὔτ' ἄλλο τι τῶν προσδοκηθέντων ἐξέφυγεν αὐτοὺς ἐάσαντας Ἀλκιβιάδην ἐπὶ τῶν τότε πραγμάτων καὶ τῆς δυνάμεως ἐκείνης, εἰ νῦν τὴν πόλιν **παραλάβων** ὀλίγου δέουσαν ἐκπεπτωκέναι τῆς θαλάσσης, κατὰ γῆν δὲ μόλις τῶν προαστείων κρατοῦσαν, αὐτὴν δὲ πρὸς ἑαυτὴν στασιάζουσαν, ἐκ λυπρῶν ἔτι λειψάνων καὶ ταπεινῶν ἀναστήσας οὐ μόνον τῆς θαλάσσης τὸ κράτος ἀποδέδωκεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πεζῇ νικῶσαν ἀποδείκνυσι πανταχοῦ τοὺς πολεμίους.
>
> Amid the rejoicing of the city there was much weeping and many people were recollecting their present good-fortune from their recent misfortunes, that neither would they have completely botched the Sicily expedition, nor would any other of their expectations have escaped them, had they only allowed Alcibiades in charge of their affairs and power at that time. If now taking claim of (παραλάβων) the city needing but little more to have fallen completely at sea, and on land barely having control of their city's borders, and herself rebelling against herself; he, having stirred the city from remnants still wretched and humble returned not only her power on the sea, but even on land he rendered the city a conqueror of her enemies everywhere.
>
> (*Alcibiades* 32.4)

The dramatic change from a pitiful, weak Athens to an Athens in good fortune recalls the bold claim of Themistocles that "taking claim of (παραλάβων) a small and obscure city he knew how to render it famous and great" (*Them.* 2.4). Alcibiades, in re-establishing Athenian hegemony, shares the abilities of Themistocles. The link to

Themistocles stresses their similar, Odyssean methods, but also presages Alcibiades second fall. The reader is left to compare them.

Plutarch relates one last occurrence in the Peloponnesian War, one as telling of his view of Alcibiades as of the city that breeds him. As he wages war as an exile in Thrace, he notices that the Athenians have chosen a bad harbor for their ships, and he recommends both a new anchorage and is insulted by Tydeus, one of Alcibiades' successors in command (36.6-37.1). Alcibiades states that had he not been so ridiculously insulted by the generals, he would have compelled the Spartans either to lose their ships or make an ill-advised battle (37.2). Events soon turn out as Alcibiades anticipates, the Athenians are crushed, Lysander is victorious, and the war is over. Here Plutarch again describes events in a way subtly divergent from his sources: for him, Alcibiades detects the ruse and alleges to help and defeat the enemy. In Diodorus, he claims that he can get some Thracians to help in the war, and is rejected because they believe Alcibiades will claim credit if they win, but reap none of the shame should they lose (13.105.3-4).[108] Plutarch alters the story somewhat, placing the culpability on Alcibiades' character: had he not felt insulted, he *could have* rounded up some Thracian soldiers and saved the Athenians anyway. An Odysseus-like ability is always there, but he only unveils it when it serves his own self-interest: the fact that he is spurned means more to him than the salvation of his fellow citizens.

[108] Cf. Nepos 8.1-5.

After his countrymen have lost the Battle of Aegospotomae to Lysander, Alcibiades flees to Persia, still fearful of his life, as he suspects the Spartans will kill him because of his alleged adultery with King Agis' wife:[109]

> ἐν δὲ Βιθυνίᾳ πάλιν οὐκ ὀλίγα τῶν ἰδίων ἀπολέσας καὶ περικοπεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκεῖ Θρᾳκῶν, ἔγνω μὲν ἀναβαίνειν πρὸς Ἀρταξέρξην, ἑαυτόν τε μὴ χείρονα Θεμιστοκλέους πειρωμένῳ βασιλεῖ φανεῖσθαι νομίζων, καὶ κρείττονα τὴν πρόφασιν.
>
> In Bithynia again losing many of his possessions and being plundered by the Thracians there, Alcibiades decided to approach Artaxerxes, thinking that he would appear no worse than Themistocles should the king make trial of him, since he had a better pretext to approach him.
>
> (*Alcibiades* 37.7)

Thus, his final exile becomes a mirror image of Themistocles' exile, which seems to have been modeled on Odysseus'.[110] The connection between Themistocles and Alcibiades draws the two together at this point in order to stress the differences between their deaths: Themistocles kills himself in Persia rather than aid the King against his homeland (*Them.* 31.5), but Alcibiades is killed by Pharnabazus' agents (*Alc.* 39), having already betrayed Athens among the Spartans, both Spartans and Athenians when he is with Tissaphernes, and Sparta again upon his return to Athens. The final scene of each hero, exiled and in Persia, underscores a significant distinction between them: Themistocles perishes on his own heroic terms, "fittingly," while Alcibiades, having betrayed everyone, is ambushed and caught in an assignation, having never conquered his licentiousness as well as his φιλοτιμία, a trait that Themistocles does not allow to overwhelm him.[111] The Odysseus-

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[109] Cf. *Alcibiades* 23.7.

[110] See above, Chapter 3, pp. 84-89.

[111] As Frazier (1988) discusses, φιλοτιμία can range from being an excellent quality to a negative one, and does not necessarily demonstrate a lack of virtue, unless, as in Alcibiades, it is taken too far. Themistocles, after all, is closely connected to φιλοτιμία (see *Them.* 17.4), but opts for patriotism over Persian honors.

like qualities of Alcibiades is only skin deep: Themistocles truly possesses control and self-mastery, Alcibiades only possesses Odyssean adaptability and deception.

Plutarch's version differs from the known sources. In Diodorus and Nepos, Alcibiades is treacherously murdered by the agents of Pharnabazus in Phrygia while he is on the road to inform the king about the rise of Cyrus.[112] Plutarch's Alcibiades, who is too clever and capable to be outwitted, is instead caught at home by Pharnabazus' agents while sleeping at the consort Timandra's house (39.1-7), or perhaps, Plutarch confesses, having dishonored a young woman he is killed by her brothers (39.9). His version emphasizes two aspects of the hero: first, he is too clever to be caught unawares in political scheming, so, I believe he rejects the story of Pharnabazus' betrayal. Second, Plutarch here returns to the theme of Alcibiades' licentiousness, displayed early on.[113] The seeking of pleasure for pleasure's sake, as Plutarch notes in the *Moralia*, is a particular need of the flatterer (*Quom. adul.* 54D-55A). In a way, Alcibiades, whom Plutarch describes as an incomparably excellent strategist and schemer, is revealed as, ultimately, a failed Odysseus. He exhibits the external abilities of Odysseus, including the deceptions and accomplishments, but he has no self-control, no distinct character. Alcibiades, φιλότιμος and φιλόπρωτος, a seeker of pleasure, helps and schemes for and against everyone, condemning himself to an empty death with no one but a courtesan to bury him.[114]

Cf. also Stadter (forthcoming) 6, who notes, "Almost every statesman shows *philotimia*, but while this quality can be disruptive, it also spurs the greatest achievements." Cf. also Arist. *Nic. Eth.* 1107b-1108a.

[112] Cf. Diod. Sic. 14.11.1-4; Nepos 10.1-4. Like Plutarch, Nepos places the idea for the murder at the hands of the Athenian oligarchs.

[113] Esp. *Alc.* 4; 16; 23.

[114] I am somewhat attracted to the idea that Alcibiades' lack of sexual self-control mirrors his submission to φιλοτιμία. In trying to impress everyone, Alcibiades impresses no one, and in trying to sleep with

Conclusion

The *Life of Alcibiades* thus, with a nod to Odysseus, highlights the failure not of a statesman so much as a flatterer. Alcibiades embraces the correct tactics to establish power and lead his city to greatness, but he lacks the stability of soul to keep not only his licentiousness, but also his ambition in check. As Alcibiades comes crawling back to Socrates after his many dalliances, so too does he keep trying to return to Athens after spending time with her enemies. The lack of trust that Athens could place in him, due to his unknowable character, keeps Athens from attaining victory in the Peloponnesian War. Her losses are due to their suspicion of him: had the city trusted Alcibiades and let him go on to Sicily, the men would have returned home.[115] Alcibiades, like Odysseus or Themistocles, is immensely accomplished, but, unlike them, he has no true sense of communal spirit: he mimics the scorned and self-serving fifth-century Odysseus instead of the philosophical man of virtue portrayed in the *Moralia*. As Coriolanus does not possess the temperance in anger that Camillus displays, so too does Alcibiades fail to restrain his φιλοτιμία as Themistocles has.

As a set of parallels, the *Coriolanus-Alcibiades* works well as a set of complementary opposites: Coriolanus is a one-dimensional Achilles, a man mired exclusively in anger and wrath, deprived of culture and education; in contrast, Alcibiades

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everyone, he has no Penelope to return to: thus, he dies in a foreign land with his mistress in contrast to Odysseus, who rejects women like Calypso, Circe, and, in a way, Nausicaä, so that he may return to his wife.

[115] Cf. Connor (1984) 162 n. 9; also Westlake (1968) 224-25, who notes of Thucydides' version: "...if Alcibiades had remained in Sicily for even a few more weeks, his plan might well have achieved a greater measure of success."

contains only the superficial aspects of Odysseus: in indulging in every form of deception and connivance, he becomes a flatterer and never comes to understand himself, eventually becoming alien to all peoples and nations. Each man employs his signature talent to a fault. As Gribble notes, "It is the status of the great individual which causes him so to be feared and hated, a paradox summed up in the erotic imagery of the picture of the Athenian attitude to Alcibiades: 'they long for him, they hate him, but they want to have him.'"[116] He is the indefinable individualist *par excellence*: like an exceptional Homeric hero, he stands out in his uniqueness.[117]

The Achilles-Odysseus models in the pair echo the antithetical themes in these two *Lives*. The theme of anger is of course explicit in each *Life*: Coriolanus is the embodiment of anger, and Rome nearly perishes. Alcibiades is the victim of the anger of the *demos*,[118] and, with his death, all hope of Athenian hegemony dies. Coriolanus, like Achilles, is a mighty soldier; Alcibiades makes for a better tactician and clever leader. Coriolanus earns his martial glory through straightforward manliness and excellence; Alcibiades attains those same glories through charm and deception. In these two *Lives*, the correspondence to Achilles and Odysseus helps to draw out the differences between them as well as explain the flaws and positive aspects in their characters, not only in relation to their Homeric models, but also in comparison to other heroes within the *Lives*,

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[116] Gribble (1999) 6.
[117] Cf. Westlake (1968) 212.
[118] Cf. *Alc.* 18.8, 20.5, 21.6, where the people react in anger to the desecration of the Herms; 36.4, where, angry with Alcibiades for various actions; 38.1, where the Athenians regret their anger; also see 26.4, where the soldiers at Samos are angry with the oligarchs and name Alcibiades their general. At *Comp. Cor.-Alc.* 2.6, however, Plutarch completely reverses tack and states that Alcibiades "performed many evils against his homeland out of anger." For the *Synkriseis* in general, see Erbse (1956), Stadter (1975) (=1995, 155-64), Pelling (1986) (=2002, 349-64), and Harrison (1995). For differing views on the reasons for inconsistency of the *Synkriseis* with the actual *Lives* they compare, see Pelling (1986) 88-89 (=2002, 352-53) and Duff (1999) 263-83.

especially Camillus and Themistocles. In the following chapter, I will attempt to show that Plutarch employs the Achilles-Odysseus scheme to illuminate aspects of statesmen's characteristics that diverge from the archetypal qualities of "anger" and "cleverness."

Chapter 5

Achilles and Anti-Odysseus: Paradigms of Failure in *Pyrrhus* and *Marius*

Whereas the Odysseus-Achilles scheme employed in the *Themistocles-Camillus* and *Coriolanus-Alcibiades* aids in drawing together characters that are significantly different, there appears to be no such need to weave together the differences of Pyrrhus and Marius. The characteristics of these two statesmen seem to fit the perfect mold for a set of parallel lives: both men are accomplished and successful generals, insatiable and ambitious, deadly and destructive.[1] Each follows a similar path to success, creating foundations of power that rest on martial accomplishment and glory. As in the depictions of Camillus and Coriolanus, both excellent soldiers, Pyrrhus' actions and deeds will implicitly recall those of Achilles, and Marius shares many of Pyrrhus' soldierly virtues.[2] The *Life of Marius*, however, diverts from a biography of a soldier and general to relate the exile and return of Marius, whose flight from Rome reads more like a modern movie script than scientific history: at various points, Marius swims for his life, hides in a muddy marsh, is captured and nearly executed, and at last returns to Rome after his misfortunes to wreak vengeance on his enemies. These events of Marius' flight, exile, and homecoming, far from the martial tone of the rest of the life, seem to be modeled in some ways on the *Odyssey*, but stress Marius' status as an *anti*-Odysseus: he is put in Odyssean situations so that the deficiencies in his character may be revealed. The

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[1] For studies of the *Pyrrhus-Marius*, see Duff (1999) 101-30, Buszard (2004) and (2005), and Werner (1995) 236-351. For historical treatments of the Pyrrhus, see Franke (1989), Garoufalias (1979), and Lévêque (1957). For Marius, see Carney (1970), and Evans (1994).

[2] For discussion of Achilles imagery in the *Life of Pyrrhus*, see esp. Mossman (1992).

Achilles-Odysseus dichotomy of this pair of *Lives* therefore is unique: each *Life* shares in the Achillean character to some extent, but this tone is abandoned in the *Marius*. In the other examples of Odysseus-Achilles patterning, the implied model generally holds. The martial valor of each hero is echoed in the biography of the other, but their deficiencies as political leaders are linked to the Homeric heroes: Pyrrhus ultimately fails as a leader because he consciously identifies with only one negative aspect of Achilles, and Marius brings about political catastrophes because he acts without self-control or reason – the exact opposite of Odysseus.

Pyrrhus: a Restive Achilles in War and Peace

Before discussing the Achilles modeling of the *Life of Pyrrhus*, previous scholarship should be briefly mentioned. First, much of the imagery that I will subsequently analyze has already been discussed by Judith Mossman.[3] In her study of the *Pyrrhus*, she states that the connections to Achilles serve to bring Pyrrhus into comparison with Alexander. She also argues that the Achilles references have two main purposes: first, the more similar that Pyrrhus' actions and virtue are to Achilles', the more positive she believes Plutarch portrays his character. As she notes, many of the allusions to Achilles in the *Life* "show Pyrrhus at his best."[4] Second, there comes a point when Pyrrhus' Achillean behavior degenerates into tragic behavior,[5] especially near his death, when he becomes more similar to Hector and Patroclus, and therefore more

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[3] Mossman (1992).
[4] *Ibid.* 95. Cf. 98, where she admits there are exceptions to this rule, as Achilles is not always a thoroughly admirable character.
[5] On the tragic in Plutarch, see Chapter 3, p. 103 n. 144 above. For specific studies of tragic imagery in the *Lives*, see Braund (1993) and Mossman (1988).

*dis*similar to Alexander, whose example Pyrrhus never quite matches. By tragic, I believe that she means his actions become theatrical or full of pathos. De Lacy states that Plutarch defines the tragic in the following way: "The material is false, the audience is deceived, and the actor pretends to be other than he really is."[6] Thus, in becoming "false," Pyrrhus fails to match Achilles and therefore fails to match Alexander; Mossman therefore dubs the Epirote king an "Alexander manqué."[7] In the end, the tragic, acted elements of Pyrrhus overwhelm his heroic ones.

Duff's argument complements Mossman's. First, he notes that a large theme of the *Pyrrhus-Marius* is that each hero's virtue is fulfilled only in the military sphere, and that the two men are symbolic of the disasters that may arise when a man of great nature suffers from limitless discontent (πλεονεξία).[8] Though Duff does not focus on the Achillean images of these qualities *per se*, he notes that the themes of military valor and tragic fatefulness in the pair echo those of the Iliadic hero. Inspired by Mossman's interpretation, Duff argues that, "as the *Life* progresses, Pyrrhus is cast increasingly in the role of a tragic hero: driven by fate, which works through his own moral weaknesses, to press on to a goal which leads inevitably to disaster."[9] For Duff the *Life* is tragic in the fateful sense: Pyrrhus' discontent inevitably brings him into misfortune.

In general, I agree with Mossman and Duff. The parallels with Achilles establish an archetypal, Achillean heroism in Pyrrhus, which is meant to draw comparisons between him and Alexander, as Mossman so rightly states. Yet, I would like to add two qualifying remarks. First, the close correspondence between Pyrrhus and Achilles

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[6] de Lacy (1952) 159. Cf. also Wardman (1974) 173.
[7] Mossman (1992) 93. Cf. Duff (1999) 123-26.
[8] Duff (1999) 121-23. Cf. Plutarch's discussion of this phenomenon at *Pomp.* 26.3.
[9] Duff (1999) 123.

generates a much more positive reading than the dichotomy than Plutarch presents between Odysseus and the very anti-Odyssean Marius in the subsequent *Life*; Mossman passes over the Marius without comment. The image of Pyrrhus also tends to be much more positive than those of his fellow post-Alexander kings in the *Lives*, especially Demetrius.[10] Secondly, the *Life of Pyrrhus*, unusual for an Achilles figure, is not plagued by the theme of anger that exists in the *Lives of Camillus* and *Coriolanus*,[11] but by a specifically Achillean discontent.[12] Thus, like Mossman and Duff, I see the Achilles-like behavior and valor of Pyrrhus as a symbol of his greatness and his weakness, both of which are essential to his character: like Achilles, he has chosen the path of warfare, because he shares the Iliadic hero's restlessness. Yet – and this is not stressed by Duff or Mossman, who prefer to see Pyrrhus driven by fate – Pyrrhus consciously decides to seek death on the battlefield, despite the fact that he *knows* that this is the *wrong* decision. His death is respresents an Aristotelian view of tragedy: his "reversal" (περιπέτεια) is coupled with "understanding" (ἀναγνώρισις).[13] As I shall discuss in more detail below, Pyrrhus rejects the opportunity for a peaceful reign, though he realizes that a life of warfare is a futile and vain endeavor. For Pyrrhus, as for Achilles, who opts for a short,

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[10] Cf. Mossman (1992) 104: "There are rather more epic connections in the *Pyrrhus* than there are tragic links; conversely, tragic imagery fills the *Demetrius*, and there is very little epic. It seems highly likely that this is because Plutarch saw Pyrrhus as more complicated than Demetrius, whose career fitted more neatly into the tragic-king mold." I would argue that the Achilles imagery renders Pyrrhus more favorable than Demetrius, whose periods of peace are consumed in drinking and sexing on the Acropolis. Also, Mossman makes no note of Eumenes, who also shares several qualities with Pyrrhus: each man eschews a chance for peace in order to continue war. Cf. *Pyr.* 14 and *Comp. Sert-Eum.* 2. Yet Plutarch accuses Eumenes of "having surrendered his body and soul to his enemies" (*Comp. Sert.-Eum.* 2.8), a charge Pyrrhus avoids; also, Eumenes earns the title "φιλοπόλεμος" (*Comp. Sert.-Eum.* 2.1, 4), an apparently derogatory adjective that Pyrrhus also never earns, despite his obviously bellicose nature.

[11] See above, Chapters 3, pp. 91-102 and 4, pp. 107-28, respectively.

[12] Cf. Duff (1999) 103-7.

[13] Cf. Arist. *Poet.* 1452a.

glorious life instead of a long, anonymous one,[14] the decision to be king or warrior is an all-or-nothing proposition, a concept that Plutarch considers erroneous.

Pyrrhus' epic accomplishments are foreshadowed from the outset of the *Life*.[15] The list of Pyrrhus' lineage reads like a chapter from a mythological textbook. Among his ancestors are the unsuccessful charioteer Phaethon, the survivors of the great flood Deucalion and Pyrrha, and finally Neoptolemus, called Pyrrhus as a child, and his descendants who conquered Epirus some time after his return from Troy (*Pyr.* 1.1-2).[16] The distinction of Pyrrhus' family tree is explicit and detailed. Plutarch also emphasizes the familial connection to Achilles by noting that the Epirotes had also bestowed divine honors upon the ancient hero, whom they also call Aspetus (1.3). Still, the lineage of Pyrrhus contains an element of foreboding. According to Plutarch, "After these first leaders, the kings in between became barbaric and quite obscure, both in their power and lives" (1.4). It is only through a connection to Greek culture that the Molossians eventually regain their previous stature.[17] The stage is set for a hero who, of indisputably great nature though he is, will struggle to limit himself. There is a raw, potentially powerful fierceness in his character.[18]

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[14] Cf. *Il.* 9.410-16.

[15] Mossman (1992) 93, "The opening of the *Pyrrhus* sets up the heroic strand in the *Life*." Cf. also Perret (1942) 428, "Dès les premiers mois de la vie du jeune héros, la présence d'Achille se fait sensible auprès de lui."

[16] On the historical links between Pyrrhus and Achilles, see Garoufalias (1979) 16, 165-70. On ancestry in Plutarch in general, see Duff (1999) 310-11.

[17] Hellenic education is, of course, a critical theme for Plutarch. See Swain (1990) 192, Duff (1999) 76-77, Pelling (2000) (=2002, 339-48), and Plutarch's *De mor. virt.* In particular, this theme is echoed in the *Marius* at 2.4, and Stadter (1988) 288 notes, "the barbarian interlude in the genealogy suggests a certain rawness in Pyrrhus' ambition, which is confirmed in the course of the life, and further paralleled in the companion figure of Marius." See also Plutarch's *De aud. poet.* and *Prof. in virt.*

[18] The characteristics of the barbarian in Plutarch vary from the savage and haughty to effeminate and deceptive. It is the "savage and haughty" that I believe Pyrrhus' "barbarized" ancestors become, since Tharryphas subsequently teaches them "humane" (φιλάνθρωπος) laws, which, as Duff (1999) 77-78 notes, opposes and limits harshness and anger. For the barbaric in Plutarch generally, see Schmidt (1999).

Events of Pyrrhus' infancy draw further links to Achilles.[19] When two men, Androclides and Angelus, steal the infant Pyrrhus away from Epirus during the period of civil strife resulting in the death of his father, the party in their flight to Megara are eventually opposed by a river (2.3). In order to cross, the fugitives ask for aid from some local peasants on the other side, one of whom is named Achilles (2.8). Mossman argues that the opposition of a flooded river may hint at a connection to Achilles' battle with Scamander *Iliad* 21.[20] The identifying of one of the rescuers as Achilles emphasizes the connection between Pyrrhus and his mythical and ancestral forebear.[21] Certainly Plutarch could have omitted the name of Pyrrhus' savior. Yet Plutarch maintains a connection to the heroic hero; Pyrrhus' relationship to Achilles and his early salvation at the hands of a man with his name suggests a reading linking the two men, but also hints at an inevitable, unyielding flaw in Pyrrhus' own character.

When Pyrrhus comes of age, he consciously manipulates and emulates the hero of the *Iliad.* First, Pyrrhus has a mystical power of healing, similar to the legend of Achilles and Telephus[22] an ability mentioned by Eurypylus in the *Iliad.*[23] While at war with Demetrius, his army meets with that of Pantauchus, Demetrius' general. Determined to prove his valor, Pyrrhus meets Pantauchus, the best of Demetrius' generals in bravery, proficiency, and bodily strength (ἀνδρείᾳ καὶ χειρὶ καὶ ῥώμῃ σώματος ἄριστος, 7.7). Pyrrhus, wishing to acquire the reputation of Achilles more through bravery

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[19] Cf. Mossman (1992) 93.
[20] *Ibid.* 93.
[21] Garoufalias (1979) 217, n. 6 records a note that this tale was invented by Proxenos "in order to point out Pyrrhus' descent from Achilles and perhaps to suggest that the god Aspetus-Achilles undertook the protection of his descendant."
[22] Cf. Ov. *Metam.* 13.171-72.
[23] At *Il.* 11.828-32.

(ἀρετή) than through bloodlines (γένος), eagerly faces him. The battle, featuring thrown javelins followed by a swordfight and then the Macedonians' succor of a dazed and defeated Pantauchus, follows the general pattern of an epic battle in the *Iliad*.[24] As Duff notes, no other source discusses the one-on-one battles that Plutarch describes here.[25] Mossman argues, "This is Pyrrhus at his best...He seeks to prove himself a worthy descendant of Achilles; as he makes his attempt, the Iliadic form of the narrative asserts that he is succeeding."[26] Plutarch's unprecedented, Iliadic battles highlight the link to Achilles as a warrior without equal. Pyrrhus' epic efforts to this point are appropriate and beneficial.

After his success against Pantauchus, Pyrrhus attains his greatest reputation. His enemies, rather than growing hateful towards him, are full of admiration (8.2).[27] Every other leader imitates Alexander in their dress and voice, only Pyrrhus does so in his deeds (8.2). Plutarch also relates an anecdote of Antigonus, who, when asked who the best general was, says, "Pyrrhus, if he should grow old" (8.4). Plutarch records that Hannibal considered Pyrrhus the best general in skill and cleverness, with Scipio and himself coming after him (8.5).[28] The heroic grandeur of Pyrrhus is strengthened by a comparison to Demetrius, who, faced with the Epirote king's glorious reputation, escapes his fickle army by disguising himself as a common soldier (11.13). As Garoufalias notes,

> "Among all the many kings who were trying to resemble Alexander the Great, only one had any real similarity: Pyrrhus. The Macedonians made comparisons

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[24] For the traditional patterns of Homeric fight scenes, see Fenik (1968). For a more detailed analysis of this episode with Pantauchus, see Mossman (1992) 95.
[25] Duff (1999) 122.
[26] Mossman (1992) 95.
[27] Polman (1974) 175-76 does not consider the *Life* at this point to have reached a true "*akme*," though the heroic emphasis here makes me beg to differ.
[28] A similar evaluation is also recorded at *Flam.* 21.4, with Pyrrhus taking second after Alexander.

> between Pyrrhus and their own king, Demetrius, who, like a stage actor, tried to suggest the appearance and manner of Alexander the Great. He affected lavish clothing, superb diadems, headdresses with double crowns, tunics embroidered with gold thread and gold-dipped sandals. But, when it came down to reality, in the heat of battle, it was only Pyrrhus who bore a truly striking resemblance to Alexander. It was in Pyrrhus alone that the great and victorious general lived again."[29]

Within the context of the *Lives*, the comparison of Pyrrhus with Achilles grants him a more authentic, heroic stature, especially when compared with Demetrius as a successor to Alexander. This glorious image of Pyrrhus also occurs in the *Life of Demetrius*, where the soldiers see "an image of Alexander's bravery" in Pyrrhus but view Demetrius as an actor on a stage (*Demetr.* 41.5). Pyrrhus has undoubtedly demonstrated his virtues to this point as a man of heroic and virtuous bearing...but only in war.

The victory he attains over Demetrius gains him the kingdom of Macedon, but the peace he makes with Lysmachus is not to last. Plutarch explains,

> οἷς γὰρ οὐ πέλαγος, οὐκ ὄρος, οὐκ ἀοίκητος ἐρημία πέρας ἐστὶ πλεονεξίας, οὐδ' οἱ διαιροῦντες Εὐρώπην καὶ 'Ασίαν τέρμονες ὁρίζουσι τὰς ἐπιθυμίας, πῶς ἂν ἁπτόμενοι καὶ ψαύοντες ἀλλήλων ἀτρεμοῖεν ἐν τοῖς παροῦσι μὴ ἀδικοῦντες, οὐκ ἔστιν εἰπεῖν· (4) ἀλλὰ πολεμοῦσι μὲν ἀεὶ, τὸ ἐπιβουλεύειν καὶ φθονεῖν ἔμφυτον ἔχοντες, δυεῖν δὲ ὀνομάτων, ὥσπερ νομισμάτων, πολέμου καὶ εἰρήνης, τῷ παρατυχόντι χρῶνται πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον, οὐ πρὸς τὸ δίκαιον· (5) ἐπεὶ βελτίους γε πολεμεῖν ὁμολογοῦντες εἰσιν ἢ τῆς ἀδικίας τὸ ἀργοῦν καὶ σχολάζον δικαιοσύνην καὶ φιλίαν ὀνομάζοντες.
>
> For whom not the sea, nor a mountain, nor an uninhabitable desert is the limit of their greed, nor do the boundaries separating Europe and Asia check their lust, how can they remain still touching and in contact with each other, not wronging the other to those present, it is impossible to say; (4) but they forever make war,

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[29] Garoufalias (1979) 42. Perhaps necessity drove Pyrrhus to rely on his deeds rather than appearance. In the same study, 274 n. 63, Garoufalias records a story from Lucian's *To an uneducated man* 21, in which "Pyrrhus showed an old woman in Larissa the pictures of Philip, Perdiccas, Alexander, Cassander, and other kings, and asked her which of them he resembled, expecting to be told that he looked like Alexander the Great. The old woman, after looking carefully, replied, to his great disappointment, that he looked like Batrachion the cook, who lived in Larissa and resembled Pyrrhus." Cf. Plutarch's description of Pyrrhus' appearance as φοβερώτερος,·due in part to having an upper row of teeth that is one solid bone (*Pyr.* 3.5).

> naturally scheming and hating, and they use the two words "war" and "peace" like coins, in whatever instance for their advantage, not for justice; (5) for certainly they are better men, who agree to make war than to name their idleness and leisure from their injustice "justice" and "friendship."
>
> (*Pyrrhus* 12.3-5)

Pyrrhus' flaw as a statesman is now apparent: he treats peace as warfare.[30] To Pyrrhus, justice is secondary to the acquisition of power, which is always accomplished in ways that emulate warfare. As Braund notes, "In battle proper, Pyrrhus can maintain a cool head and a broad view, but out of battle such powers seem to desert him in his passion for more."[31] Peacetime rule is not to be one of Pyrrhus' strengths.

Plutarch soon reveals that his Achillean nature is responsible for Pyrrhus' unchecked ambition, which soon goads him into further misfortune. Retiring to Epirus after losing Macedon to Lysimachus, he is granted the chance to rule his people in peace (13.1). Unfortunately, his heroic nature troubles his soul. Plutarch notes:

> ὥσπερ ὁ Ἀχιλλεὺς οὐκ ἔφερε τὴν σχολήν,
> "ἀλλὰ φθινύθεσκε φίλον κῆρ
> αὖθι μένων, ποθέεσκε δ' ἀϋτήν τε πτόλεμόν τε."[32]
>
> Just as Achilles could not bear leisure,
> "But he wore away his heart
> waiting there, though he longed for both the battle cry and war."
>
> (*Pyrrhus* 13.2)

In this instance his characteristics and actions, dictated by his connection to his heroic predecessor, prove harmful. As in the *Iliad*, his actions foreshadow his future misfortune. Pyrrhus' Achillean lust for warfare is ruinously powerful and leads to his accepting the request of the Tarentines to fight Rome (13.12-13). At this point, Plutarch relates a

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[30] We have seen a similar problem in Coriolanus, who treats the political realm like a battlefield. See above, Chapter 4, esp. p. 115.
[31] Braund (1997).
[32] *Il.* 1.491-92.

discussion between Pyrrhus and Cineas, his Thessalian advisor. Cineas asks when Pyrrhus' ambition for lands and property might end: for after Italy he shall take Sicily, then Libya, Carthage, and eventually Macedonia and Greece (14.7-11). When all these victories are accomplished, Cineas asks, "What then will we do?," to which Pyrrhus answers, "We shall have much leisure to celebrate and make merry" (14.11-12). When Cineas responds, "What keeps us from doing that right now?," Pyrrhus is silent, and realizes that he is surrendering his good fortune for potentially vain hopes (14.14). This scene, as Duff has noted, is reminiscent of an advisor speech in Herodotus, in particular the discussions between Croesus and Solon or Xerxes and Artabanus.[33] Like Xerxes (and unlike Croesus), Pyrrhus understands Cineas' admonition, but cannot follow his advice. In Herodotus the gods bid Xerxes to attack Greece (to his great detriment)[34] – or he at least interprets the oracle in this manner – whereas the burden of Pyrrhus' decision to pursue war with Rome rests on his shoulders alone. Pyrrhus' unyielding and restive heroic bearing, like Achilles', now conducts him down a path of misfortune.[35] Yet it is heroic discontent, not the wrathful need for vengeance of a Coriolanus, that spurs him.

Where his ancestor Achilles fights against the Trojans, Pyrrhus now becomes the first Greek king to wage war against the Trojans' descendants, the Romans.[36] During this war, Pyrrhus' character remains steeped in the conventionally heroic virtues of bravery and leadership. At Tarentum, Pyrrhus behaves not like a tyrant but as a disciplined

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[33] Duff (1999) 113. Cf. also Lattimore (1939), Pelling (1991) 130-40.
[34] Herod. 7.10-18.
[35] As tragedy is defined in Aristotle, he undergoes a "reversal" (περιπέτεια) – his war with Rome – and "understanding" (ἀναγνώρισις) – his discussion with Cineas (*Poetics* 1452a). Like Achilles' choice to live a short, glorious life, Pyrrhus recognizes that his choice leads to his doom, but resolves upon it regardless.
[36] As Mossman (1992) 105 n. 4 notes, the Romans are not characterized as Trojans. Plutarch's image of the Romans in the *Pyrrhus* depicts them not as Trojans of the *Iliad* (who are legendary losers, after all), but as a heroic race that matches Pyrrhus, perhaps matching the Trojans of the *Aeneid*. On this see also below.

general, forbidding the Tarentines from drinking parties and revelry in an attempt to ready them for war (16.1-3). When he encounters the Romans, he is struck by a deep respect for their discipline and order, stating to Megacles, "The arrangement of the barbarians is not barbaric" (16.7). Subsequently, as Mossman notes, "The first battle against the Romans is one of Pyrrhus' finest moments,"[37] as he engages once more in a one-on-one conflict with a Roman, though this time he must be saved by his companion Leonnatus (16.13-16). Whereas in the war with Demetrius Pyrrhus had sought out Pantauchus without fear and obtained incredible glory, his near-death experience at the hands of a Roman cavalry man "taught Pyrrhus to guard himself more closely" (17.1).[38] At this point, Pyrrhus realizes that he cannot risk himself needlessly: his fearless daring is now replaced by a tamer caution. The opposition of the Romans brings the Iliadic warrior into a new, more cautious frame of mind.

Pyrrhus' sudden urge for caution leads to an act that recalls an event of the *Iliad.* Pyrrhus agrees to exchange his cloak and armor (τὴν χλαμύδα καὶ τὰ ὅπλα) with his officer Megacles in order to prevent himself from being targeted by the Romans (17.1). In giving his armor to his friend, his actions are similar to those of Achilles in *Iliad* 16 who allows Patroclus to don his own armor. Like Patroclus, Megacles dies, and Pyrrhus reveals himself to his soldiers in order to prevent a rout and eventually defeat the Romans.[39] Pyrrhus in fact loses many of his best troops, including the generals that he trusts the most (17.8). Through these actions that are reminiscent of Achilles, Pyrrhus once more attains a victory against the stolid Roman enemy. Though the results of his

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[37] Mossman (1992) 99.
[38] Plutarch (*Pyr.* 16.16) names the cavalry man as one Oplacus, a Frentanian by birth.
[39] Mossman (1992) 100 argues for a negative reading of this scene, suggesting that Pyrrhus is acting cowardly in not fighting at the fore in his own armor.

decision are not thoroughly positive – like Achilles, he loses a loyal companion – he does accomplish the vital goal of keeping himself alive.

The actions of Pyrrhus against the Romans, though ultimately unsuccessful, are not due to a deficiency in his character. His failure against the Romans lies not in his inability to match the prowess of his ancestor Achilles – certainly, he matches the epic hero in combat ability and even imitates his decision-making – but in his misfortune of opposing an entire nation with natures as great as his own. While each victory wears down Pyrrhus' forces, for the Romans, as Plutarch notes, "Defeat never seemed to undermine their self-confidence: instead their anger (ὀργή) only gave them fresh strength and a determination to pursue the war" (21.15).[40] The Romans mirror Achilles, whose anger stirs his determination and warlike strength. The Trojans Pyrrhus faces as a 3rd century BCE Achilles are far mightier than those of the *Iliad.* Plutarch portrays Pyrrhus' failure to subjugate Rome as due to the greatness of Rome rather than the inability of the Epirot general.[41] As Garoufalias notes, the Romans "had a highly developed sense of patriotism and...fought out of national duty for the glory and grandeur of Rome."[42] These Romans are nothing like the Persians of the East, who succumb so easily to Alexander's invasion.[43]

Because of the devastating losses he suffers in his victories over Rome, Pyrrhus abandons the Tarentines in favor of fighting the Carthaginians in Sicily. Again his heroic

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[40] See above for the Achillean effects of "ὀργή" in the *Camillus* and *Coriolanus*. Also cf. Alexiou (1999).
[41] Cf. the comments at *Pyr.* 8.3-5, referred to above, where the generalship of Pyrrhus is said to surpass his contemporaries and even Hannibal and Scipio.
[42] Garoufalias (1979) 77.
[43] Cf. Braund (1997): "Pyrrhus' war with Rome evoked the familiar debate as to what would have happened had Alexander clashed with Rome." Cf. also Appius Claudius' speech at *Pyr.* 19.

bearing comes to the fore. In the assault on Eryx, he fights once more like an epic hero, scaling the ladders and fighting in the fore like an invincible warrior. Plutarch adds,

> ἔπαθε δ' αὐτὸς οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ καὶ προσιδεῖν δεινὸς ἐφάνη τοῖς πολεμίοις, καὶ τὸν Ὅμηρον ἔδειξεν ὀρθῶς καὶ μετ' ἐμπειρίας ἀποφαίνοντα τῶν ἀρετῶν μόνην τὴν ἀνδρείαν φορὰς πολλάκις ἐνθουσιώδεις καὶ μανικὰς φερομένην.
>
> He suffered nothing, but appeared terrible to look upon for the enemy, and he proved Homer write in saying that courage, alone of the virtues, often breeds bearings that possess the soul and are frenzied.
>
> (*Pyrrhus* 22.11)

His martial bearing still recalls Achilles and has the potential for glory. Pyrrhus, matching once more the character and ability of Achilles, demonstrates the strength of character that resisted the Romans so well in Italy. Against the weaker and less heroic inhabitants of Sicily, Pyrrhus' might again outshines the opponent.

Unfortunately, the suspicion and warlike ambition that leads to his bitter schemes with Lysimachus in Macedonia recur in his dealings with the Sicilians. Having stabilized affairs in Sicily, his peacetime actions, as Plutarch notes, become tyrannical (23.3). As with Lysimachus, he turns against the men who invite him to Sicily, disgusting his allies. Thus, like his campaigns in Macedon and Italy, the affair in Sicily too is left unaccomplished, and he eventually returns to Italy in an effort to defeat the Romans again (23.7). Once more at war, he demonstrates another instance of Achillean individual might, cleaving a mighty Mamertine opponent into two pieces (24.4-5). This time, undermined by his hesitant and over-reaching political policy, Pyrrhus' allies are already against him, and he meets a sound defeat at the hands of the Romans.[44] Though his martial valor is unsurpassed, Pyrrhus saps its effectiveness because of his unsuitable

[44] As Plutarch *Pyr.* 25.8-9 notes, this marks the beginning of Roman hegemony in Italy.

behavior in the political realm. His polemical tactics when other types of leadership are required continues to hamper his command.

Having accomplished nothing more than sacrificing the good fortune that Cineas had warned him about losing earlier, Pyrrhus returns to Epirus for a short-lived respite. Ever the restless Achilles, he embarks on a new war in the Peloponnesus and harasses Antigonus (26.2) and besieges Sparta. This siege recalls the war against the virtuous and capable Romans, as it proves to be as dramatic and illustrative a failure. As Mossman notes, during this war, "The anecdotes are of the courage of the Spartans, not of Pyrrhus himself, until after the vision that he interprets as portending the fall of the city."[45] In fact, when warned that his dream of lightning striking Sparta denotes that the city is protected by the gods, Pyrrhus replies, echoing the words of Hector: "One omen is best, to fight for Pyrrhus" (οἰωνὸς ἄριστος ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ Πύρρου, 29.4).[46] Pyrrhus' heroism now takes a negative turn, as he, like Hector in the *Iliad*, haughtily rebukes the man of good counsel. The path that has led him to this point of glory followed by miserable defeat has been his own.

After losing the siege of Sparta, Pyrrhus retreats towards Argos in an attempt to battle Antigonus. On the way, his son Ptolemy is killed by the pursuing Spartans, resulting in a battle frenzy whose madness reaches an almost inhuman level:

> ἐφ' οὓς ὁ Πύρρος ἄρτι τὸν θάνατον τοῦ παιδὸς ἀκηκοὼς καὶ περιπαθῶν ἐπέστρεψε τοὺς ἱππεῖς τῶν Μολοσσῶν. (8) καὶ πρῶτος εἰσελάσας ἐνεπίμπλατο φόνου τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων, ἀεὶ μέν τις ἄμαχος καὶ δεινὸς ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις φαινόμενος, τότε δὲ ὑπερβάλλων τόλμῃ καὶ βίᾳ τοὺς

[45] Mossman (1992) 102.
[46] Cf. *Il.* 12.243: "εἷς οἰωνὸς ἄριστος ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πάτρης." Alexiou (2000) 63, states that Plutarch intends for this quotation to characterize Pyrrhus as a most self-confident and ambitious man. Cf. also Duff (1999) 124.

προτέρους ἀγῶνας...καὶ πεζὸς ἤδη πάντας ἐπὶ τῷ Εὐάλκῳ μαχομέν ους ἀπέκτεινε τοὺς λογάδας.

> Against them Pyrrhus turned the horses of the Molossians, having just heard of the death of his son and been filled with anguish. (8) And first driving into them he became filled with the slaughter of the Spartans; always before he seemed someone invincible and deadly in weapons, but at that moment he surpassed all his former contests in daring and violence...and on foot he swiftly killed all the picked band fighting over the corpse of [the Spartan] Eualcos.
>
> (*Pyrrhus* 30.7-8)

The savage and mindless response, and the fight over the corpse of an enemy may here recall the devastation that Achilles unleashes on the Trojans after the death of Patroclus.[47] Though these events are not exactly parallel to the *Iliad* – Pyrrhus is only away from the fighting at this moment, he has not sulkily withdrawn – certainly, the death of his son presages his own death which will soon arrive in Argos, much as Patroclus' death does for Achilles. Pyrrhus' unceasing desire for warfare now climbs to its inevitable climax.

At Argos, Pyrrhus tries to pre-empt the conflict with one last appeal to his warlike, heroic nature, and challenges Antigonus to a duel. Perhaps as a final salvo against Pyrrhus' way of life, Antigonus refuses to fight, noting, "many roads lie open for death, if he no longer wishes to live" (31.4).[48] When the Argives ask for both leaders to go away, Antigonus quickly consents, but Pyrrhus, his compulsive urge for war having now become all-encompassing, does not give a hostage, and immediately initiates a battle with the city. In the midst of a chaotic street fight, Pyrrhus meets his end. An old woman strikes from above upon his helmet with a roof tile, causing his eyes to be troubled. In this dazed state, a man named Zopyrus finds and executes him (34.2-6). It is tempting, as

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[47] Duff (1999) 127 notes that the death of Eualcos is termed an "ἐναγισμός," which is specifically a sacrifice to a dead man worshipped as a hero. Also see same, n. 97, where Duff says it probably recalls "Achilles' human sacrifice at Patroclus' pyre" at *Il.* 23.175-76. Cf. also Mossman (1992) 103.

[48] Cf. also Braund's (1997) interpretation of this scene.

Mossman notes,[49] to recall the heroic death of Patroclus in the *Iliad*, whose helmet is struck from his head by Apollo and his eyes roll about in their sockets before Hector offers the killing blow (*Il.* 16.790-867). The fate of Pyrrhus has finally arrived, in a manner that again echoes the heroic. Pyrrhus' warlike nature, the nature that, like Achilles, renders him invincible in battle and yet almost entirely inept in times of peace and diplomacy, results in an ill-fated, warrior's death in a street fight.[50]

As Braund notes, Pyrrhus "leads his army this way and that, without achieving anything substantial beyond warfare and, at best, fleeting victories."[51] Pyrrhus never reaches a point of accepting what he has. An anecdote of Pyrrhus also perhaps demonstrates Plutarch's intention. When Pyrrhus is asked by his son who will inherit the throne, he says, "whoever keeps the sharpest sword" (*Pyr.* 9.6). Plutarch considers this statement to be the equivalent of the curse of Oedipus from tragedy, that Eteocles and Polyneices should divide the house "with whetted sword" and not by lot.[52] Pyrrhus' statement appears to encourage πλεονέξια, or "desire to have more," a trait that Plutarch, as a good Platonist,[53] considers "savage and beastly" (ἄμικτος καὶ θηριώδης, 9.6). In making this proclamation, Pyrrhus dooms his children to the same sort of life that he has led: he views the succession as another battle to be won by force of arms.[54] Notably, Pyrrhus' promise of succession resembles a similar tale of Alexander. As Diodorus relates, when Alexander was asked to whom he would leave his kingdom, he

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[49] Mossman (1992) 103.
[50] On a discussion of the tragic build-up to Pyrrhus' death, see Duff (1999) 123-25; Mossman (1992) 102;
[51] Braund (1997).
[52] From Euripides *Phoenissae* 68.
[53] Cf. *Rep.* 9.586A.
[54] Braund (1997) states, "The contrast with Antigonus' parenting at the end of the *Life* (*Pyr.* 34.9-10) could hardly be stronger."

answered, "To the strongest" (17.117.4).[55] Though Plutarch almost certainly knew this story, he omits it from his *Life of Alexander*.[56] Given that Plutarch couples the quotation of Pyrrhus with a tale of mythical fratricide, and that Alexander's kingdom was fragmented after his death, Plutarch's omission of Alexander's famous statement suggests a more positive reading of Alexander: *he* would not have intentionally made a promise that would have promised only bloodshed and chaos. Therefore, Pyrrhus' intentional provocation of bloodshed fares poorly beside the omitted tale of Alexander.

The use of Achilles imagery thus reinforces three major themes in the *Life*. First, it highlights the almost entirely military tone of the *Life* as well as stressing Pyrrhus' unmatched success as a warrior. Second, though the emphasis on Pyrrhus' martial valor will be shared by Marius in the parallel *Life*, the consistent emphasis is more positive, bringing Pyrrhus closer to the positive image of Alexander and farther from the negative example of Demetrius.[57] The image of Marius will be more negative. Lastly, the Achillean character of Pyrrhus presses him, like his epic predecessor, into misfortune and death not from an unvanquished anger, but from an unyielding and restless spirit. In fact, though the *Life* is mainly epic in its connotations, it contains aspects of tragedy. For, as Knox notes of tragic heroes, Pyrrhus "makes a decision which springs from the deepest layer of his individual nature, his *physis*, and then blindly, ferociously, heroically

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[55] Also recorded by Arrian 7.26.3, and Curtius 10.5.4-5, who translates "τῷ κρατίστῳ" as "optimum."
[56] I state this fact with some trepidation, as it is commonly believed that the ending of the *Alexander* (along with the beginning of the *Caesar*) is missing. See Hamilton (1969) 217, Ziegler (1935) 387-90, Stadter (1988) 276-77, and Pelling (1979) 85 n. 81 (=1995, 289 n. 81; =2002, 36 n. 82).
[57] Though the *Pyrrhus* is sometimes placed in a group of "negative *Lives*," Plutarch does not make such a designation explicit. Only in the proem to the *Demetrius-Antony* does Plutarch definitely mark a pair as negative (*Demetr.* 1). For more on this topic, see Russell (1973) 135, Pelling (1988b) 10-26, Stadter (1988) 285, Duff (1999) 45-49.

maintains that decision even to the point of self-destruction."[58] Pyrrhus consciously opts to forsake peace in favor of war, though he knows the consequences, and this warlike nature continues to dictate his actions when periods of diplomacy and reasonable statesmanship are required. In fact, the need for constant warfare consumes Pyrrhus, as he considers it the only way to prove his worth. Ever the epic warrior, Pyrrhus' single-mindedness and unwavering reliance on martial virtue and constant warfare to prove his worth taints his leadership and renders it pointless.[59] He understands that his nature is not always beneficent, but he cannot escape it, and so he is inevitably doomed to a premature death. We shall see a recurrent pattern of such martial valor unaccompanied by self-control in the parallel *Life of Marius*, but Marius will turn his passion against his homeland.

Marius: Magnificent Warrior, Horrible Citizen[60]

The *Life of Marius* echoes many of the themes of the *Pyrrhus*, and both men's fame rests almost entirely on their military accomplishments. Most importantly, though, the two men are similar in suffering from discontent resulting from πλεονεξία.[61] The "need for more" of Pyrrhus and Marius leads to each man's downfall: neither man lives happily in leisure, and each one actively seeks warfare. Yet, whereas Pyrrhus at least

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[58] Knox (1966) 5; on Achilles as a tragic figure, see same 50-52.
[59] As Braund (1997) notes, "Plutarch has chosen to close [the *Pyrrhus*] in such a way as to highlight the shortcomings of his subject, Pyrrhus, and thereby to confirm the central moral of the *Life*. The closing vignette of Antigonus and his son shows Plutarch's readers that the wise king (and therefore the wise person) takes a broader view of his position in the world."
[60] This title is inspired by that of Werner's (1995) excellent study, *Quantum Bello Optimus, Tantum Pace Pessimus: Studien zum Mariusbilden der antiken Geschichtsschreibung*, which stems from Velleius Paterculus II.11.1, and is similar to the evaluation stated at Livy, *Periochae* 80: "Vir, cuius si examinentur cum virtutibus vitia, haud facile sit dictu utrum bello melior an pace perniciosior fuerit."
[61] See esp. Duff (1999) 103-7.

makes the conscious choice not to remove himself from warfare and rule at peace in Epirus,[62] Marius lacks any sense of self-awareness, and pursues his desires mindlessly. Though his six consulships bring him closer to sole hegemony than anyone in Roman history, even these accomplishments leave him unfulfilled. Marius not only cannot accept leisure, he also cannot accept a rightful place for a Roman politician, and his *Life* will be more disastrous. In order to illustrate the devastating vices of Marius, Plutarch seems to employ an Odyssean model in order to draw out their contrasts. This implied model is highlighted during his flight and exile, and demonstrates how a man without the benefits of philosophy or self-control reacts to misfortune – in essence, how an anti-Odysseus would act: with selfishness, barbarism, and destruction to his fellow citizens. As in the *Pyrrhus*, the *Marius*' epic counterpart illuminates the subject's character. In Marius' case, despite his accomplishments and lofty stature, he is nowhere near the ideal leader or statesman, but really a savage beast dressed in the robes of authority.

From obscure roots, Marius becomes famous and accomplished, like Pyrrhus, in the military sphere. The bulk of the *Life* is a rather straightforward tale of a stolid, military Roman earning respect and promotion with exceptional speed. As a soldier, Marius' inborn qualities behoove him excellently, and he quickly overcomes his unknown heritage. Under Scipio he excels the other soldiers in bravery (ἀνδρεία) and even kills an enemy in the sight of his general (3.2-3). At one point, Scipio, when asked what leader will follow him, touches Marius on the shoulder and says, "Perhaps this fellow" (*Mar.* 3.4). His military successes, individual glory, and approval from the illustrious Scipio place a solid foundation for the young Marius' political and military

[62] Cf. *Pyrrhus* 14; see also above.

future. So far his nature and the good of Rome are in conjunction, and he seems to be following the martial proficiency laid out in the parallel *Pyrrhus*.

So long as Rome has need of Marius' generalship, he fares well and, in general, quite virtuously. After his praetorship, he goes to Spain and clears it of robbers, behaving honorably and uprightly enough to earn the hand of a patrician's daughter (6.4).[63] He also serves well under Metellus in Africa (7.1-6). Despite many hardships and countless labors, Marius suffers all of them alongside his fellow soldiers; as Plutarch approvingly notes, "for soldiers wonder at leaders not as they take a share in their honors and prizes as much as those taking part in their toil and danger" (7.5).[64] After going to Rome to earn the consulship, he returns to Africa, where Jugurtha is defeated and captured in short order (9-10). Though the capture of Jugurtha is effected by an irritatingly haughty Sulla, when the Cimbri and Teutones threaten Rome, Marius immediately abandons his anger with Sulla in order to fend off the German threat (11.1). Also, after he defeats the Teutones, he forsakes a triumph to rush out against the Cimbrians, whom his colleague Catulus has failed to defeat (24.1). He quickly dispatches the Cimbrians and preserves Rome. As the premier general of Rome Marius is loved and respected, and his usefulness for his homeland is unquestioned.

Yet, when Marius struggles for the highest commands he fails to act in a virtuous manner, and his antipathy for the nobles and those in authority trouble his actions. When Marius has Metellus execute his friend Turpillius on a charge of treason that is later found to have been false, he "rejoices" and brags about placing a guest-friend's demon (ἀλάστωρ ξενοκτόνος) on Metellus (8.5). Also, after winning the consulship at

[63] In fact, the daughter proves to be Julia, Julius Caesar's aunt.
[64] Cf. *Pyrrhus* and *Alexander*, who not only serve alongside their men, but often lead the assaults.

Rome, he boasts that he stole it from the blue-blooded aristocrats and slanders the deeds of Metellus in Africa (9.2-3). When the subtleties and designs of diplomacy and politics are required, Marius proves to be nothing more than a self-centered, strife-harboring fiend. Pelling notes that this is not "the last time when we see his *logos* misfiring in politics, generating the wrong response because he has failed to read his audience aright."[65] His words inspire acts of pride and pettiness towards him. Metellus grows jealous at Marius' consulship (10.1), and Sulla, who ultimately (and felicitously!) captures Jugurtha without Marius' help, has a seal-ring engraved commemorating the deed (10.7-9), an act that causes Marius and his followers to seethe with hatred. The harmful political leadership of Marius will be a recurring feature of the *Life*, and his actions seem to be the opposite of an Odysseus: his own personal glory is more important to him than anything else, even success.

In complete opposition to the goals of Odysseus as portrayed in the *Moralia*, the point of Marius' attainment of power is not merely to lead his nation to success, but to sow dissent between his side and the nobles. This base behavior is the result of his harsh demeanor and lack of education, which Plutarch has discussed earlier in the *Life*:

> τῆς δὲ ὄψεως τῆς Μαρίου λιθίνην εἰκόνα κειμένην ἐν Ῥαβέννῃ τῆς Γαλατίας ἐθεώμεθα πάνυ τῇ λεγομένῃ περὶ τὸ ἦθος στρυφνότητι καὶ πικρίᾳ πρέπουσαν. ἀνδρώδης γὰρ φύσει καὶ πολεμικὸς γενόμενος, καὶ στρατιωτικῆς μᾶλλον ἢ πολιτικῆς παιδείας μεταλαβών, ἄκρατον ἐν ταῖς ἐξουσίαις τὸν θυμὸν ἔσχε. (2) λέγεται δὲ μῆτε γράμματα μαθεῖν Ἑλληνικὰ μῆτε γλώττῃ πρὸς μηδὲν Ἑλληνίδι χρῆσθαι τῶν σπουδῆς ἐχομένων, ὡς γελοῖον γράμματα μανθάνειν ὧν οἱ διδάσκαλοι δουλεύοιεν ἑτέροις· μετὰ δὲ τὸν δεύτερον θρίαμβον ἐπὶ ναοῦ τινος καθιερώσει θέας Ἑλληνικὰς παρέχων, εἰς τὸ θέατρον ἐλθὼν καὶ μόνον καθίσας εὐθὺς ἀπαλλαγῆναι. (3) ὥσπερ οὖν Ξενοκράτει τῷ φιλοσόφῳ σκυθρωποτέρῳ δοκοῦντι τὸ ἦθος εἶναι πολλάκις εἰώθει λέγειν ὁ

[65] Pelling (2000) 334 (=2002, 342).

Πλάτων, (4)"Ὦ μακάριε Ξενόκρατες, θῦε ταῖς Χάρισιν," οὕτως εἴ τις ἔπεισε Μάριον θύειν ταῖς Ἑλληνικαῖς Μούσαις καὶ Χάρισιν, οὐκ ἂν ἐκπρεπεστάταις στρατηγίαις καὶ πολιτείαις ἀμορφοτάτην ἐπέθηκε κορωνίδα, ὑπὸ θυμοῦ καὶ φιλαρχίας ἀώρου καὶ πλεονεξιῶν ἀπαρηγορήτων εἰς ὠμότατον καὶ ἀγριώτατον γῆρας ἐξοκείλας. ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἐπὶ τῶν πράξεων αὐτῶν εὐθὺς θεωρείσθω.

We have seen a marble image of the face of Marius lying in Ravenna in Galatia, remarkable in its depiction of his harshness and bitterness. For he was by nature virile and warlike, and having partaken of a military rather than political education, he had an excessive temper in his offices. (2) Also, it is said that he neither learned Greek letters nor did he use the Greek language for any matter of seriousness, since he deemed it laughable to learn a literature whose teachers were slaves to others; and after his second triumph at the consecration of some temple while providing Greek spectacles, having come into the theater and only sitting down he immediately left. (3) So, just as Plato was accustomed to say many times to the philosopher Xenocrates who seemed to be of a rather sullen disposition, (4) "My good Xenocrates, sacrifice to the Muses." If someone had similarly persuaded Marius to sacrifice to the Greek Muses and Graces, he would not have placed the most malformed crown upon his outstanding military and civil campaigns, nor driven by anger, an untimely love of rule and an uncontrollable need for more would he have run aground onto a most savage and cruel old age. However, these things shall be seen straightaway in his deeds themselves.[66]

(*Marius* 2.1-4)

Marius' savageness and propensity for harsh and bitter behavior, uncontrolled by any form of education and more similar to a beast than the self-controlled Odysseus, frequently and commonly appear when he is outside of his natural environment, war. As Swain notes, "Marius' emotional instability is firmly rooted by Plutarch in his defiance of Greek παιδεία which is fully available."[67] As a soldier, he learns well and demonstrates a useful and excellent education. Unfortunately, Marius' accomplishments in the military sphere do not easily translate to the political sphere. In this, as Pelling notes, he is not unique:

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[66] Cf. *Coriolanus* 1.5.

[67] Swain (1990) 192. Cf. also Duff (1999) 105; Russell (1973) 98.

> "Coriolanus,[68] Marius, Philopoemen, Marcellus: it does indeed seem as if soldiers are, for Plutarch, particularly prone to such educational one-sidedness. Such 'contentiousness,' such infectious passion, such roughness in personal interactions are just the thing for the barracks or the battlefield, but they tend to leave a man out of his depth when it comes to the subtler relationships of personal and political life."[69]

Such disparity therefore recurs in Plutarch's statesmen, and though Marius is by no means unique in being politically incompetent,[70] he may perhaps be the worst. His uncultured and uncompromising behavior is unlike the "πολύμητις" Odysseus, who at various times employs frank honesty towards Agamemnon, cleverness and deception against the Cyclops, and caution among the Phaeacians.

The haughty and disruptive behavior that accompanies Marius' first consulship becomes more virulent after the German threat is averted. Not content with five consulships, Marius greedily and disgustingly bribes and threatens his way to a superfluous sixth consulship, of which Plutarch says,

> θεραπείαις τε τὸν δῆμον ἀναλαμβάνων καὶ πρὸς χάριν ἐνδιδοὺς τοῖς πολλοῖς, οὐ μόνον παρὰ τὸν ὄγκον καὶ τὸ κοινὸν ἀξίωμα τῆς ἀρχῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν ὑγρός τις εἶναι βουλόμενος καὶ δημοτικός, ἥκιστα τοιοῦτος πεφυκώς.
>
> He engaged the people with obsequious services and, for the favor of the many, conceded not only the dignity and the common worthiness of the office, but even his own nature, wishing to be someone pliant and popular, though he was naturally not at all like this.
>
> (*Marius* 28.1)

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[68] On Coriolanus, see Chapter 4, pp. 107-27.
[69] Pelling (2000) 333 (=2002, 341).
[70] In addition to the "battlefield" statesmen listed in Pelling's quotation, cf. also Plutarch's statement at *Pompey* 23.5-6, and a comment of Duff (1999) 121. See also Hillman's (1994) 258-72 discussion of Plutarch's authorial remarks within the *Life of Pompey* for further explicit criticism of the statesman's political failings.

As Duff notes, these actions – the betrayal of one's beliefs in the pursuit of glory – are reminiscent of the flatterer.[71] Soon after he attains his sixth consulship, he "schemes" (ἐπεβούλευε) to have Metellus exiled (28.6) and manipulates the Senate solely for the purpose of catching Metellus in a deceitful trick (ἀπάτη, 29.3).[72] Marius' transition from war to peace has become most destructive to the Republic. Eventually, his two-faced behavior wins him no friends at all, and he becomes hated by both the nobles and the people (30.5). His actions at this point again seem directly contrary to those of the positive figure of Odysseus, or, at best, like the fifth-century Odysseus of tragedy. Unlike Odysseus, who scorns the populist figure of Thersites and puts him in his place, Marius harbors such men's admiration while directly and pettily opposing Roman noblemen. Also, Plutarch's Odysseus only employs trickery on behalf of the state, like a Themistocles,[73] not to expel excellent men from the city. His disgraceful and deceptive behavior at Rome in times of peace show that Marius' respectable skills are limited solely to the military sphere.[74]

When the prospect of war crops up again for Rome, Marius continues to claim to be doing one thing while accomplishing another. He sails to Galatia, ostensibly to offer sacrifices to the mother of the gods, but really hoping to incite Mithridates into a war with Rome (31.2-5). Upon his return, he builds a house in the forum, explaining that his distance from his friends made the lines of clients at his home shorter than his rivals, when really he is put aside because of his political inferiority, "like a warlike instrument in times of peace" (32.2). Marius, lacking the nature and education to benefit his city in

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[71] Duff (1999) 119. Cf. also Plutarch's *Quom. adul.* 48E-49A.
[72] On Plutarch's derogatory view of these words, see Chapter 3, p. 89 n. 108.
[73] See Chapter 3 above, esp. pp. 79-84.
[74] Cf. Duff (1999) 120, and *Marius* 31.3, "His nature was not suitable for peace nor governing."

times of peace, continually lies, flatters, and manipulates his countrymen for his own self-aggrandizement. The image of Marius at this point is one of a shady, deceitful character, whose need for more power and glory trumps everything: similar in tactics, but opposite to Plutarch's view of the soul of Odysseus, whose need for *public* success overwhelms his need for honor and reputation. Soon, Marius' glory-hoarding brings him into direct conflict with Sulla, and far from trying to smooth over their tensions and differences, he continues to act the way he always has, with asperity, inhumanity, and ambition. When Sulla marches on Rome, Marius' flight and exile will highlight these anti-Odyssean defects in his character and demonstrate his disastrous status as a statesman.

Marius' Odyssey

As has been stressed, Marius stands as the complete antithesis to Plutarch's conception of Odysseus as portrayed in the *Moralia*. If one were to compare the two men at all, Marius' manipulations and ambitions resound more closely to the fifth-century figure of the self-serving, scheming Odysseus portrayed by Pindar, Sophocles, and Euripides. Yet, despite the disparity between their characters, there are several reminiscences and allusions in the *Marius* that recall the *Odyssey*. There are three signposts that seem to anticipate the Odyssean flight and exile of Marius. The first, which highlights a major difference between the *Pyrrhus* and *Marius*, stems from the very beginning of the *Life*. The *Marius* begins with the words, "We are unable to state the third name of Caius Marius" (1.1). Not only does Marius lack the lineage of his

parallel Pyrrhus, but he is missing part of his name.[75] There is no extended discussion of ancestry, there are no ancient heroes connected to Marius' heritage—his first real "heritage" is established only through marriage to the patrician Julia. Whatever Marius earns will not rest upon nor be inspired by any sort of epic ancestry. Part of this obscurity of Marius is of course dependent on his being the first of his family to attain senatorial status. As a *novus homo* Marius has no ancestors to speak of and no fame

This discussion of Marius' namelessness provides, I believe, a subtle link to the *Odyssey*. In his adventure in the cave of the Cyclops Odysseus identifies himself to Polyphemus as "Οὔτις" or "Nobody" (9.366). As Odysseus is a "nobody" in the cave of the Cyclops, Marius is a nobody at Rome.[76] But for Odysseus, his namelessness is part of a scene meant to establish his and his comrades' safety, while the missing third name of Marius shows his fundamental self, a self that he proudly employs to divide the people and the nobility. The "namelessness" of each man elaborates upon an important theme: Marius' lack of a third name in a way demonstrates his insecurity: he feels a compulsive need to earn the regard and reputation that he believes comes with it. Odysseus, in contrast, easily eschews glory and honor by hiding his name: his desire is not the self-aggrandizement of Marius but salvation and safety.

Later, a more conspicuous signpost to the *Odyssey* appears in the midst of a series of descriptions of Marius' political and military successes. Plutarch describes the origins of the German tribe called the Cimbrians:

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[75] For another view of Plutarch and Marius' name, see Duff (1999) 130 n. 105.

[76] Plutarch of course holds no prejudices against men like Marius who are born into obscurity. In fact, he lists Odysseus as an example of one such fellow who overcomes his family's lack of renown to become the wisest of Homer's heroes (*De exil.* 603D).

ἄλλοι δέ φασι Κιμμερίων τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ὑφ' Ἑλλήνων τῶν πάλαι γνωσθὲν οὐ μέγα γενέσθαι τοῦ παντὸς μόριον, ἀλλὰ φυγὴν ἢ στάσιν τινὰ βιασθεῖσαν ὑπὸ Σκυθῶν εἰς Ἀσίαν ἀπὸ τῆς Μαιώτιδος διαπερᾶσαι Λυγδάμιος ἡγουμένου· [9] τὸ δὲ πλεῖστον αὐτῶν καὶ μαχιμώτατον ἐπ' ἐσχάτοις οἰκοῦν παρὰ τὴν ἔξω θάλασσαν γῆν μὲν νέμεσθαι σύσκιον καὶ ὑλώδη καὶ δυσήλιον πάντη διὰ βάθος καὶ πυκνότητα δρυμῶν, οὓς μέχρι τῶν Ἑρκυνίων εἴσω διήκειν, οὐρανοῦ δὲ εἰληχέναι καθ' ὃ δοκεῖ μέγα λαμβάνων ὁ πόλος ἔξαρμα διὰ τὴν ἔγκλισιν τῶν παραλλήλων ὀλίγον ἀπολείπειν τοῦ κατὰ κορυφὴν ἱσταμένου σημείου πρὸς τὴν οἴκησιν, αἵ τε ἡμέραι βραχύτητι καὶ μήκει πρὸς τὰς νύκτας ἴσαι κατανέμεσθαι τὸν χρόνον· [10] διὸ καὶ τὴν εὐπορίαν τοῦ μυθεύματος Ὁμήρῳ γενέσθαι πρὸς τὴν νεκυίαν.

But others say that the first of the Cimmerians known by the ancient Greeks were not a great part of the whole, but only a group of exiles or a faction forced out by the Scythians, passing into Asia from the Maiotic lake with the leader Lygdamis; (9) yet most of them and the most warlike lived the land on the edges along the outer sea, dwelling in a land shady and wooded and wholly without sunlight because of the thickness of the trees, which extend inland as far as the Hercynii; and as regards the heavens, they are under that portion of them where the pole gets a great elevation by reason of the declination of the parallels, and appears to have a position not far removed from the spectator's zenith, and a day and a night divide the year into two equal parts; (10) which was of advantage to Homer in his story concerning the *nekuia*.[77]

(*Marius* 11.8-10)

Plutarch has here merged two different traditions regarding the Cimmerians. The ethnography of the wandering Cimmerians is taken from Herodotus,[78] and the Cimbrians were known as wanderers by Tacitus[79] and Livy.[80] Diodorus Siculus makes the connection that the Asian wanderers of Herodotus become the Cimbrians.[81] This tradition, though, is combined with a second one, that associated with the Cimmerians of the *Odyssey*, who appear at the start of Book 11:

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[77] Translation adapted from Perrin (1920).
[78] The Cimmerians are mentioned as being driven out of Europe and chased by the Scythians at 1.15-16, 103, 4.1, 11-12, 7.20. The tribes of Herodotus are merged with the Cimmerians of the *Odyssey* by the Scholiast *Od.* 11.14.
[79] *Germ.* 37.
[80] *Per.* LXIII.
[81] Diod. Sic. 5.32.

"ἡ δ' ἐς πείραθ' ἵκανε βαθυρρόου Ὠκεανοῖο.
ἔνθα δὲ Κιμμερίων ἀνδρῶν δῆμός τε πόλις τε,
ἠέρι καὶ νεφέλῃ κεκαλυμμένοι· οὐδέ ποτ' αὐτοὺς
ἠέλιος φαέθων καταδέρκεται ἀκτίνεσσιν,
οὔθ' ὁπότ' ἂν στείχῃσι πρὸς οὐρανὸν ἀστερόεντα,
οὔθ' ὅτ' ἂν ἂψ ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν προτράπηται,
ἀλλ' ἐπὶ νὺξ ὀλοὴ τέταται δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι."

"And the ship came to the borders of deep-flowing Ocean.
There were the people and city of the Cimmerian men,
hidden in mist and cloud; nor ever does the son
shining look upon them with its rays,
neither when he rises into the starry heaven,
nor when he turns back to the earth from the sky,
but dread night is spread upon miserable mortals."

(*Odyssey* 11.13-19)

It is unclear whether Plutarch's connection between the nomadic Cimmerians of Herodotus and the Germanic wanderers of Tacitus and Livy is his own or that of another author. Strabo connects the Cimmerian Bosphorus to the Cimmerians of the *Odyssey* (1.1.10),[82] but it appears that only Plutarch connects the Cimmerians of the *Odyssey* to the wandering tribes of Herodotus and subsequently the German tribe of the Cimbri.[83] The extended and unprecedented connection made here between the Cimmerians and Cimbrians puts the *Odyssey* in the reader's mind.

Finally, an Odyssean allusion appears in the narrative just before Marius is driven from Rome. As his rivalry with Sulla promptly reaches its climax, Marius serves without distinction in the Social War, the very war that solidifies the foundations of Sulla's power. Plutarch calls this war "ποικίλος καὶ πολυτροπώτατος" (33.1). The second

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[82] Cf. also Hom. Schol. *Od.* 11.14, who seems to make the connection between Herodotus' Cimmerians and those of the *Odyssey*.

[83] Plutarch's justification of Homer here – using his work as a legitimate historical source – once more strongly implies his proximity to the Stoic view of Homer. For a general discussion of how the ancient philosophers and historians viewed Homeric geography, see Romm (1992) 172-214. Surprisingly, no less stringent a historian than Polybius gives credit to Homer's geography.

term is a rare and curious term that echoes the epithet of Odysseus in the first line of the *Odyssey*.[84] This "most much-turning war," with its varied fortunes, is soon followed by Marius' flight and hints once more for a comparison with the *Odyssey* – though Marius, as I shall demonstrate, hardly comes across as πολύτροπος at all. Yet, before Plutarch describes Marius' frantic flight, he highlights once more the unripe ambitions of Marius, who spends his days after the Social War in hopes of being awarded the Mithridatic command, practicing in the Campus Martius with the younger soldiers, primarily evoking scorn for his greed and need for glory (πλεονεξία καὶ φιλοδοξία, 34.5-6). With this almost pitying description of the old, corpulent Marius' discontent, Plutarch begins to describe his flight after a futile alliance with Sulpicius results in Sulla's march on Rome.

Like Odysseus, Marius has two main parts to his exile: his journey and his homecoming.[85] The narrative of Marius' flight, as I have outlined in the diagram on the following page, shares an overall structural similarity with Odysseus' journey. Both men are swept from their anticipated paths and arrive at unexpected lands. On their travels, they endure many sufferings and eventually lose their companions. Both are driven to a vulnerable and naked solitude, receiving sympathy and aid from the people who discover them. Finally, both men return to their homeland and consummate their revenge.

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[84] Plutarch rarely uses "πολύτροπος" in either the *Lives* or the *Moralia*, and uses the superlative only here. At *Numa* 22.7, it is used to describe a disease; *Marcellus* 12.6, it describes the varied forces under Hannibal; at *Eumenes* 16.6, of Eumenes; it appears twice in the *Alcibiades* (See above, Chapter 4, pp. 128-36). See also *De aud. poet.* 25A, *De mult. amic.* 97A, *De amore prol.* 493A. At *Sulla* 6.2, he calls the War ποικιλώτατος, which *does* recall the other term used here, ποικίλος.

[85] For a historical account of the flight and exile of Marius, see Carney (1961). For another historical synopsis of Marius' flight, see Werner (1995) 318-47. Duff (1999) 62 n. 35, states that "Marius' flight into exile contains many novelistic elements." The *Odyssey* also served as a subtext for the genre of the novel. Cf. Ruiz-Montero (2003) 54-55, Winkler (1994) 36. Marius' exile differs from those of Themistocles, who never returns, and of Alcibiades, who suffers a second exile (from which he does not return).

Table 1: Diagram of Structural Similarities between Marius' and Odysseus' journeys:

Marius' Journey	Odysseus' Journey
Leaves Ostia.	Leaves Troy.
⬇	⬇
Storm (off Western Italy)	Storm (off Malea)
⬇	⬇
Lands near Circeium.	Lands at Various Islands, including those of the Cyclops, Circe, and the land of the dead, where the Cimmerians live.
⬇	⬇
Abandoned by his men, dumped on shore near Minturnae.	Companions are killed. After 7 years with Calypso, washes up Scheria.
⬇	⬇
Hides in bushes, dragged out naked and filthy.	Hides naked in bushes in Scheria, begs Nausicaä for help.
⬇	⬇
Treated with kindness by an old enemy, Fannia, and after a Cimbrian or Gaul refuses to kill him, is granted clemency and passage on a ship by the Minturnians. Find his allies in Africa.	Speaks with the Phaeacians and is given transport back home.
⬇	⬇
Returns to Rome.	Returns to Ithaca.

Though the structure and events of their actions are similar, the reactions and efforts of the heroes through their trying dramas are enormously different.

Throughout these episodes in Marius' flight and exile there are a few verbal allusions to similar events in the *Odyssey*. One of the first places that Marius lands at is called Circeium, a place which gets its name from Circe.[86] When Marius is unceremoniously dumped on land and abandoned by his comrades, he "lay there for a long time on the shore, speechless" (ἄναυδος, 37.9), and is discovered naked (γυμνός) by the inhabitants of his landing place (38.2). This scene of the *Marius* closely echoes Odysseus' arrival at Scheria, where he is washed up on shore breathless and speechless (ἄπνευστος καὶ ἄναυδος, *Od.* 5.456), but from weariness, not despair, and crawls from his hiding space naked (γυμνός, 6.136) and faces Nausicaä, who promises him protection in the home of her father.

The similarity in structure and the apparent verbal links Plutarch makes between Marius' journey and that of Odysseus underscore the two men's differences. Odysseus, whose primary attributes in the *Moralia* are self-control and prudence, overcomes the most dire situations and sufferings through intelligence and mental balance.[87] Marius, in contrast, is constantly full of *aporia*,[88] like the impure soul of Plato,[89] and when he is in danger, he escapes due to the shame and self-reproach of his captors rather than his own

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[86] For Circe, see *Odyssey* 10; on the origin of Circeium, see Maltby (1991) 130.
[87] Cf. *Quaest. conv.* 642A, where Plutarch states that Odysseus managed to escape from the Cyclops because he was "φρόνιμος."
[88] Cf. *Mar.* 36.3, 36.5, 36.11, 40.8, 45.5.
[89] Cf. *Phaedo* 108A-C, where Socrates notes that such a soul "wanders, held in absolute bewilderment" (αὐτὴ δὲ πλανᾶται ἐν πάσῃ ἐχομένη ἀπορίᾳ), unlike the "composed and wise" soul (κοσμία τε καὶ φρόνιμος).

abilities.[90] Marius does not actively and creatively respond to events rather than passively endure what the circumstances dictate to him. Worse, he refuses to learn from the experiences of his exile: the most important trait he might have learned is mercy, which he is granted three times. First, some sailors refuse to turn him over to Sulla's agents (37.1-4). Second, Fannia, a woman he had once punished for adultery treats him with kindness rather than enmity (38.3-10). Finally, the Minturnians, feeling shame for attempting to execute the one-time savior of Italy, give him supplies and find passage for Marius on a ship to Africa (39.5-40.1). These three examples of kindness and temperance have no effect on him. Unlike Odysseus, who returns to Ithaca a changed man, Marius returns to Rome heedless of his journey's lessons. His experience does not deepen his piety and his knowledge of the human condition,[91] but exposes his savagery and mindless passion.

After a long journey full of suffering and bitterness, Marius returns to Italy, which is temporarily free of Sulla's presence, in order to help the expelled consul Cinna against Octavius (41). Like Odysseus, Marius is determined to fulfill his home-coming and reclaim his rightful place through violence against his enemies. Yet, Odysseus' destruction of the suitors is presented as just[92] and the will of the gods,[93] but Marius' motivations are shameful, as Plutarch notes:

> εἰδὼς δὲ τὸν μὲν Ὀκτάβιον ἄριστον ἄνδρα καὶ τῷ δικαιοτάτῳ τρόπῳ βουλόμενον ἄρχειν, τὸν δὲ Κίνναν ὑποπτόν τε τῷ Σύλλᾳ καὶ πολεμοῦντα τῇ καθεστώσῃ πολιτείᾳ, τούτῳ προσνέμειν ἑαυτὸν ἔγνω μετὰ τῆς δυνάμεως.

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[90] Cf. *Od.* 1.3-9, where Odysseus' men perish from their folly, despite his attempts to bring them home safely.
[91] Cf. Montiglio (2005), esp. 42-61.
[92] On the suitors as "unjust," see *Od.* 2.282, 3.133, 14.90, 21.312.
[93] Cf. *Od.* 21.413-15.

> And knowing that Octavius was an excellent man and one wishing to rule in the most just manner, but that Cinna was distrusted by Sulla and eager for war against the established government, Marius decided to devote himself to the latter with his forces.
>
> (*Marius* 41.5)

Marius' return to Rome predicts and anticipates destruction, but only of the just. It is not that he destroys the good without understanding, but he *intentionally* chooses to destroy the better man in favor of the worse.

Plutarch's stress on the appearance of Marius also contrasts with that of Odysseus.[94] In the *Odyssey*, Athena disguises Odysseus as a beggar in order to accomplish his safe home-coming. Homer describes the transformation in Book 13 as that of a nobleman transformed into a vile, pathetic beggar. His hair is destroyed, his clothing replaced with rags, and he is wrapped in the skin of an old man (13.392-438). Marius' appearance upon his return to Rome is identical. Marius rejects the insignia of office from Cinna and meets the consul "in mean attire, his hair uncut since the day of his flight, being now over seventy years of age" (41.4). Like Odysseus, his clothing and hair have changed, and Plutarch emphasizes Marius' vulnerability, naturally rather than divinely created. Both men look like savages or tramps, with one difference: Odysseus merely looks the part, Marius has really degenerated into the role and now resembles his statues, whose bitterness and savagery Plutarch has already discussed.[95]

Events prove that Marius' grotesque appearance reflects his true self. Unlike Odysseus, who carefully dispenses justice on the wicked suitors and his treacherous servants, Marius, with his ally Cinna, slaughters anyone who opposes them, usually

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[94] On the importance of appearance in the *Pyrrhus-Marius*, see Duff (1999) 124-25; also, cf. Mossman (1991) and Wardmann (1967) on the use of statues in Plutarch.
[95] At *Mar.* 2.1, quoted above.

without reason. Marius' execution of the plan is perverse: he refuses to stop killing. The consul Cinna soon has his fill of murder, but Marius continues to rage. As Plutarch says, "So many were slain that at last Cinna's appetite for murder was dulled and sated; but Marius, whose anger increased day by day and thirsted for blood, kept on killing all whom he held in any suspicion whatsoever" (43.6). As Carney notes, Plutarch contradicts the historical tradition; both Livy and Velleius Paterculus considered Cinna to be the prime villain and murderer.[96] Plutarch portrays Marius as the villain in order to show his inhumanity, especially when one remembers the kindness and clemency granted to him by his former captors Fannia and the Minturnians, both of whom could have killed him. His blind savagery also looks all the worse for its implied comparison to Odysseus' careful justice, who carefully tests the loyalty of his son, wife, servants, and the culpability of the suitors, and states that the suitors were punished by the gods for their violent deeds.[97]

The implicit contrast between Odysseus and Marius emphasizes Plutarch's negative view of Marius. He faces the same sorts of troubles as Odysseus from the start of his flight and exile: he wanders far from home, eager for a homecoming; his home and object of desire are assailed by enemies out to kill him and his son. Had Marius been a true Odysseus, his cleverness and willingness to learn humanity and self-control would have brought him home a wiser man to a happy and just ending. He returns to Rome grim, angry, and unfulfilled, and no amount of slaughter slakes his thirst: a comparison

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[96] Cf. Vell. Pat. II.20. Marius only earns blame *with* Cinna, never alone. Livy *Per.* 80 describes the purges as being performed by "Cinna et Marius," but gives Marius the credit for ordering S. Licinius from being cast from the Tarpeian Rock. Carney (1961) 118 states, "The generality of sources attributes to Cinna the responsibility for the 'Marian Massacres'." Carney (1960b) 114-16 also states that Cicero largely downplays Marius' culpability for the murders at Rome.

[97] *Od.* 22.411-13. Cf. Stanford (1964) 34.

to Odysseus reveals only his failure to become a virtuous statesman. Whereas Odysseus overcomes his sufferings and woes by his intelligence, virtue, and wisdom, Marius does not overcome his sufferings, but rather is overwhelmed by them: in effect, his journey unveils his barbaric and savage self.

Plutarch has already described the old age of Marius as "ὠμότατος καὶ ἀγριώτατος" (2.4). As Schmidt has discussed, the adjectives "ὠμός" and "ἄγριος" are found in rhetorical doublets with the adjective βαρβαρός.[98] Marius, of course, demonstrates a propensity for barbarous acts after his exile. For example, the headless trunks found throughout Rome during the "Marian Massacre" are considered a particularly barbaric symbol.[99] Plutarch considers beheadings among the worst acts of a leader: he emphasizes Caesar's distress at the beheading of Pompey (*Caes.* 48.2, *Pomp.* 80.5), he shows dismay at the fate of Cicero at the hands of Antony (*Cic.* 48.6-49.2, *Ant.* 20.3-4),[100] and he is appalled by the barbaric head-presentation of Crassus in the Parthians' version of the *Bacchae* (*Crassus* 33.3-6).[101] Marius' senseless slaughter of friends and enemies alike also compares poorly to Antigonus' genuine grief at the death and barbaric maltreatment of Pyrrhus by his son (*Pyr.* 34.7-8). Marius, in both his flight and his return, fails to show serenity, charisma, or dignity. He succumbs to his sufferings and returns to Rome, not as Carney as stated, having "gained in spiritual nature by his ordeal,"[102] but having significantly lost his humanity.

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[98] Schmidt (1999) 21; cf. also Brenk (1992a) 4446-47.
[99] Schmidt (1999) 38-40.
[100] Cf. Pelling (1988b) 149-50, 167-68.
[101] On the *Crassus*, see also Braund (1993) and Zadorojnyi (1997).
[102] Carney (1961) 118.

One last possible allusion to the *Odyssey* emphasizes Marius' lack of virtue. In the midst of Marius' murders at Rome, Plutarch relates a special case. Antonius, the premier orator of his day and the man whom Cicero eulogizes in his *De Oratore*, charms the men sent by Marius to kill him. Antonius delays his own murder by means of eloquence. According to Plutarch "As soon as Antonius began to speak and beg his life, none of (the murderers) dared touch or so much as look upon him but they all bent their heads down and wept" (44.6). Marius' deputy, Annius, must cut off Antonius' head himself, as the soldiers were charmed by Antonius' eloquence:

> διατριβῆς δὲ γενομένης ἀναβὰς ὁ Ἄννιος ὁρᾷ τὸν μὲν Ἀντώνιον διαλεγόμενον, τοὺς δὲ στρατιώτας ἐκπεπληγμένους καὶ **κατακεκηλημένους** ὑπ' αὐτοῦ· κακίσας οὖν ἐκείνους καὶ προσδραμὼν αὐτὸς ἀποτέμνει τὴν κεφαλήν.
>
> As there was a delay, Annius entered and saw Antonius conversing and the soldiers struck dumb and **enchanted** by him; so cursing them he ran forward and cut off Antonius' head himself.
>
> (*Marius* 44.7)

The behavior of Marius' soldiers matches that of the Phaeacians in Book 11 of the *Odyssey*, charmed by the speech of Odysseus, when he halts mid-way through his tale to gauge his audience's reaction:

> ὣς ἔφαθ', οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ,
> **κηληθμῷ** δ' ἔσχοντο κατὰ μέγαρα σκιόεντα.
>
> So he spoke, and all were hushed in silence,
> and were held by an **enchantment** along the shadowy halls."
>
> (*Odyssey* 11.333-34)

First, it is important to note that Cicero places the blame for Antonius' murder firmly on the head of Cinna, not Marius.[103] Plutarch's inclusion of Antonius among Marius'

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[103] Cicero twice gives Cinna the blame for having Antonius killed, rather than Marius, at *Tusc. disp.* 5.19.55 and *Phil.* 1.14.34. Cf. Carney (1960b) 115.

victims thus serves a vital purpose: Antonius, the illustrious and eloquent speaker, provides the final stamp on the failure of Marius. Like Odysseus, Antonius keeps his serenity and calm in the face of imminent death. Marius the barbarian hardly speaks. Just before entering Rome, he glares silently at everyone, refusing to utter a word even to the Senate, and makes it clear "from the grave look of his face and the gloominess of his eyes that he was immediately going to fill the city with slaughter" (43.2).[104] Marius' silent, grim forecast for doom contrasts negatively with the charming culture of Antonius.[105]

Of course, none of these horrid and barbaric actions bring Marius the slightest bit of inner peace; instead, they bring him fear and madness. After assuming his seventh consulship, one earned with the slaughter of his enemies, and discovering that Sulla's war with Mithridates is over, Marius is in shambles:

> αὐτὸς δὲ ἤδη τοῖς τε πόνοις ἀπειρηκὼς καὶ ταῖς φροντίσιν οἷον ὑπέραντλος ὢν καὶ κατάπονος, τὴν ψυχὴν πρὸς τοσαύτην αὖθις ἐπίνοιαν νέου πολέμου καὶ καινῶν ἀγώνων καὶ φόβων ὑπὸ ἐμπειρίας δεινῶν καὶ καμάτου τρέμουσαν οὐκ ἀνέφερε.
>
> But he, now worn out with toils and anxieties like one drowning and exhausted, could not restore his spirit, which was trembling from the experience of terrible deeds and distress, for the weighty consideration of a new war and fresh struggles and fears.[106]
>
> (*Marius* 45.4)

Marius' desperate and violent grab for power only underscores the complete futility of his act. Like Pyrrhus, he could have set down his bellicose and ambitious nature and

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[104] Carney (1961) 121 reasons why Marius stood outside the city for a while. "[Marius] must, however, have seen the necessity to legalize the position of himself and the other ten remaining outlaws. The tribunes assembled the people, and Cinna formally proposed the return of the outlaws. Only Plutarch reports that Marius did not await the conclusion of the voting."

[105] Cf. Duff (1999) 129-30; also Carney (1960a) 28-29.

[106] On the "water" imagery suggested by ὑπέραντλος, see Carney (1960a) 24-25, Duff (1999) 110.

worked within an atmosphere of peace, but he must have more. His bitterness and savagery only makes him a target of larger prey, as Plutarch notes with a tragic quotation stating that "Terrible are the lairs of the lion though he be gone" (45.5).[107] Hegemony at Rome is a vain and ruinous possession when Sulla's return is imminent. An implied contrast with Odysseus again holds: the Homeric hero returns home, cleansing it of enemies so that he might enjoy a peaceful life, not a life of anxiety and dread. For Plutarch, who here manipulates the chronology in order to make Marius die in fear and delirium at the success of Sulla,[108] Marius' futile counter-coup results only in the exacerbation of his own terror, which is mercifully ended by a death full of delirium and madness.[109] No peaceful life is in store for Marius.

Plutarch has re-interpreted the events of Marius' life, diverging significantly from the more positive actions promoted by other sources, such as Cicero. As Carney notes, "Here, as elsewhere in Marius' career, the correspondence between the factual detail given by Plutarch and by Cicero is very close, making their differences – in motivation and in atmosphere – the more striking."[110] Nowhere in Plutarch's narrative does one get the sense that, as Carney states, Marius is "indomitable as usual in distress."[111] The passivity and smoldering resentment of Plutarch's Marius precludes any positive reading. Had Marius been an Odysseus, had he the character and the cultivation of an Odysseus, he would have prospered and learned from the ordeals of his exile. As Duff states, "The

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[107] Author unknown. Ironically, one could say this of the suitors in the *Odyssey*.
[108] Cf. Carney (1960a) 27. At *Sulla* 12.6, Plutarch employs the correct chronology, a fact he ignores in the *Marius* in order to illustrate the inanity of Marius' final bid for power.
[109] For an attempt to re-create the real causes of Marius' death, see Carney (1958), who argues that Plutarch's description is inspired from Marius' "literary enemies" and combines the causes from multiple sources into a series of symptoms (119). Cf. also Passerini (1934) 376-77.
[110] Carney (1960b) 112.
[111] Carney (1961) 105.

message is clear, and, for Plutarch, unsurprising: lack of education and reason in the soul leads to greed, excessive ambition and, ultimately, disaster."[112] Once a great, worthy man, virile, warlike, and suitable for comparison with Pyrrhus the descendent of Achilles, Marius becomes a perverse imitation of Odysseus. Odysseus, upon his return, only *looks* like an uncultivated man, scorned by society; Marius truly *is* uncultivated and anti-social. The image of Marius upon his return is not meant to recall the crafty Odysseus, but the blood-thirsty, man-eating Cyclops.[113]

Conclusion

The Achilles-Odysseus pattern within the *Pyrrhus-Marius* underlines the positive military abilities of the heroes, but more significantly emphasizes and explains their terrible failings. In the case of Pyrrhus, both his military valor and accomplishments hinge upon his heroic nature, but his Achillean restlessness overwhelms and consumes him in a manner that smacks of Aristotelian tragedy. The continual implicit and explicit links with Achilles, from Pyrrhus' epic lineage to his last demand for a duel with Antigonus, are all elaborate and consistently drawn up to underscore his hero's single-minded dedication to glory and success through warfare. But, whereas the other Achilles figures in this study, Camillus and Coriolanus, supplement their Achilles-like abilities through varying degrees of anger, the depiction of Pyrrhus depends upon a tragic desire for war-mongering.

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[112] Duff (1999) 110.

[113] In fact, if one is meant to compare *Pyrrhus* to *Alexander*, I believe a comparison of the *Marius* to the *Life of Caesar* is logical. The clemency bestowed by Caesar when he attains sole power, is completely opposite to the bestial slaughter perpetrated by Marius.

Similarly, the *Marius* contains several hints that implicitly point the reader to the *Odyssey*. A comparison of Marius with Odysseus, however, only illustrates Marius' almost perfect contrast with the hero whom Plutarch so admires in the *Moralia*. In creating his image of Marius, Plutarch has interpreted his sources to make Marius as guilty as possible of the slaughter of his fellow citizens, creating a picture of him as a bitter and savage monstrosity unleashed upon Rome. Despite the generally positive Ciceronian portrayal of Marius available to Plutarch for the *Life of Marius*,[114] his biography of the statesman belies his disapproval.[115] Unlike the positive model of Themistocles, whose Odyssean modeling marks him as a genuinely unselfish hero, and unlike the indefinable nature of Alcibiades, whose dynamic blend of adaptability and flattery alternatingly impress and harm his countrymen, Marius possesses not one iota of public concern or charm. When a man without philosophy is subject to misfortune, a man obsessed with excesses of πλεονέξια and φιλοτιμία, he will not exit the experience with insight or even a more moderate bearing; instead, misfortune strips away the false layers of competence and bravado, revealing his ugly and destructive countenance.

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[114] See Carney (1960b).

[115] Cf. *Marius* 2.3, 45.7-46.4; Carney (1958) 117-19; Carney (1960a) 28, and Duff (1999) 130, who considers Marius to be "the most pilloried of Plutarch's heroes."

Conclusion

In this study of Plutarch's *Themistocles-Camillus*, *Coriolanus-Alcibiades*, and *Pyrrhus-Marius*, I have attempted to demonstrate how Plutarch employs an Odyssean model in one *Life* while maintaining an Achillean model in the other. There are, I believe, several reasons for these models: first, Homer had an important influence on Plutarch and most Greek writers of his day. Second, they help to unite characters of different characteristics: the battle-proven Camillus and Coriolanus are paired with the wily Themistocles and Alcibiades, respectively. The Achilles-like modeling of the first two thus create an internal *Iliad-Odyssey* connection with the Odysseus-like characteristics of the latter two men. Lastly, Plutarch, as I argue above, used these models because, quite often, the heroes had been connected to the heroes traditionally. Only the *Coriolanus* and *Marius* had historiographical traditions that did not intersect with the characters of Achilles or Odysseus.

The most significant conclusion of Plutarch's modeling of Odysseus and Achilles is that a negative or positive correspondence to each statesman's Homeric model is consistent across a pair of *Lives*. As *Themistocles* proves to be a heroic and virtuous Odysseus, so too does Camillus come across as a positive Achilles. Each statesman ultimately proves temperate and more concerned with communal safety than personal glory when he is in a position of misfortune and exile. In contrast, Coriolanus and Alcibiades both represent negative views of Achilles and Odysseus, respectively. Coriolanus is an unsophisticated barbarian whose anger proves disastrous, and Alcibiades is much more similar to the fifth-century BCE Odysseus, a self-serving schemer and

manipulator, than the Plutarchan philosopher. Coriolanus and Alcibiades both fare poorly in comparison to their Homeric counterparts. Similarly, though the themes of the *Pyrrhus-Marius* are different, Pyrrhus too is inferior to Achilles and Marius falls short of Odysseus in self-mastery.

Also significant is that the Homeric models in one set of *Lives* can be used to illustrate the character in another set, which can be seen most clearly in a comparison of *Themistocles-Camillus* and *Coriolanus-Alcibiades*. The Homeric modeling within each pair, coupled with their similar themes and bitter exiles, strongly suggest a reading that includes the comparison of one set with another. Themistocles and Alcibiades are each labeled traitors, yet Plutarch's depiction of Themistocles is far more favorable: he does not become the self-serving traitor that Alcibiades becomes. When Themistocles is presented with the opportunity to harm his nation, he ignores it. Alcibiades, in contrast, immediately turns on Athens: he no sooner arrives in Sparta he ruins his homeland's chances in the war. Each has perhaps been exiled and punished unjustly, yet only Themistocles has the self-control to ignore his nation's volatility and remains patriotic and beneficent. Alcibiades, like Themistocles, demonstrates no sign of anger, maintaining an Odyssean self-mastery, and yet turns against his homeland. Plutarch, I believe, illustrates a fundamental flaw in Alcibiades' character by showing him as a one-dimensional Odysseus: a flatterer.

Camillus and Coriolanus illustrate an identical contrast. Each, once again, is unfairly exiled by the people. And each swears vengeance upon them, but Coriolanus does so with furious silence, while Camillus, explicitly compared by Plutarch to Achilles, prays for vengeance if only he has been treated unjustly. The gods, as of Achilles in the

Iliad, approve of Camillus and compel his nation to have need of him. In contrast, Coriolanus actively seeks out his homeland's enemy and swears to aid them against his homeland. Eventually, after much misfortune, each hero is approached by his fellow citizens to return, and, of course, Camillus, temperate and masterful, accepts. Coriolanus, still consumed by an ultimately profitless anger, declines until it is too late. As in the *Themistocles* and *Alcibiades*, the Homeric modeling in the *Camillus* and *Coriolanus* implicitly lessens Coriolanus' stature in comparison to Camillus. Themistocles represents the philosophical Odysseus praised by Antisthenes, the Stoics, and Plutarch himself, while Alcibiades resembles the fifth-century Odysseus. Similarly, Camillus represents a "good" Achilles, one who drops his anger before it brings about true harm, while Coriolanus, more stolidly maintaining a connection with the Achilles of the *Iliad*, brings about pain for his fellow citizens beyond that which they brought upon themselves.

In a similar way, the *Life of Pyrrhus*, as Mossman has excellently argued, employs a Homeric model in order to compare him with Demetrius and Alexander. As Coriolanus is inferior to Camillus, so too does Pyrrhus' identification with Achilles demonstrate his inadequacy as a general, leader, and conqueror. Thus, whereas Alexander conquers Persia and establishes Greek power in the East despite a premature death, Pyrrhus brings an early death upon himself without accomplishing anything notable. Though Pyrrhus is connected, like Alexander, to Achilles, and therefore is a better example of virtue than Demetrius, who is undeniably connected to tragedy, he fails to reach the apex established by the great Macedonian conqueror of Persia, as his enemy, the Romans, prove to be Trojans far mightier than he.

Lastly, in the *Marius*, we can see how Plutarch plays with the reader's expectations. The *Life* begins with tales of military and heroic virtue that rival those of Pyrrhus. Like Pyrrhus, Marius is solely a man of war, and though he is not a monarch, he becomes the closest thing to king in Rome until Sulla establishes his dictatorship. One might expect further Achillean modeling here. When the Odyssean flight and exile appears in such dramatic overtones, then, the reader does not expect it. When he flees for his life and suffers a wild and dramatic exile, the correspondences to the *Odyssey* illustrate his complete *lack* of composure and accentuate his grim nature, uncultivated by a Hellenic education. Unlike Pyrrhus, a hero whose life spent in perpetual war ends early, Marius grows old and corpulent, but his dissatisfaction with age leads to a bitter exile. Eventually he returns to Rome, not as a wise and weary philosopher, but as a monster. As Pyrrhus falls short of Alexander, Marius may here be portrayed in this manner to underscore his failure to be Caesar, whose victory over Pompey allows him to demonstrate his clemency and goodwill instead of tyrannical meanness.

There may also be a tendency in Plutarch's use of Homeric modeling to connect Greeks with Odysseus and Romans with Achilles. Though I have not investigated this issue extensively, the models of Odysseus and Achilles may emphasize a culturally stereotypical rift between the races with which Plutarch engages. Camillus and Coriolanus, both Romans, are connected to the more martial and direct Achilles. Curiously, the one statesman modeled on Odysseus, Marius, is depicted as an *anti*-Odysseus figure. The connections of two Athenians, Themistocles and Alcibiades, with Odysseus may also have some cultural significance for Plutarch. Such perspectives and arguments I must leave for later research.

In conclusion, I believe that the interrelationships of Homeric modeling within these six *Lives* thus help to build Plutarch's portrayal of their characters. The method used is generally implicit, which coincides with how he expresses his moral views in the *Lives*.[1] In using subtle Homeric models, Plutarch provides the *Lives* with both another way of evaluating his heroes – in comparison to the most famous and well-known heroes of the ancient world – and also with a way of interconnecting themes, characteristics, and actions across sets of unrelated, or at least apparently unrelated, biographies. As Athenian begs comparison with Athenian, general with general, or late Republican Roman with late Republican Roman, Odyssean and Achillean models illustrate and reinforce characteristics of other statesmen based on Odyssean and Achillean models.

The Homeric modeling employed in *Themistocles-Camillus*, *Coriolanus-Alcibiades*, and *Pyrrhus-Marius* accentuates the interrelationships among the *Lives* as a whole. Themistocles' connection to Odysseus not only aids in the interpretation of his own *Life* and the parallel *Camillus*, but also the *Alcibiades*, and, to a lesser extent, the *Marius*. Similarly, the Achillean modeling in the *Camillus* implies comparison of his *Life* to other Achilles-like models like the Coriolanus and Pyrrhus, but also other *Lives* that I have omitted from this study, like *Alexander* and *Philopoemen*. This method of evaluating Homeric models is a useful tool for furthering our comprehension of the *Lives*, one that could be expanded to examine models based on different Homeric heroes or other genres, such as tragedy. The shared literary connections to Homer place these *Lives*

[1] Though Plutarch is much more explicit in the *synkriseis*, the themes and discussions in them tend to differ or be unrelated to the *Lives* they compare, and generally explore the question of "better" and "worse" rather than absolute virtue or vice. Cf. Duff (2000) 144-45, "It is certainly the case…that sometimes the *synkriseis* do not provide a good summary of the themes and issues in the *Lives* which they follow. There is often, indeed, a marked divergence between the themes and interests which had emerged in the preceding narratives and those which appear in the *synkrisis*. Sometimes, there are even contradictions in substance between *synkrisis* and *Life*."

into a grander network of biographies that are pleasurable and instructive when read individually but even more illuminating when read collectively.

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