

**Persuasive ethics: The direct discourse of women in  
Plutarch's Roman *Lives***

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by Amanda Macauley

Classics Department

University of Otago

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## Abstract

This thesis examines the ways in which the speech of women and their interaction with men contribute to the ethical framework of Plutarch's Roman *Lives*. In particular, it explores the significant features shared by the various examples of female speech: every Roman woman who speaks is a member of the elite; all speak at a point of civic and personal crisis; and all are portrayed as virtuous *exempla*. The lone exception to this model is Cleopatra, whose direct discourse functions as a philosophical and cultural contrast to the virtues espoused by the Roman women, although ultimately, Plutarch provides the Egyptian queen with a measure of redemption at the close of the *Life of Antony*. A close reading of these texts therefore offers a complex view of how Plutarch regarded gender, culture and identity under the rule of the Roman Empire.

Chapter One analyses the public intercessions of Hersilia in the *Life of Romulus* and Volumnia in the *Life of Coriolanus*. In these episodes, Plutarch incorporates Greek tragic models and Roman cultural ideals in order to present female action and direct discourse as a dramatic articulation of the importance of *sophrosyne* and *paideia* for both the statesman and state. Chapter Two explores the more intimate speeches delivered by Julia, Octavia and Cleopatra in the *Life of Antony*. The discourse of these women serves to illustrate the ethical tension between *eros* (passion) and *logos* (reason), and the conflict between the pursuit of public and private goods. Chapter Three examines the spoken interaction between husband and wife in the *Lives of Pompey, Brutus and Gaius Gracchus*. The women's speeches, modelled again on Greek tragic and epic archetypes, explore the vital difference between *eros* and marital *philia* (friendship), reinforcing the connection between private conjugal harmony, virtue and civic stability.

Plutarch thus regularly deploys female direct discourse to dramatically reinforce his moral and philosophical themes at watershed moments of the narrative. As each speech is delivered not only at critical points of the protagonist's life, but at critical moments for Rome, each scene dramatically exemplifies an unsettling mode of instruction within the narrative by questioning the statesman's roles and responsibilities within Rome's societal structures; and each subsequently reasserts the social and ethical foundations on which the protagonist (and Plutarch's ideal reader) should rely.

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## Abbreviations and Editions used

The Loeb editions of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* have been preferred over Teubner editions, thus the chapter and verse divisions do not correspond with the latter.<sup>1</sup> References to the *Moralia* use the Stephanus page numbering system. All translations are my own, unless otherwise stated, although I have consulted Perrin's translations throughout, and in some instances, those of Warner (2006), Scott-Kilvert (2004, 2010, 2013) and Pelling (2010, 2013).

Abbreviations for ancient authors and their works follow the conventions used in the Oxford Classical Dictionary (3rd ed.). Abbreviations for some of the more obscure works of the *Moralia* not listed in the OCD are as below:

<i>An virtus docere possit</i>	<i>An virt. doc.</i>
<i>Coniugalia praecepta</i>	<i>Con. prae.</i>
<i>Consolatio ad uxorem</i>	<i>Con. ad. ux.</i>
<i>De virtute morali</i>	<i>De virt. mor.</i>
<i>De liberis educandis</i>	<i>De lib. ed.</i>
<i>De cohibenda ira</i>	<i>De coh. ira.</i>
<i>De capienda ex inimicis utilitate</i>	<i>De cap. ex. in.</i>

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<sup>1</sup> Duff (2002) xiii. It has been argued that the Teubner editions have imposed a level of atticism not present in Plutarch's original (see Giangrande (1988, 1991, 1992a and b); Gallo (1992)).

## ***Parallel Lives***

<i>Theseus and Romulus</i>	<i>Thes.</i>	<i>Rom.</i>
<i>Lycurgus and Numa</i>	<i>Lyc.</i>	<i>Num.</i>
<i>Solon and Publicola</i>	<i>Sol.</i>	<i>Pub.</i>
<i>Themistocles and Camillus</i>	<i>Them.</i>	<i>Cam.</i>
<i>Pericles and Fabius Maximus</i>	<i>Per.</i>	<i>Fab.</i>
<i>Coriolanus and Alcibiades</i>	<i>Cor.</i>	<i>Alc.</i>
<i>Aemilius Paulus and Timoleon</i>	<i>Aem.</i>	<i>Tim.</i>
<i>Pelopidas and Marcellus</i>	<i>Pel.</i>	<i>Marc.</i>
<i>Aristides and Cato Major</i>	<i>Arist.</i>	<i>Cat. Maj.</i>
<i>Philopoemen and Flaminius</i>	<i>Phil.</i>	<i>Flam.</i>
<i>Pyrrhus and Marius</i>	<i>Pyrr.</i>	<i>Mar.</i>
<i>Lysander and Sulla</i>	<i>Lys.</i>	<i>Sulla</i>
<i>Cimon and Lucullus</i>	<i>Cim.</i>	<i>Luc.</i>
<i>Nicias and Crassus</i>	<i>Nic.</i>	<i>Crass.</i>
<i>Sertorius and Eumenes</i>	<i>Sert.</i>	<i>Eum.</i>
<i>Agesilaus and Pompey</i>	<i>Ages.</i>	<i>Pomp.</i>
<i>Alexander and Caesar</i>	<i>Alex.</i>	<i>Caes.</i>
<i>Phocion and Cato Minor</i>	<i>Phoc.</i>	<i>Cat. Min.</i>
<i>Agis-Cleomenes &amp; Gracchi</i>	<i>Ag./Cleom.</i>	<i>Gaius/Tib.</i>
<i>Demosthenes and Cicero</i>	<i>Demo.</i>	<i>Cic.</i>
<i>Demetrius and Antony</i>	<i>Dem.</i>	<i>Ant.</i>
<i>Dion and Brutus</i>	<i>Dion</i>	<i>Brut.</i>
<i>Aratus</i>	<i>Arat.</i>	
<i>Artaxerxes</i>	<i>Art.</i>	
<i>Galba</i>	<i>Galba</i>	
<i>Otho</i>	<i>Otho</i>	
<i>Comparison</i>	<i>Comp.</i>	

## Introduction

*'Regarding the virtues of women, Clea, I do not hold the same opinion as Thucydides. For he declares that the best woman is she about whom there is the least talk among persons outside regarding either censure or commendation, feeling that the name of the good woman, like her person, ought to be shut up indoors and never go out. But to my mind Gorgias appears to display better taste in advising that not the form but the fame of a woman should be known to many. Best of all seems the Roman custom, which publicly renders to women, as to men, a fitting commemoration after the end of their life.'* Plutarch, *Mulierum virtutes* 242e.<sup>2</sup>

The philosophical study of ethics—the analysis of what constitutes moral virtue—can perhaps be plainly outlined by a simple question: how should we live?<sup>3</sup> The centrality of ethical inquiry in philosophical treatises was as apparent in Plutarch of Chaeronea's time as it was in Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus and Zeno's day. Despite the vast political and social changes that occurred from the 5th century BCE to the 2nd century CE, the relationship between ethics, rhetoric and politics was still considered an important one.<sup>4</sup> For Plutarch, what constituted moral virtue was probably the most important theme of his assorted works.<sup>5</sup> Russell claims that there is often a tone of authorial intimacy

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<sup>2</sup> Trans. Babbitt (1931).

<sup>3</sup> Sauv  Meyer (2008) 1.

<sup>4</sup> Vickers (1988). Zeyl (1987) ix-xv. Ancient philosophers recognised the significant moral implications of rhetoric. Plato's *Gorgias* primarily attacks the ethical bankruptcy of the 'art of rhetoric,' ending with an exhortation to choose the life of a philosopher over that of the orator-politician, whom Socrates describes as a person who engages in the practices of pleasure rather than the good (an issue also revisited by Plato in the *Phaedrus*). Sachs (2009) 4. If the *Gorgias* is an attack on rhetoric, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is a classic defence of the genre. He claimed that rhetoric was merely an offshoot of dialectic and ethical studies into politics (*Rhet.* 1365a25-27). Cicero also attempted to reconcile the rhetoric-philosophy disjunction with the *De Oratore*. May and Wisse (2001) 3. Cicero criticises the philosopher's theoretical approach to rhetoric but also maintains that the ideal orator must be a master of all verbal and written communication-including universal philosophical knowledge. Also see Kahn (1985) and Porter (1998). Jacobs (2011) 6. For Plutarch's contemporaries (or near contemporaries), Valerius Maximus' *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* is illustrative of Roman ethical standards, Seneca was interested in integrating moral virtue with the principles of monarchy (*Epistulae, De constantia, De ira*), while Quintilian focused on educating the 'perfect orator' (*Inst. Orat.* 12). On Greek ethical thought, see Earl (1967), Dover (1974), den Boer (1979), Carter (1986), Bryant (1996) and Sauv  Meyer (2008). On Roman ethical attitudes, see Kaster (2005), and Connolly (2007).

<sup>5</sup> For more see Pelling (1989) and Swain (1987).

and self-revelation in his writing, therefore understanding Plutarch's works is greatly improved by understanding the individual.<sup>6</sup>

On one hand Plutarch remained strongly attached to his birthplace in Boeotia, serving as an *archon* of Chaeronea and as a senior priest of Apollo for many years at nearby Delphi.<sup>7</sup> Many of his dialogues are set in or around his immediate locale (Chaeronea, Thespieae, Delphi, Athens, Eleusis), which suggests that Plutarch wrote for the Greek world.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, he was a Roman citizen who spent time in Rome whilst cultivating important Roman and Italian contacts. The *Parallel Lives* for example, are dedicated to the prominent Roman politician Sosius Senecio. To this extent, then, Plutarch was also engaged in the Roman imperial sphere.<sup>9</sup> Stadter claims that his role as a Delphic priest and philosopher made him a spokesman of Greek cultural memory, yet his association with Roman politicians, some close friends of Trajan, strongly suggests that some of his vast corpus of political writings were aimed at the new elite; 'how to' guides for the contemporary Roman statesman.<sup>10</sup> And as he makes it clear in the *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae*, Plutarch's privileging of the past was not in opposition to his acculturation as a Roman citizen.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Russell (1973) 3.

<sup>7</sup> Preston (2001) 89. An inscription at Delphi lists Plutarch as a Roman citizen, a priest of the oracle of Apollo and as a member of the Delphic *Amphictyony* (FD III, IV.4, 472 [=CIG 1713 & SIG 829A]).

<sup>8</sup> Duff (2005) 462.

<sup>9</sup> Stadter (2002) 5-6, Jacobs (2011) 5. Greek and Roman leaders are roughly equally represented as dedicatees of Plutarch's assorted works; ten works dedicated to Romans and twelve to Greeks. Significantly, his two longest works (the *Parallel Lives* and the *Symposiacs*) were addressed to Senecio who at least identified as Roman.

<sup>10</sup> Stadter & Van der Stockt (2002) 1.

<sup>11</sup> Mayer (1997) 41. He cautions (his Greek audience presumably) that one shouldn't use the glorious past as a model for overthrowing Roman rule: 'And when entering upon any office whatsoever, you must not only call to mind those considerations of which Pericles reminded himself when he assumed the cloak of a general: 'Take care, Pericles; you are ruling free men, you are ruling Greeks, Athenian citizens,' but you must also say to yourself: 'You who rule are a subject, ruling a State controlled by proconsuls, the agents of Caesar; 'these are not the spearmen of the plain,' nor is this ancient Sardis, nor the famed Lydian power.' You should arrange your cloak more carefully and from the office of the generals keep your eyes upon the orators' platform, and not have great pride or confidence in your crown, since you see the boots of Roman soldiers just above your head. No, you should imitate the actors, who, while putting into the performance their own passion, character, and reputation, yet listen to the prompter and do not go beyond the degree of liberty in rhythms and meters permitted by those in authority over them' (*Prae. ger. reip.* 813e). Trans. Fowler (1936).



Plutarch's work can be divided into two parts: the compilation of texts grouped together as the *Moralia* and his later grand *opus*, the *Parallel Lives*.<sup>12</sup> His focus on moral virtue was tinged with optimism. In the *An virtus docere possit* he decries those who believe that virtue cannot be taught, instead upholding that every individual has a capacity for moral improvement.<sup>13</sup> That Plutarch considered virtue to be vitally important, not merely for political office but for humankind in general can be seen in the *Life of Romulus* where he claims that to reject the divinity of virtue (ἀρετή), is both 'profane and base.' Instead one must 'implicitly believe that the virtues and souls (of men), ascend from men to heroes, from heroes to demi-gods, and from demi-gods, once freed from irrationality (παθητικόν) to gods according to reason' (κατὰ τὸν εἰκότα λόγον, 28.6-8).<sup>14</sup> Subsequently, the *Moralia* and *Lives* present his convictions regarding the essential nature of moral virtue, complete with didactic examples for his educated readership to absorb and follow.

His philosophical and practical interest in the modality of male-female relationships and of female social roles also meant that he devoted considerable literary space in his assorted works to women. He addressed at least three works to women and he stands out among fellow moralists in his positive and sympathetic attitude to marriage.<sup>15</sup> As Buszard notes, his depictions of women in his moralistic essays comprise 'the most extensive analysis of the female character by any ancient author.'<sup>16</sup> For Plutarch, as a Greek living under the dominion of Rome where women were increasingly present and active in the public sphere, the need to think about the evolving position of female social roles and gender in general was acute.

It is generally accepted that Plutarch frames his ethical issues in Platonic terms, although as Beneker notes, this is often complicated by his tendency to use Aristotelian terminology and his complex relationship with Stoicism.<sup>17</sup> Where Aristotle saw virtue as an essentially masculine quality, Plato

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<sup>12</sup> The *Moralia* includes nearly eighty essays, whilst the *Lives* comprise of twenty- two sets of *Lives* and four standalone *Lives* (*Galba*, *Otho*, *Artaxerxes* and *Aratus*). The Lamprias catalogue lists additional works that have been lost.

<sup>13</sup> *An. virt. doc.* 439c: 'Why do we assert that virtue is unteachable, and thus make it non-existent? For if learning begets virtue, the prevention of learning destroys it' (τί τὴν ἀρετὴν λέγοντες ἀδίδακτον εἶναι ποιοῦμεν ἀνύπαρκτον; εἰ γὰρ ἡ μάθησις γένεσις ἐστίν, ἢ τοῦ μαθεῖν κώλυσις ἀναίρεσις).

<sup>14</sup> References to the *Lives* will be cited in-text, any other works of Plutarch will be footnoted.

<sup>15</sup> The *Consolatio ad uxorem* was addressed to his wife Timoxena, the *De Iside et Osiride* and *Mulierum virtutes* to his friend Clea, while the *Coniugalia praecepta* was written for his young friend Eurydice. Russell (1973) 6.

<sup>16</sup> Buszard (2010) 83.

<sup>17</sup> Boulet (2004) 245. Beneker (2012) 7. Russell (1973) 84. He claims that 'the most comprehensive of [Plutarch's] surviving ethical works, (the) *De virtute morali* is Platonist in substance, Aristotelian in terminology.'

believed that women could theoretically possess the same virtues as their male counterparts and could therefore have the same nature in respect to the guardianship of the state.<sup>18</sup> The progression of Plato's thought through the *Republic* demonstrates, theoretically at least, that courage (*andreia*) and virtue (*arete*) are not strictly dependent on gender. Plutarch follows Plato in the *Amatorius*, where he comments that, 'it is ridiculous to maintain that women have no participation in virtue (ἀρετῆς). What need is there to discuss their prudence and intelligence (σωφροσύνης καὶ συνέσεως) or their loyalty and justice (πίστεως καὶ δικαιοσύνης), when many women have exhibited a daring and great-hearted courage which is truly masculine?'<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the more than five hundred references to Plato within Plutarch's assorted works demonstrates his reliance on the philosopher, whom he described as the 'divine Plato' (*Per.* 8.2).<sup>20</sup> Such devotion was a marked feature of the literature of the Second Sophistic, when in response to the reality of Roman domination, Greek writers and philosophers incorporated and reinterpreted classical models for contemporary imitation.<sup>21</sup> In fact during this period, Plato was more often invoked than any other Greek writer aside from Homer in a wide variety of contexts.<sup>22</sup> Plutarch's strong but flexible Platonic tendencies are thus firmly anchored within the context of social and political change of the Second Sophistic.<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, Plutarch could be seen as essentially Romanised, yet also steadfastly Greek in his privileging of past cultural and philosophical ideals.<sup>24</sup> Accordingly, it may come as no surprise during this time that, as part of negotiating the complex relationship between past and present and its associated political and social contradictions, ideas regarding the importance and symmetry of female virtue were discussed in Greek literature more so than previously. Certainly, as noted by McInerney, there was an increase of works in Plutarch's time regarding the accomplishments of women, including Book Five of Sopatros of Apamea's compilation, Apollonius the Stoic's *Women Who Were Philosophers or Otherwise Accomplished Something Noteworthy* and Artemon of Magnesia's *Account of Deeds Accomplished by the Virtue of Women*.<sup>25</sup> The increasing social mobility of women

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<sup>18</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 1260a21-2. Pl. *Resp.* 5.456a-457a.

<sup>19</sup> *Amat.* 769b-c. Trans. Barberà (2007).

<sup>20</sup> Boulet (2005) 245.

<sup>21</sup> Preston (2001) 90.

<sup>22</sup> Fowler (2010) 106.

<sup>23</sup> For more on the influence of Plato in the literature of the Second Sophistic, see Gerson (2010), Fowler (2008), Jazdzewska (2011).

<sup>24</sup> Preston (2001) 91.

<sup>25</sup> McInerney (2003) 326. He cautions that we cannot assume that the tone of all these works was positive, since authors of this period were also fascinated by paradox and *adoxia*. However, Musonius the Stoic's tract *Whether Sons and Daughters should receive the same Education*, re-evaluates the concept of the 'manly' woman using the defence and protection of a woman's chastity as the benchmark for female bravery and action. At the same time, his view that as women possess the same

in contrast to the classical period must account for some of this interest, but anxieties regarding post-colonial masculinity also motivated discussions of how virtue was gendered. As Centlivres Challet notes:

*'[ancient] texts consist of male, normative discourses addressed to a potentially unknown audience; what the writers say reflects the public side of the functioning of their society. When looking at male representations of women, we learn as much about male constructions of women as about male constructions of men who write about women and about male views of relationships.'*<sup>26</sup>

Consequently, through his representation of women, Plutarch conceptualises and addresses anxieties regarding identity, culture and gender, grounding such issues in a philosophical and ethical model derived from the Greek past. His use of historical examples in both the *Moralia* and *Parallel Lives* encourage continuity between past and present, producing a universal template from which ethical lessons can be dispensed to Greek and Roman, man and woman alike.

### **Plutarch and Women: The *Moralia***

The *Moralia* (Ἠθικά) are an eclectic mix of essays, dialogues, political advice and letters. In modern editions, the *Moralia* comprise seventy-eight texts, although thirteen are considered to be spurious.<sup>27</sup> Although not all the works within the *Moralia* deal specifically with ethics, the largest unified group of twenty-two texts specifically offer philosophical advice and practical ethics.<sup>28</sup> Of this group, four essays—the *Coniugalia praecepta*, *Amatorius*, *Mulierum virtutes* and *Consolatio ad uxorem*—all directly address the subject of women and their roles within society. Plutarch's precepts within these texts regarding the 'proper' place of women were mixed. In the *Coniugalia praecepta*, he advises that, 'it is necessary that the chaste woman be especially visible when with her husband, but that she stay at home and conceal herself when he is not present' and that 'a woman must talk either to her husband or through her husband.'<sup>29</sup> In the *De Iside et Osiride* he asserts that, 'young women needed watching and keeping at home and in silence.'<sup>30</sup> This view of women reflects classical Greek

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capacity for *andreia* as men, they should be educated indicates that Plutarch was not the only philosopher of the time who was interested in how the Platonic notion of gender symmetry in regards to virtue could be applied to real life situations.

<sup>26</sup> Centlivres Challet (2013) 2-3.

<sup>27</sup> For a chronology of Plutarch's works, see Jones (1966) 61-74.

<sup>28</sup> Van Hoof (2014).

<sup>29</sup> *Con. prae.* 142d.

<sup>30</sup> *De Is. et Os.* 381f.

thinking. Pericles (apparently) claimed that, ‘a woman’s reputation is highest when men say little about her, whether it be good or evil’, while in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*, a husband describes his new wife as one who was raised ‘under diligent supervision in order that she might see and hear as little as possible and ask the fewest possible questions.’<sup>31</sup>

The content and tone of the *Mulierum virtutes* appears at odds with such views on what constitutes ideal womanhood. Plutarch begins the work stating that he disagrees with Pericles’ beforementioned statement, instead focusing solely on historical *exempla* of conspicuous female bravery (both individually and as groups), which included physical violence, the shaming of men, the defence and foundation of cities and political negotiation.<sup>32</sup> Most of the anecdotes take place at a time of war and violence; his women react rather than initiate and act to uphold what is fundamentally right.<sup>33</sup> There is then, a measure of inconsistency between Plutarch’s use of tangible and positive examples of female virtue in the *Mulierum virtutes* and the implicit message regarding the ideal behaviour of women in the other works of the *Moralia*. However, his assertion in the *Amatorius* that women have the same capacity for virtue and courage as men suggests, that while he perhaps believed that women should ideally remain in the background, he also allowed them the capacity for leadership and decisive action in a crisis.

Several modern studies have addressed these themes in the *Moralia*. Pomeroy’s 1999 collection of essays on the *Amatorius* and *Coniugalia praecepta* includes Foxhall’s examination of Plutarch’s perceptions of women and their relationship with men, who determines that although Plutarch was comfortable with the concept of the ‘public’ woman, the idea of an autonomous woman was still problematic for the philosopher.<sup>34</sup> McNamara’s and Stadter’s discussions on the gendering of virtue in the *Moralia* conclude that women depicted by Plutarch express capabilities in their own way. They do not replace men but instead exhibit virtue only where gaps appear in a fundamentally male society, their role being to sustain and defend what is right.<sup>35</sup> Likewise, Chapman’s nuanced examination on the female principle in the *Moralia* affirms McNamara’s and Stadter’s conclusions, whilst also highlighting Plutarch’s preference for harmony and reciprocity within the conjugal relationship under

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<sup>31</sup> Thuc. 2.45.2. Xen. *Oec.* 7.5.

<sup>32</sup> Physical violence: the women of Melos (*De mul. vir.* 246e-247a), the women of Salmantica (248e-249b); shaming of men: the Persian women (246a-b); defence of cities: the women of Chios (244f-c), the women of Argos (245d-f); foundation of cities: the Trojan women (243f-244a); political negotiation: the Celtic women (246c-d).

<sup>33</sup> Pomeroy (1999) 178.

<sup>34</sup> Foxhall (1999) 138-150.

<sup>35</sup> McNamara (1999) 151-161, Stadter (1999) 173-182.

the leadership of the husband, a theme also explored by Tsouvala among others.<sup>36</sup> In regards to public action by women, McInerney's study on the 'manly' women of the *Moralia* determines that while female bravery and virtue are indeed permissible in exceptional circumstances, such female agency is simultaneously intertwined with ambiguous notions of shame, duplicity and verbal abuse.<sup>37</sup> And perhaps along similar lines, Walcot argues that such examples of female virtue are exceptional and Plutarch instead had a very low opinion of women as weak and deceitful creatures.<sup>38</sup> However, his study is highly selective and makes little or no comment on the circumstances of the many overtly virtuous female characters in the *Moralia*.

A common theme thus emerges in modern scholarship. Plutarch's ideal woman as contained within the works of the *Moralia* is one who, when she steps outside her traditional role, has the scope to display similar virtues to men so long as these actions support male preeminence and the existing social structure. Women can cross gender boundaries but not for their own benefit and only in the absence of male action. While the idea that female bravery reflects male cowardice occurs repeatedly in ancient literature, Plutarch's aim is not so one-dimensional. For him, women do have the potential to possess true *arete*.

The fact that Plutarch addressed so many works specifically to women indicates at the very least that he wished to provide moral lessons for his female readership by including such dramatic examples of female bravery alongside his more traditional precepts concerning women's societal roles. What this complex ethical position demonstrates is two different yet complementary positions regarding the virtues of women. On one hand, in times of stability, women should submit to the leadership and tutelage of their husbands (or fathers). On the other hand, in times of crisis, women could act with conspicuous and public bravery in defence of society. Each example is a different manifestation of female virtue; one more theoretical and rare, the other realistic and commonplace. Nevertheless, both reinforce an androcentric social structure.

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<sup>36</sup> Chapman (2012). Tsouvala (2014).

<sup>37</sup> McInerney (2003).

<sup>38</sup> Walcot (1999).

## The *Parallel Lives*

The *Parallel Lives* (Βίοι) were written over a more than twenty-year period sometime between 96CE and Plutarch's death in 120CE.<sup>39</sup> Out of the twenty-three known books, twenty-two have survived; many containing a shared introduction, followed by paired biographies on a Greek and Roman statesman with a closing *Comparison*. His decision to compare Greek and Roman statesmen using a Roman biographical template suggests that Plutarch wished to address his own concerns regarding identity and culture that he, as a relative insider, had the authority to pursue on behalf of other Greeks.<sup>40</sup>

Plutarch makes the purpose of the *Lives* clear in the *proem* to the *Life of Aemilius*, where he claims that he is, 'using history as a mirror and endeavouring in a manner to fashion and adorn my life in conformity with the virtues depicted within' (*Aem.* 1.1). As Duff notes, this mirror (ἔσποτρον) is a didactic tool for the reader, with Plutarch's text as the mediating instrument of ethical extraspection.<sup>41</sup> In other words, he asks us to treat a narrative portrait of another as our mirror in a two-way process of metamorphosis, rather than as an instrument of mere reflection.<sup>42</sup> It is the nature of the man that Plutarch is interested in rather than his historical influence. The *Lives* essentially revolve around one basic question; 'what sort of man was he'?<sup>43</sup>

To be a good man in the context of the *Lives* meant that one needed to possess (and exercise) virtue. In the *De virtute morali*, Plutarch declares his Platonic position on how virtue is formed by the restraint and education of the soul:

*'And Plato clearly, surely and incontrovertibly maintained that the soul of the universe is neither simple... (but mixed). And also that the soul of man is neither simple nor subject to similar emotions; but has one part that is intelligent and rational (τὸ νοερὸν καὶ*

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<sup>39</sup> Buszard (2010) 83: the composition and dissemination of the fifty extant *Lives* spans well over twenty years. Jones (1966) suggested that Plutarch composed his extant works between 96CE and 117CE and the subsequent work of Van der Valk (1982), Delvaux (1995), and Nikolaidis (2005) has not shortened this span.

<sup>40</sup> Geiger (1985) 248. He claims that Plutarch may have derived his idea for a *synkreisis* between Greek and Roman heroes from Nepos's juxtaposition of a series of Greek/foreign and Roman generals. The references to Cornelius Nepos in the *Lives* (*Luc.* 43.1, *Marc.* 30.4, *Comp. Pel-Marc* 1.4, *Tib.* 21.2) indicate Plutarch's acquaintance with his work. Mayer (1997) 35. He claims that cross-cultural comparisons (Roman and Greek) were essentially a Roman literary device-the practice of *comparatio* being a common structural element of Roman biographical works.

<sup>41</sup> Duff (2002) 32.

<sup>42</sup> Zadorojnyi (2010) 169-171.

<sup>43</sup> Russell (1973) 102.

λογιστικόν)... and another which, being subject to passion (τὸ παθητικόν)...stands in need of direction and restraint (λογιζομένου καὶ φρονοῦντος). Therefore, ethical or moral virtue is well named for it is a quality of the irrational, being formed by reason (ὕπὸ τοῦ λόγου πλαττόμενον). And finally, the possession of (this) state is a permanent condition bred by habit (ἔθος) and becoming on the one hand vice, if the passion has been educated badly, but virtue, if educated (παιδαγωγηθῆ) excellently by reason.’ (441f-443d)<sup>44</sup>

The training and habituation of the mind via philosophical education (*paideia*) was of fundamental importance for Plutarch. In the *De liberis educandis*, he writes; ‘those who are not able to attain to philosophy wear themselves to a shadow over the other kinds of education which have no value. For that reason, it is necessary to make philosophy the head of all learning’ (τῆς ἄλλης παιδείας).<sup>45</sup> Consequently, he opens many of the *Lives* with descriptions of his protagonist’s early education, associating good education with virtuous behaviour in later life and poor education with moral weakness.<sup>46</sup>

Political virtue, guided by philosophical education, also occupies a central position in the *Lives*, for such instruction has an impact not just on the man, but the entire community.<sup>47</sup> In *the Comparison of Aristides and Cato Major*, he comments that ‘man has no higher virtue than political virtue’ (τῆς πολιτικῆς ἀνθρώπος ἀρετῆς οὐ κτᾶται τελειοτέραν, 3.1), while in the *An seni respublica gerenda sit* he claims that, ‘statesmanship (πολιτεύεσθαι) consists, not only in holding office...proposing laws and making motions, but the continuous practice of statesmanship and philosophy which is every day

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<sup>44</sup> Here Plutarch modifies Plato somewhat in presenting a bipartite version of the soul in contrast to Plato’s tripartite division into the rational (τὸ λογιστικόν), the spirited (τὸ θυμοειδές) and the appetitive (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν, *Resp.* 435b-441c, 580e-590b). He does explain Plato’s tripartite model (*De virt. mor.* 442a-b) but goes on to explain that the appetitive and spirited parts of the soul are both irrational and need guidance by the rational. Beneker (2012) 12-13 notes that Plutarch tends not to refer to the ‘spirited’ part of the soul in the *De virtute morali*, although he still views the ‘passions’ as the properties of the spirited and appetitive Platonic parts. Thus, Plutarch’s model is a complex one, combining the irrational parts of the soul into one unit yet continuing to distinguish their functions. This will be important in the *Lives*, in particular Plutarch’s treatment of Mark Antony and Coriolanus.

<sup>45</sup> *De lib. ed.* 7d.

<sup>46</sup> Duff (2008) 1. The importance of *paideia* is a consistent theme throughout the *Lives*. For example, the possession or lack of *paideia* as an important ethical influence is explored in the *Lyc.* (31.2), *Num.* (3.4-5), *Comp. Lyc-Num.* (4.6-8), *Tim.* (6.1), *Cat. Maj.* (2.3, 23.3), *Phil.* (1.3-4), *Mar.* (2.3, 46.4), *Sert.* (10.4), *Alex.* (8.4), *Phoc.* (2.5), *Cat. Min.* (11.2), *Dion* (4.7, 47.4-5), *Brut.* (52.5).

<sup>47</sup> De Blois (1991) 4569. On the importance of the theme of education in the *Lives*, see Pelling (1989) 199–232 and Swain (1990) 126–45. On the theme of Greek education and the Romans more generally, see Whitmarsh (2001) 181–246, Nerdahl (2011) 295.

alike seen in acts and deeds.<sup>48</sup> It is not mere personal virtue that the *Lives* focus on, but the combination of moral and political virtue that forms the principles of statesmanship.

Therefore, Plutarch applies the ethical conceptions of the *Moralia* to the *Parallel Lives*. The virtues and vices of his statesmen are established not merely through their celebrated deeds, but through behaviour, sayings and anecdotes that reveal each statesman's ability to balance the internal forces of reason (*logos*) and passion (*eros*) with self-restraint (*sophrosyne*) and philosophical education (*paideia*).<sup>49</sup> And so, in order to stress the ethical character of his protagonist, Plutarch shaped his narrative, often by the careful selection and modification of his source material to create, as Beneker astutely explains, 'an interpretive framework that sets his version of the historical narrative into a much larger ethical context.'<sup>50</sup> And considering Plutarch's apparent belief that women had the same capacity for virtue as men, this complex interrelationship between reason, passion, self-restraint and education must be as applicable to women in the *Lives* as his famous statesmen.

Unlike the *Moralia*, where women were either presented as case studies or as the main subject, the women of the *Lives* are minor characters in a narrative that revolves around the male protagonists and their deeds. As a consequence, research on the characterisation of women in the *Lives* has been less comprehensive. Le Corsu's 1981 dissertation divides the women of the *Lives* into geographical and sociological categories, but unfortunately her study is so broad in scope that detailed analysis on the function and characterisation of women within the narrative is limited.<sup>51</sup> Nonetheless, she concludes that Plutarch had a dismissive attitude towards women, stating; 'for our moralist, the ideal woman is a submissive wife leading a discreet and dignified life, wholly devoted to her husband, without fanfare and luxury.'<sup>52</sup> However, as we shall see, Le Corsu fails to acknowledge the significance of politically active women who enter the narrative at crucial junctures.

Blomqvist, in a similar study to McInerney's, examined such active women, finding a surprising number of independent women who are praised and honoured. Of particular importance, Blomqvist

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<sup>48</sup> *An seni*. 769c-d.

<sup>49</sup> *De virt. mor.* 440f-441a: 'For instance virtue, when it considers what we must do or avoid, is called prudence (φρόνησις); when it controls our desires and lays down for them the limitations of moderation and seasonableness in our pleasures, it is called self-restraint (σωφροσύνη); when it has to do with men's relations to one another and their commercial dealings, it is called justice.'

<sup>50</sup> Beneker (2012) 58.

<sup>51</sup> Le Corsu (1981).

<sup>52</sup> Le Corsu (1981) 135: 'pour nostre moraliste, la femme idéale est l'épouse soumise menant une vie discrète et digne, toute de dévouement à son mari, sans tapage et sans luxe.'



finds that, of the women who intervene or are active in the *Lives*, most are Spartan or Roman in contrast to the *Moralia*, where Plutarch presents women of this type from a variety of states and ethnicities. In a parallel to the scholarship on women in the *Moralia*, Blomqvist concludes that Plutarch praises active women only when they accept their subordinate position and work to support men, rather than their own interests. Interestingly, Blomqvist also determines that Plutarch endowed his ideal woman, regardless of race, with the qualities of the strong and virtuous Roman *matrona*.<sup>53</sup> In contrast Castellani asserts that Greek and Roman women in the *Lives* were merely homogenised stock characters due to the ‘cultural continuum’ of Plutarch’s era and that the philosopher ‘never fully comprehended their distinctiveness as parents and consorts.’<sup>54</sup>

Such opposing views suggest that the role of active women in the *Lives* needs further analysis. A fundamental problem with the above approaches is that for the most part, they fail to take Plutarch’s ethical focus into account when analysing his representation of individual women. More useful is Salvioni’s analysis of ‘angry mothers’ and Mayer’s elucidation of the relationship between the fatherless son and the ‘renegade’ statesman. Salvioni makes the interesting point that the sons of widowed mothers eventually turn against their country in the *Lives*, while Mayer expands on this argument by asserting that contemporary concerns regarding Graeco-Roman nationalism and assimilation into the Roman Empire are reflected in Plutarch’s portrayal of ‘cultural renegades’ including Coriolanus and Sertorius who were brought up by widowed mothers.<sup>55</sup> These approaches provide fresh insight by incorporating Plutarch’s portrayal of women with important themes of the *Lives* and it is this line of inquiry that is most important, for Plutarch’s clear aim was to reinterpret and compare the historical narrative of each Greek and Roman statesman through a moral lens.

Beneker, in a crucial study productively argues that the interaction between Mark Antony, Pompey, Brutus, Pericles and their wives/consorts reinforces Plutarch’s use of *eros* as a moral lens through which he evaluates each man’s political and ethical virtues.<sup>56</sup> Beneker’s theoretical framework, based as it is on the protagonist, nevertheless raises a further area for analysis: how does Plutarch characterise active women whose role in the narrative functions as part of this conceptual framework? In particular, how do their demonstrated virtues explain and reinforce the protagonist’s moral qualities or weaknesses and Plutarch’s own conception of the ideal woman—as mother, sister or wife?

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<sup>53</sup> Blomqvist (1997) 75-76, 85.

<sup>54</sup> Castellani (2002) 142.

<sup>55</sup> Salvioni (1982), Mayer (1997).

<sup>56</sup> Beneker (2012).

One important element of this ethical scheme is the interaction between Plutarch's male protagonists and the women around them. While such interaction can be narrated via indirect speech, the instances where Plutarch puts the words of his women in direct discourse is the most significant. First, most linguistically oriented scholars agree that the basic characteristic of direct speech is vividness.<sup>57</sup> Within a narrative context, direct speech is in itself a form of mimetic speech on behalf of the author. As Beck notes, it tends to be utilised to order to dramatise the speaker's 'own concerns in a way that places those concerns in the wider social context of which the embedding conversation provides an instance.'<sup>58</sup> Accordingly, the act of direct discourse within a text emphasises its content and purpose to a greater extent than indirect discourse. Direct speech was also used to reveal character and personality through the rhetorical practice of *ethopoeia*. Therefore, a focus on direct discourse brings us closer to the themes that Plutarch considered most important for his reader's instruction.

Secondly, female speech in ancient literature functions as an active setting where anxieties regarding realities and consequences can be examined. Lovatt explains the importance of gender in the context of ancient discourse and the challenges in its interpretation, commenting:

*'Even when analysing the real speech of real people in a culture and society available for interpretation, there are endless problems and subtleties associated with mapping the interactions of the genders. How much more difficult this must be in a literary text, governed by literary conventions, set in a fictional society and written for an ancient society whose social conventions are themselves accessible only as the constructions of history.'*<sup>59</sup>

Thus, the gender component of female speech, however it is constructed, is important for understanding the 'mental world' of Graeco-Roman literature, in which writers meditated on identity and the nature of social and political structures. The reality of women's experiences in this context is not as important as how the characterisation of female speech serves as an instrument for illustrating male concerns about the world. The boundary between public and private spheres is also referenced by the very act of female speech, since public speech was considered a masculine act, while female

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<sup>57</sup> Beck (2012) 23.

<sup>58</sup> Beck (2012) 24.

<sup>59</sup> Lovatt (2013) 1.

speech in a domestic context immediately draws attention to the private world of the statesman, one which he must separate in order to control and maintain his public *persona*.<sup>60</sup>

There was an underlying current in ancient literature of how dangerously persuasive women's speech could be. Peitho, the goddess of persuasion and seduction, personified the danger of female speech and sexuality for men. In the public, masculine theatre of oratory, writers from Plato to Quintilian were concerned with the relationship between persuasion, charm and weaker, marginalised groups (such as women and slaves) who could utilise such verbal modes.<sup>61</sup> To be defined as feminine or servile meant one was the 'Other,' a concept mired in anxieties regarding identity and power constructs.<sup>62</sup> Zeitlin explains that this construct of 'Otherness' was a way of elaborating for men, 'a fuller model for the masculine self.'<sup>63</sup> In the context of the *Lives* then, we can view female speech as an intratextual mirror for Plutarch's statesmen to confront their ethical weaknesses and simultaneously, as a didactic mirror for his audience.

At the same time, it must be noted that persuasive female speech was not always portrayed as dangerous. The influence that women could hold within the family legitimised female speech in a familial context, for the care and protection of the family was a woman's paramount social role. Isaeus notes that women would not allow their husbands to give false testimony about family matters, while Demosthenes suggests that jurymen would have to justify their verdicts to their wives,

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<sup>60</sup> McClure (2009) 39-40. If the public sphere belonged to men, then private speech such as gossip and domestic conversation was the appropriate domain for women—at least in literature written almost exclusively by men. Lament, spinning and work songs were also categorised as female-specific modes of speech. Beard (2014) sums this up eloquently; 'To be a man – and we're talking an elite man – was to claim the right to speak. Public speech was a – if not the – defining attribute of maleness. A woman speaking in public was, in most circumstances, by definition not a woman. Telemachus makes this gendered action clear to Penelope, telling her to 'go back up into your quarters, and take up your own work, the loom and the distaff ... speech will be the business of men, all men, and of me most of all; for mine is the power in this household.' When Telemachus says 'speech' is 'men's business', the word is *muthos*—authoritative public speech.' McClure (2009) 6-7. Plays such as Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Euripides' *Hippolytus* and *Andromache*, Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousae* and *Ecclesiazusae* demonstrated that uncontrolled and public female speech disrupted the male-only nature of oratory and also the stability and health of the *oikos* and *polis* unless it could be suppressed or transformed into a ritual form (*i.e* lament).

<sup>61</sup> Connolly (1998) 131.

<sup>62</sup> As the corresponding constructions of masculinity and femininity relate to socially constructed gender roles rather than biological sex, any discussion of gender is by necessity one of culture as well as nature. The concept of the 'Other' was first articulated by de Beauvoir (1949) and then by Said (1963), who explored the conceptualisation of the 'Other' primarily through post-colonial racial constructs. For a specific treatment of Graeco-Roman gender constructs, see Arthur (1976, 1984), Richlin (1984), Hallett (1989) and Zeitlin (1996).

<sup>63</sup> Zeitlin (1990) 85, Hallett (1989).

daughters or mothers.<sup>64</sup> The utilisation of such private authority was a feature of female speech in 5th century BCE Attic drama, where women could demonstrate an unusual rhetorical proficiency normally associated with men, but usually only in situations where the male head of household or husband was temporarily or permanently absent.<sup>65</sup> As with the examples of female action and bravery in the *Moralia*, female appropriation of masculine modes of action were at least occasionally permissible when such action was undertaken in order to protect and reinforce the established (and androcentric) social order.

Considering Plutarch's keen interest in women and their societal roles, it is unsurprising that we encounter different constructions of female speech and femininity in the *Lives*. His statement in the *Life of Alexander* that 'a slight thing like a phrase or a jest often makes a greater revelation of character,' indicates that he favoured relatively informal but authentic speech over dramatic set-pieces (*Alex.* 1.2). But for women, whose public activities were constrained, a confrontation or grand scene is necessary to move them into the spotlight. Galaz has argued that the speech and *pathos* (*gynaikos logos*) of female characters in the *Lives* functioned as *paradeigmata* and underlined a specific code of moral principles. By assuming that feminine speech and nature is the opposite to that of men, female direct discourse often highlighted the deficiencies of men, for the women in many cases are more noble than the men they are connected with.<sup>66</sup> Buszard in his 2010 study of eleven female Greek and Roman speeches in the *Lives* comments that Plutarch would have expected his direct discourse to receive due attention from his educated audience, as they would have understood that the character of the speaker was revealed via their speech. The passages featuring female speech would therefore be the same passages in which he took the greatest pains to depict female character.<sup>67</sup>

Buszard's careful analysis of the female speech scenes reveals that Plutarch's characterisation of those Greek and Roman women was uniformly positive; all demonstrate a sharp intellect and predominantly civic outlook. His study focuses on how Plutarch represented the women's character through *ethopoeia*, using epic and tragic models in many instances as a template from which the reader can positively view their input. He concludes that their direct discourse is a necessary reaction

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<sup>64</sup> Isae. 7.15, 12.5. Dem. 59.110.

<sup>65</sup> McClure (2009) 7. The absent male head of household was a common tragic plot. She notes that 'the freedom entailed by the absence of men leads to verbal transgression; in all these plays, the women show an unusual rhetorical proficiency normally associated with men and the tangible sign of their power in the polis.'

<sup>66</sup> Galaz (2000) 204.

<sup>67</sup> Buszard (2010) 85.

to a crisis and a defence of the public roles of their men.<sup>68</sup> While this is certainly true with regards to the chronological development of each biography, the speech of women plays a more significant role than as a mere response to a critical period of the narrative. Buszard seems to have defined female speech as dramatic scenes that produce some sort of effect or outcome, for if every instance where women engage in direct discourse and interact with men, we find eleven Roman women, sixteen Greek and eleven barbarian women who are accorded direct discourse in the *Lives*.<sup>69</sup> However, some of these scenes are constructed as conversations, exclamations and anecdotes, a typical method of Plutarch's to add cultural/historical interest or character development.<sup>70</sup>

If we, like Buszard, restrict our analysis to the instances of female direct discourse which are delivered as a set speech (either in private or public) or which are delivered in order to effect a particular outcome, we shall see that not only are such speeches important in elucidating positive female character traits (which is Buszard's main focus) but more significantly, that the fundamental function of each woman's speech is to dramatically reinforce a particular ethical theme at a watershed moment of the narrative. As Plutarch considered his reader to be a spectator (θεατήρ) absorbing the visual imagery of a scene (*Per*.1.5), the vividness of direct discourse dramatises his ethical concerns in a way that places those concerns within a wider social context.<sup>71</sup> Such literary mimesis at a time of crisis also invites a tragic reading, which in itself has a powerful ethical effect because it draws the audience and narrator together via shared assumptions and insights into expected social roles and responsibilities.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Buszard (2010) 112.

<sup>69</sup> See Appendix 1. Buszard purposely excludes speeches by barbarian women since he deems their speech as substantially different in circumstance, motivation, and character from those of Greek and Roman women. I have not included the utterances of the Delphic oracle, since she was technically the mouthpiece of the (male) god. I have included Egyptian speech as examples of barbarian direct discourse, while two examples (an old woman in the *Life of Demetrius* and 'foreign women' in the *Life of Lyscurgus*) have not been assigned to any particular ethnicity since it is unclear in the text.

<sup>70</sup> For more on Plutarch's use of anecdotes (including the cross-referencing of anecdotes throughout his assorted works), see Stadter (2008) 53-66.

<sup>71</sup> As Duff (2002) 41, notes, the more usual Greek term for the reader is 'ὁ ἀναγνώσκων'. Beck (2012) 24.

<sup>72</sup> Duff (2008) 7.

## Methodology

The aim of this thesis is to ascertain in what ways the speech of women and their interaction with men contributes to the ethical framework of the Roman *Lives*. By following the basis of Beneker's methodology and expanding on the scope of Buszard's work, this study will investigate how female speech explores the interconnection between the ethical constraints of *eros*, *sophrosyne* and *paideia* on the rational and irrational parts of the protagonist's psyche.<sup>73</sup>

This study will focus exclusively on the speech and action of women in the Roman *Lives*. Firstly, an investigation of the speech of all women in the *Lives* would be beyond the scope of a study this size. Secondly, of all the speeches in the *Lives*, the longest is delivered by the Roman *matrona* Volumnia in the *Coriolanus*, while the speeches of Cleopatra, Hersilia, Cornelia and Licinia are the longest speeches in their respective biographies (Porcia's speech is the second longest instance of direct discourse in the *Brutus*).<sup>74</sup> Clearly, Plutarch regarded their direct speech to be significant moments in the narrative, especially in the cases where such female speech was effectively constructed by Plutarch himself, rather than incorporating or modifying existing source material. Indeed, the relative acceptability of elite female intervention in Roman political and social issues compared to the classical Greek model allows Plutarch to present their speech in a positive rather than transgressive light. This cultural context also allows for a greater range of Roman female direct discourse by mothers, sisters and wives in both civic and domestic contexts including speeches of intercession, negotiation, intimate conversation and lament. As Plutarch also ordered the vast majority of his *Lives* with the Greek *Life* first, he tended to introduce his ethical themes in the initial biography with the result that such themes and character traits are explored in a more complex fashion in the subsequent Roman *Life*, many of which are significantly longer than their Greek counterparts.<sup>75</sup>

Since direct female involvement and speech is so sparing in the *Lives*, each episode takes on a narrative importance beyond its gendered and therefore marginal status. Indeed, as we shall see, there is an overarching theme that binds each episode of Roman female speech: every woman who speaks is a member of the elite; all speak at a point of civic and personal crisis; and all are portrayed as virtuous *exempla*.<sup>76</sup> However, not every instance of direct discourse will be examined. As this study

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<sup>73</sup> Pelling (1988, 1989) and Swain (1990) among others have demonstrated that Plutarch links a partial or complete absence of *paideia* with political failure and personal downfall particularly in the Roman *Lives*, suggesting that he saw a deficiency of Hellenic education in Roman culture as detrimental.

<sup>74</sup> See Appendix 2. From this point, each *Life* will be abbreviated to the protagonist's name (*i.e.* the *Coriolanus* instead of the *Life of Coriolanus*) in the interests of brevity.

<sup>75</sup> Stadter (1999a) xiv. The three exceptions to the Greek led pairs are the *Coriolanus*, *Aemilius Paulus* and *Sertorius*.

<sup>76</sup> Buszard (2010) 84.

will focus on the function of female speech within Plutarch's ethical framework, speech that does not affirm the wider context of female action within the *Life* or fails to address the protagonist or speaker's own moral qualities will not be included. Consequently, short scenes of female direct discourse and/or anecdotes that shed little light on how Plutarch utilises female interaction as a way of reinforcing his ethical aims will not be included.

Chapter One will analyse the two instances of public intercession by women in the Roman *Lives*: that of Hersilia in the *Romulus* and Volumnia (and by association Valeria) in the *Coriolanus*. Female action on behalf of the state, itself a crucial theme of the *Mulierum virtutes*, is revisited here within the context of a well-established Latin tradition. However, Plutarch also incorporates Greek tragic models in order to present their direct discourse as a dramatic yet sanctioned intervention in the masculine sphere.

Chapter Two will explore the more intimate speeches delivered by Julia, Octavia and Cleopatra in the *Antony*. As Plutarch primarily assesses Antony through his private conduct and the subsequent effects on his public life, the discourse of his mother and wives serves to illustrate the inner workings of a flawed man. The role of Cleopatra is particularly interesting. As the only non-Roman woman who is accorded extended sections of direct discourse in the Roman *Lives*, Plutarch utilises her speech and action both as examples of Antony's need for unsuitable guidance and as a philosophical contrast to the sterling qualities of his Roman wife, Octavia. As a sovereign in her own right, neither Greek nor Roman, she had little or no social restrictions on the path she chose to follow in life. As we will see, her example was not a positive one, moulded by Plutarch (and indeed his sources) to be the primary mechanism in the downfall of Antony. Her public utterances, delivered for her own benefit, are one of the very few instances in the *Lives* where female speech is framed as dangerous and inappropriate.<sup>77</sup> Plutarch's depiction of the Egyptian queen as the diametric opposite of Octavia also serves to highlight the virtues of Antony's Roman female family members as community-minded, private figures. In ignoring her speech, an analysis of the *Antony's* ethical framework would be rendered incomplete.

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<sup>77</sup> For example, the constant presence and agency of the queen mother Parysatis in the *Artaxerxes* provides an intriguing picture of maternal authority within the treacherous milieu of the Persian court. As an intriguer, a clever trickster and adept manipulator, Plutarch presents a maternal narrative revolving around her pursuit of revenge against those who aided her eldest son Artaxerxes against her younger and more favoured son Cyrus. Unlike Volumnia and Julia, who were prepared to sacrifice their very bodies in their conflict against their sons in defence of the state and family, Parysatis embodies the stereotypical Greek view of the vengeful, bloodthirsty barbarian queen, whose pursuit of emotionally selfish ends instead produces familial chaos.

Chapter Three will turn to the interaction between husband and wife in the *Pompey*, *Brutus* and *Gaius Gracchus*, including speeches delivered by Pompey's wife Cornelia, Gaius' wife Licinia and Brutus' wife Porcia. Plutarch's views in the *Moralia* regarding the connection between private harmony and civic stability are reaffirmed whilst simultaneously highlighting the importance of the protagonist's private life on his moral standing. Lament was considered an appropriate form of female speech and Plutarch references the lament of Andromache in the *Iliad* in his construction of Cornelia, Porcia and Licinia's discourse, utilising Greek tragic and epic precedents for female speech and action. However, Plutarch employs the Andromache model not only to incorporate a familiar and appropriate context for each woman's speech but to also demonstrate that his Roman women are less selfish and more civically minded than their Greek counterpart; an interesting position that reinforces the complexity of Plutarch's identity as a Romanised Greek.

Of course, such groupings are to some extent slightly arbitrary. Julia's intervention parallels that of Hersilia and Volumnia, while Cleopatra delivers a lament at the end of the *Antony* that echoes the laments of Licinia and Cornelia. However, by grouping female speech according to the ethical context of each examined Life, we gain a better understanding of how Plutarch deployed his Roman female characters as moral mirrors for his male characters and as ethical *exempla* in their own right.



## Chapter 1: The Ethical Discourse of Female Intercession

As mirrors of the mythologised Roman past, the public intercessions of Hersilia and Volumnia in the *Romulus* and *Coriolanus* respectively offer an ideal starting point from which to consider how and why Plutarch presented female direct discourse within a Roman context. Only three speeches are delivered in the *Romulus* and of those, that of Hersilia (and the Sabine women) is the longest and most dramatic, while Volumnia's speech in the *Coriolanus* is the longest single episode of direct discourse in the *Lives*.<sup>78</sup> The apparent acceptability of a virtuous woman interceding with powerful men on behalf of the community at a time of crisis in both Greek and Latin literature provides a positive contextual basis for Plutarch's interpretation. In addition, the inherent drama of an intercession scene occurring literally on the battleground (or in the case of Volumnia, outside the gates of Rome in front of a hostile force) is amplified by the women's invasion of masculine space, thereby according the speech of each woman a prominent role within the narrative.

However, while the main focus of the chapter will be on the function of female direct discourse, the wider context of female action within the *Romulus* and *Coriolanus* also needs to be considered, for it offers a better understanding of how and why Plutarch adapted his original source material to suit his ethical aims. The interaction between male and female characters and its resulting effects therefore provides a background that helps to contextualise the relative ethical importance of each woman's dramatic speech scene.

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<sup>78</sup> Speech by Remus (7.5-7), *Romulus* (28.2). Buszard (2010) 84-85: Volumnia's speech occupies two Teubner pages, while the next longest episode of direct discourse in the *Lives* (the dialogue between Cleomenes and Therycion, *Cleom.* 31.1-6,) requires only a page and a half.

## The *Life of Romulus*

‘By the subsequent honour, love, and just treatment given to these women, [Romulus] made it clear that his deed of violence and injustice was a most honourable achievement, and one most adapted to promote political partnership.’ Plutarch, *Comp. Thes- Rom.* 6.2.

Beginning with the *Romulus* is not a matter of ordering analysis in chronological order, although admittedly arranging an investigation from the mythological past to more contemporary times appears to be a tidy methodology. In fact, Plutarch turned to legendary matter after composing more historically based biographies.<sup>79</sup> In the *proem* to the *Theseus* (the parallel biography to the *Romulus*), he explains that he decided to investigate the domain of poets and mythographers in order to purify Fable; ‘making her submit to reason and take on the semblance of history’ (1.3). Plutarch was prepared to take on the mythic and fabulous and make them a component of his early Roman biographies, for he saw the role of Fortune and the divine in such legends justified Rome’s claim to rule for his wider Graeco-Roman audience (8.7). He explicitly addresses the persuasive effect of the cultural memory associated with such mythical elements in the *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae*, claiming that; ‘political oratory, much more than that used in a court of law, admits maxims, historical and mythical tales, and metaphors, by means of which those who employ them sparingly and at the right moment move their audiences very much.’<sup>80</sup> In the *De Iside et Osiride*, he states that, ‘our lifeworld is mimetically beholden to myth at a level where ethics and metaphysics emerge.’<sup>81</sup> Clearly, Plutarch believed that the inclusion of mythological aspects in historical narrative served a greater ethical purpose than mere entertainment. As Bahktin explains, ‘historical reality is an arena for the disclosure and unfolding of human characters, nothing more.’<sup>82</sup> Rather than saying that such things actually happened, Plutarch instead utilises mythical examples as demonstrative proof of his ethical framework.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *Thes.* 1.1. For more on the chronology of Plutarch’s *Lives*, see Jones (1966) 61-74.

<sup>80</sup> *Prae. ger. reip.* 803a.

<sup>81</sup> *De Is. et Os.* 361d-e, 377a. Zadorojnyi (2012) 179.

<sup>82</sup> Bahktin (1981)141. Such a historical backdrop, ‘in which the disclosure of character takes place, serves merely as a means for disclosure, it provides in words and deeds a vehicle for those manifestations of character: but historical reality is deprived of any determining influence on character as such, it does not shape or create, it merely manifests it.’

<sup>83</sup> Gulaz (2000) 204.

The use of historically dubious subject matter does not mean that Plutarch was careless or indiscriminate with his selection of source material. He cites many sources including Fabius Maximus (14.1), Valerius Antias (14.7), C Sulpicius Galba (17.5), Juba (14.7, 15.4, 17.5), Dionysius of Halicarnassus (16.8) and Zenodotus of Troezen (14.8).<sup>84</sup> Although not directly cited, there are many close correspondences between Plutarch's account and that of Livy, while the Latin historian and Dionysius also preserved detailed accounts of Romulus' abduction of the Sabine women.<sup>85</sup> Such a variety of sources allows Plutarch, in many instances, to incorporate two or more different versions of a particular story or anecdote. When he does present more than one version of a particular story, he implicitly reduces the credibility of his less favoured accounts by either placing them second, recounting them in an unconvincing manner or only referring back to one particular version later in the narrative. This is an important facet in the earlier *Lives*, since Plutarch could not draw on established sayings and anecdotes that he employed in his later historical biographies. Accordingly, the reader gets a clear sense from the beginning of the biography as to which traditions and themes Plutarch favours and why.

### **The Ethical Framework of the *Romulus***

The *Romulus* is constructed around the conflicting qualities of Rome's mythical founder. While Plutarch acknowledges Romulus' rash anger, selfishness and later tyrannical tendencies, he also notes that he was by nature a statesman (τῆ φύσει πολιτικῶν γεγονότων, *Comp.* 2.1) and much of his ethical focus is on Romulus' actions in founding Rome. He explains that he decided to pair Romulus and Theseus together because, 'of the world's two most illustrious cities, Romulus founded the one, and Theseus made a metropolis of the other' (*Thes.* 2.1), but he differentiates between each man's degree of 'founding,' describing Romulus (and Remus) as founders of cities (οἰκισταὶ πόλεων) rather than transplanters like Theseus (μετοικισταὶ, *Comp.* 4.1). Plutarch also notes that both statesmen resorted to the abduction of women (ἀρπαγή, *Thes.* 2.1). In the case of Romulus, Plutarch will take great pains to explain that the abduction of the Sabine women was an integral part of the founding of his new blended community and ultimately a just act, while Theseus' acts were committed purely out of lustful aggression (ὑβριν καὶ καθ' ἡδονήν, *Comp.* 6.2). Such an emphasis on the justness of Romulus' actions perhaps reflects a measure of anxiety on Plutarch's part that the abduction was a morally problematic act. However, since he believed that Rome's contemporary glory could be traced back

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<sup>84</sup> For more on Plutarch's sources and methods, see Pelling (2002) 1-44. On Plutarch's knowledge of Latin and Latin sources, see Jones (1971) 81-7, Cornell (2013) 105-113.

<sup>85</sup> Instances where Plutarch closely follows Livy: 3.2, 3.3, 4.2, 7.1, 9.1, 9.3, 9.5, 10.1, 13.2, 14.1, 14.6, 16.3, 17.1, 18.2, 19.1, 21.3, 23.1, 23.5, 25.1, 26.2, 27.6, 28.1. The Sabine abduction episode in Livy: 1.9.6-1.13-8; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.*: 2.30.3-2.46.3.

to such legendary actions, the deed must be ultimately ‘good’ for Rome, for as Plato notes, ‘a rightly founded city (ὀρθῶς) is good in the full sense of the word: it will be wise, brave, prudent, and just’ (σοφὴ τ’ ἐστὶ καὶ ἀνδρεία καὶ σώφρων καὶ δικάια).<sup>86</sup> Accordingly, Hersilia’s speech and indeed, the role and interaction of women prior to the abductions are vital components of Plutarch’s positive characterisation of Romulus’ statesmanship and Rome’s civic and cultural strength.

### **Women and Rome’s Origins**

The agency of Rome’s early women effectively sets down the ethical parameters of the *Romulus*. The first five chapters are almost totally dedicated to cataloguing the different versions of Rome’s original foundation, all of which revolve around female action. Plutarch opens the *Life* by briefly claiming that the Pelasgians who settled on the site of the future city derived the name Rome from their military strength (ῥώμην 1.1). His second story however is considerably more detailed. Trojan refugees, having been blown onto the Tuscan coast, had no plans to settle and prepared to continue their journey.<sup>87</sup> The women were distressed at the thought and one of their number, Roma, proposed that they should burn the ships. After following Roma’s instructions, the women appeased their husbands’ anger with kisses (ἀσπάζεσθαι τοῖς στόμασι), a gesture Plutarch claims that later became customary for Roman wives to offer their husbands (1.4). Despite their initial anger, once the men saw themselves in a more prosperous situation than they had expected, they honoured the women’s deeds by naming Rome after Roma since she was the reason for their settlement (1.3).

Plutarch’s version of the burning of the ships is slightly different than the various Greek and Latin traditions. Dionysius recounts a similar version to Plutarch, except that it was Aeneas who named Rome after the Trojan woman Romê.<sup>88</sup> In the *Aeneid*, it is Juno (disguised as one of the Trojan women), who delivers a speech that convinces the women to burn the ships.<sup>89</sup> Aeneas is finally convinced that the group should stay, not by the actions of the women but by the words of the seer Nautes and the shade of his father Anchises.<sup>90</sup> By omitting any reference to Aeneas or any other recognisable (male) Roman figure, Roma is the principal character in Plutarch’s account. Her proposal to burn the ships arose from her ‘superior birth and great wisdom’ (γένει προὔχειν καὶ

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<sup>86</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 427e.

<sup>87</sup> Also recounted by Plutarch in the *De mul. vir.* 243f-244a.

<sup>88</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.72.2. He claims the author of the history of the priestesses at Argos was the source for this version, Damastes of Sigeum and others who agreed with this account. Dionysius also notes a version another version (via Aristotle) in which it was captive Trojan women who burned the ships, fearing that the Greeks would carry them back as slaves to their homeland.

<sup>89</sup> *Aen.* 5.604-663.

<sup>90</sup> *Aen.* 5.700-745.

φρονηῖν, 1.2). Elite female leadership, intellect and conciliation are the main features of Plutarch's version, not the whim of the gods or frantic expediency.

Not only does Plutarch reframe the burning of the ships tale in order to focus the attention on Roma, he then provides four other possible kinship legends relating to Roma before only briefly noting other possible naming traditions for Rome, the last being that of Romulus (2.1-3).<sup>91</sup> Despite acknowledging that the Romulus story is considered by many to be the most authentic, Plutarch merely lists it as one of the many possible, secondary versions compared to the extended Roma legend. Plutarch's arrangement accords Roma precedence over well-known androcentric naming and foundation traditions, especially those preserved in Dionysius and Livy's versions, who link Rome's name first and foremost with Romulus and credit the vast majority of founding activities to men, particularly Aeneas.<sup>92</sup> The consistent focus on Roma in the early chapters suggests that the implicit theme of the Trojan women story is an important one in the overall scheme of the *Romulus*. Ultimately, the women's use of mollification (ἀσπάξεσθαι καὶ φιλοφρονεῖσθαι, 1.4) and the eventual benefits for the community transformed their act of aggression into a just and ultimately persuasive act. Indeed, Plutarch will employ a similar positive approach to Romulus' use of force and persuasion on the Sabine women. The emphasis on female characters in the early stages of the biography therefore serves to conceptualise, in positive terms, the participation of women in key founding activities and also provides a background motif of force and persuasion that (in this instance) is sanctioned by women.

The importance of female participation is reinforced when Plutarch moves to the birth legends of Romulus and Remus. He gives two versions of the story: a 'fabulous' Tarchetius account that he took from Promathion, and the more familiar Rhea Silvia account taken from Diodes of Peparethus (2.3-

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<sup>91</sup> The four other lineage traditions for Roma according to Plutarch: She was a daughter of Italus and Leucaria, or, in another account, of Telephus the son of Heracles; and that she was married to Aeneas, or, in another version, to Ascanius the son of Aeneas. He refers again to Roma at 2.3 claiming that 'others say it was Roma, a daughter of the Trojan woman I have mentioned, who was wedded to Latinus the son of Telemachus and bore him Romulus,' a version also preserved by Dionysius (1.72.5).

<sup>92</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.45.3. Livy 1.7.1-3. There is a similar theme of a new settlement named after a woman, Lavinia, in Livy, but his account story revolves around Aeneas. As Dionysius noted in his account; 'the arrival of Aeneas and the Trojans in Italy is attested by all the Romans and evidences of it are to be seen in the ceremonies observed by them both in their sacrifices and festivals, as well as in the Sibyl's utterances, in the Pythian oracles, and in many other things, which none ought to disdain as invented for the sake of embellishment' (2.49.3). In contrast, Plutarch only briefly mentions Aeneas in describing possible lineages for Roma (2.1), Romulus (2.2-3) and the Alban kings (3.1).

6, 3.1-4.2).<sup>93</sup> Both stories feature a kinswoman of the king of Alba Longa (daughter in the first account, niece in the second) who mysteriously becomes pregnant with twins, who are subsequently cast out and suckled by a she-wolf until they are saved by strangers. As Brenk notes, ‘Plutarch regards (the Tarchetius version of 2.3-6) as myth (μυθώδη παντάπασιν) but undoubtedly related it as important for conveying the Roman mentality about their origins.’<sup>94</sup> While this may be true, Plutarch’s repetition and expansion of such female-centric stories creates a simultaneous resonance and dissonance, amplifying the central feminine element of the story whilst following his established pattern of presenting two or more variations of the same story.

Plutarch immediately repeats this tactic in the next chapter. He recounts two different accounts relating to Acca Larentia, firstly as the foster-mother of Romulus and Remus and secondly as a courtesan who left her estate to Rome (5.4-5).<sup>95</sup> While both stories appear unrelated, each Larentia is honoured for her civic duty. One raised the twin founders of Rome, while the other gave her vast possessions to the people: two fundamental civic services. As with the Rhea Silvia narrative, the latter Larentia account appears to fulfil Plutarch’s aim of ‘purifying Fable and making her submit to reason,’ through his linking of both stories to the contemporary geographical Roman landscape (4.1, 5.5). Such constructed temporal seepage between the mythic past and present effectively appropriates the cultural value of the places associated with each woman and privileges their role over other traditions.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, while the Rhea Silvia account was a well-known component of Rome’s founding mythic corpus, the extended Acca Larentia narrative appears to be a less necessary addition unless we consider that the duplication of ‘founding mother’ stories serves to emphasise the role of such women in Plutarch’s reconstruction of Roman collective identity.

### **The abduction of the Sabine women**

By the close of Chapter Five, Plutarch has dedicated fifteen sections to the actions and reactions of women, compared to nine for men. Moreover, his arrangement and expansion of the Roma, Rhea Silvia and Acca Larentia narratives over other, androcentric traditions that were available to him thematises the early chapters by introducing *leitmotifs* of male-female conflict, force and persuasion as symbols of emerging Roman values. While the start of Chapter Six signals an abrupt shift of focus onto Romulus and his pursuit of traditionally masculine activities (6.3) and the organisation of the

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<sup>93</sup> The Promathion account does not appear in any other extant sources, while Plutarch claims that the account of Diodes of Peparethus was followed by Fabius Pictor. For more on the issue with the Greek and Latin sources, see Dillery (2010) 77-107.

<sup>94</sup> Brenk (1977) 229.

<sup>95</sup> *Quaest. Rom.* 272f.

<sup>96</sup> Banta (2006) 2.

military and political structures of the city (13.1-5), the role of women in the creation of the new Roman community is, as we expect given the preceding chapters, significant. Despite his successful political initiatives, Romulus had pressing issues. His policy of opening Rome's doors to all sorts of male fugitives meant that the city now had a large indigent population unable to find wives.

Livy claims that it was the scarcity of women (*penuria mulierum*) and the rejection of the neighbouring tribes that were the reasons for the abductions, but both Dionysius and Plutarch depict Romulus proactively deciding to abduct women from the neighbouring Sabines in order to contract political alliances.<sup>97</sup> In order to seize the women, Romulus set a cunning trap, one that all the sources agree upon.<sup>98</sup> At a festival for Cosus, to which all the neighbouring tribes were invited, Romulus gave a signal at which his men 'drew their swords, rushed in with shouts, and carried off (ἥρπάζον) the daughters of the Sabines, allowing the men themselves to escape' (14.3-5).<sup>99</sup> Plutarch follows Dionysius and reports that 'some say' (λέγουσι ἔνιοι) that Romulus abducted the women because of his warlike nature and his belief in oracles which considered Rome's destiny would be sustained by war (14.1). He concludes however that such motives are unlikely and instead posits that the most likely reason was to effect some sort of blending and fellowship with the Sabines (τρόπον τινὰ συγκράσεως καὶ κοινωνίας, 14.1-2). Mere lines later Plutarch repeats the premise that Romulus' aim was blending and unity (συμμεῖξαι καὶ συναγαγεῖν), rather than *hubris* or injustice (μὴ μεθ' ὕβρεως μηδ' ἀδικίας, 14.6).<sup>100</sup> Certainly he notes that the abductions were in fact 'a necessity' (ἀναγκαῖον,

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<sup>97</sup> Livy 1.9.2. He claims that Romulus sent envoys to all the neighbouring tribes to solicit alliances and marriage but was turned away. Dionysius of Halicarnassus offers three possible reasons: to increase the number of available wives, as a pretext for war against the Sabines and an excuse to seek out an alliance with the Sabines. Of the three, he favours the last (*Ant. Rom.* 2.30.1-2, 2.31.1). Cicero described the abductions as motivated by Romulus' desire to strengthen his power and his people (*ad muniendas opes regni ac populi, De rep.* 2.12). Livy claims that despite their military might, Rome was 'owing to the want of women a single generation was likely to see the end of her greatness, since she had neither prospect of posterity at home nor the right of intermarriage with her neighbours' (1.9.1). Ovid notes that the Romans by now had a reputation for military prowess but not enough wives and the alliances that their families would bring, commenting like Livy, that Rome's wealthy neighbours scorned to take poor men for their sons-in-law (*Fasti* 3.187).

<sup>98</sup> Livy 1.9.6-10, Ovid *Fasti* 3.190, Cic. *De rep.* 2.12, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.30.3-6.

<sup>99</sup> For the number of women taken, Plutarch offers Livy's version of 30 women, Valerius Antias' estimate of 527 and Juba at 683.

<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, Plutarch adds that according to Fabius, it was in the fourth month after the founding of the city that Romulus decided to abduct the Sabine women, which indicates that he wished to present the abductions as the pressing issue for Romulus and the state (14.1). Dionysius disagreed, commenting; 'it is not likely that the head of a newly-built city would undertake such an enterprise before establishing its government' (2.31.1). However, Plutarch had already covered Romulus' organisation of the military and political structures of the city (13.1-5), so in his chronology, the abductions occurred at an appropriate stage of the biography.

9.2) due to the lack of real cohesion among the Roman population, reinforcing the theme that the abductions, although unjust, were undertaken for noble purposes.

In fact, the absence of brutal violence or desire (*eros*) in the official abduction plans is quite striking. This can be seen in how Plutarch modifies a Livian story. Livy recounts that the most beautiful women were marked out for the chief senators. The gang of a certain Thalassius seized (*raptam*) a beautiful woman for their master, claiming that passion and love (*cupiditate atque amore*) were persuasion enough for the women despite the use of force.<sup>101</sup> Plutarch instead describes a group of men leading (*ἄγοντα*) the girl to Talasius, not a powerful senator but a young man with an excellent reputation. He concurs with Livy that ‘Talasius’ was the origin of the Roman wedding cry, but then adds that he was personally told that ‘Talasius’ was the watchword that Romulus gave for the abductions (15.2). He then continues with his most detailed explanation, claiming that the most credible origin of the ‘Talasius’ wedding cry was the fact that the Sabine women were to be exempt from all labour except spinning (15.4).<sup>102</sup> By adding two further versions of the story, the last based on his own conjectures, Plutarch relocates the quasi-romantic story back into the pragmatic statesmanship of Romulus.

### **Hersilia in Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus**

The one named woman of Plutarch’s episode, Hersilia, is described as an unplanned captive, since as a married woman she was not in a position to become a Roman wife.<sup>103</sup> At this point however, the sources become a little tangled. Livy places Hersilia’s speech after the Sabine abductions and her subsequent (re)marriage to Romulus where she intervenes on behalf of the Antemnite women, although she is not accorded any direct speech.<sup>104</sup> She is not mentioned in his narrative of the Sabine rape at all. Instead Livy’s Sabine women, in a spontaneous intervention, enter the battlefield ‘with

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<sup>101</sup> Livy 1.9.12-16.

<sup>102</sup> Plutarch claims that the Greeks called spinning ‘*talasia*’.

<sup>103</sup> Plutarch says that some said that she was married to Hostilius, an eminent Roman, others, to Romulus himself (14.6). In Dionysius’ version, Hersilia has no connection to Romulus at all, she is merely a leader of the Sabine women (2.45.2). However, Plutarch also notes that Hostilius died in the battle between the Romans and Sabines, which resolves the technical issue of Hersilia already being a Sabine wife before her intercession (18.5). Brown (1995) 302-303, suggests that Livy’s modification of the story (having Hersilia intervene, not with the Sabine women, but on behalf of other captive women) ‘transfers the vision of the proposal from Romulus to Hersilia, who argues not just for mercy but for the incorporation of the defeated parents into the state, which, she says, will heal the breach by promoting harmony’ (*ita rem coalescere concordia posse*, 1.11.2). Plutarch (and Dionysius) give the credit for this farsighted policy instead to Romulus.

<sup>104</sup> Livy 1.11.2. Her indirect discourse is a private speech between husband and wife, rather than a public intercession between two factions.



dishevelled hair and torn clothes...daring to go amongst the flying spears... to part the hostile armies and disarm them of their anger.<sup>105</sup> Time and the arrival of children have generated strong familial ties. In fact, the women now identify so strongly with their new Roman families that they beg their fathers and husbands to avoid staining themselves ‘with impious bloodshed, nor parricide.’<sup>106</sup> When they shift to a more personal appeal, one that Livy marks by switching to direct discourse, their argument is laden with threat:<sup>107</sup>

*‘If you regret the relationship between you, if you regret the marriage-tie, then turn your anger against us; we are the cause of war and the cause of wounds and death to both our husbands and our parents. It will be better for us to perish than to live, without either of you, as widows or as orphans.’*<sup>108</sup>

Livy’s Sabine women see themselves as responsible for the war and their misfortune provides them with the physical courage (*victo malis muliebri pavore*) to risk their bodies on the battlefield and declare themselves ready to sacrifice themselves as a solution to the dilemma of cross-familial loyalties.<sup>109</sup> While their words seek to re-confirm their traditional submissive social position in a way that benefits their men, the women still subvert obvious social, political and military norms in their storming of the battlefield.<sup>110</sup> Despite such courage, the Sabine women are wholly concerned with the immediate conflict; the overall welfare of the state is not their main concern. Indeed, by making the speech a collective one, the female virtue Livy portrays is only applicable to the women in general rather than to a specific individual, contextualising their words as familial (and familiar) female concerns rather than as a deed based on political interests.

Dionysius has Hersilia and the Sabine women interceding between the Sabines and Romans after the incorporation of the Antemnates into the Roman collective. Rather than a battlefield intervention, the women intercede during a cessation of hostilities, risking far less (physically) than Livy’s women.<sup>111</sup> He attributes the intercession plan initially to Romulus, who proposes the plan before the senate and

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<sup>105</sup> Livy 1.13.1. Trans. Foster (1919).

<sup>106</sup> Livy 1.13.2. Trans. Foster (1919).

<sup>107</sup> Buszard (2010) 101.

<sup>108</sup> Livy 1.13.3: ‘*si adfinitatis inter vos, si conubii piget, in nos vertite iras; nos causa belli, nos volnerum ac caedium viris ac parentibus sumus; melius peribimus quam sine alteris vestrum viduae aut orbae vivemus.*’

<sup>109</sup> Livy 1.13.1.

<sup>110</sup> Brown (1995) 307.

<sup>111</sup> Brown (1995) 306.

then commands the Antemnate and Caeninense women to intervene on Rome's behalf.<sup>112</sup> When the Sabine conflict ground to a standstill, the women take Romulus' earlier cue. Congregating, they discuss the situation and Hersilia requests the senate's permission to approach the Sabine camp and sue for peace in an orderly fashion.<sup>113</sup> The women's actions as Roman ambassadors are stereotypically feminine. Hersilia's words are reported indirectly, with the narrative focusing on the dramatic actions of the women. Dressed in mourning clothes and carrying their babies, they lament and fall at the feet of the men, while Hersilia, as the head of the embassy, delivers a 'long and sympathetic plea' (μακρὰν καὶ συμπαθῆ διεξῆλθε δέησιν) begging the men to reconsider their position.<sup>114</sup> After her words, the assembled women throw themselves at the feet of the Sabine king with their children and remain prostrate till the men relent and promise to do everything that was reasonable and in their power.<sup>115</sup>

In contrast to Livy, the scene in Dionysius is a scene of negotiation and his scene of public lamentation is reminiscent of female supplication scenes in Greek tragedy. Their aim (as Dionysius helpfully outlines in the preceding chapter) is to provide an acceptable solution for the men since both sides were reluctant to either withdraw or continue fighting.<sup>116</sup> As Dionysius only relates Hersilia's words in indirect discourse, the success of the scene seems to rest in the supplication of the congregated women and children rather than her vaguely outlined words. The men are persuaded, not with their words, but with their pathetic supplication. Buszard comments that Dionysius, with his use of the participle 'having spoken' in the plural (εἰποῦσαι) instead of the more natural singular participle in a genitive absolute (e.g. τοιαῦτα αὐτῆς εἰπούσης), conflates Hersilia's speech with the subsequent actions of all the Sabine women. Her speech becomes theirs, just as their pathetic gesture becomes hers.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.35. Brown (1995) 300.

<sup>113</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.45.4. Buszard (2010) 101. He notes that the Sabine women in Dionysius exploit the cessation of hostilities to congregate and decide on their options, an impossibility in Livy's more frenzied version.

<sup>114</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.45.6.

<sup>115</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.46.1.

<sup>116</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.44.1-2.45.1.

<sup>117</sup> Buszard (2010) 102.

## Plutarch's Hersilia

Plutarch utilises the accounts of Dionysius and Livy but takes a slightly different course by focusing the scene on Hersilia and according her a section of first person discourse.<sup>118</sup> He follows some of the emotional distress of the participants in Dionysius and also grants Hersilia a central role in the intercession, but the dramatic and spontaneous agency of her intercession is more in keeping with Livy's version.<sup>119</sup> Plutarch also echoes Livy in his depiction of the women invoking the gods, by the shift mid-oration from indirect to direct discourse and through his employment of *anaphora*.<sup>120</sup> His violent battlefield scene also has more in common with the Livian episode. As Livy's women rush in from the side (*ex transverso*) with dishelleved hair (*crinibus passis*), Plutarch's women also 'rush from every direction (*ἀλλαχόθεν ἄλλαι*) with dishevelled hair (*κόμην λελυμένην*).<sup>121</sup>

The words of the Sabine women are crucial in Plutarch's scenario. Both sides, stirred by the sight of the women and still more by their words (*τοὺς λόγους ἔτι μᾶλλον*, 19.2), part giving the women both physical and narrative space in which to speak. The women's words, at this point a collective, begins 'with argument and frankness' (*δικαιολογίας καὶ παρρησίας*, 19.2) and concludes with Plutarch stating that many of these sentiments were proclaimed by Hersilia (*τοιαῦτα πολλὰ τῆς Ἑρσιλίας προαγορευούσης*, 19.5). The direct discourse, which began as a collective (*ἔφασαν*), has become an individual speech aimed specifically at the Sabine men:

‘τί γάρ (*ἔφασαν*) ὑμᾶς δεινὸν ἢ λυπηρὸν ἐργασάμεναι, τὰ μὲν ἤδη πεπόνθαμεν, τὰ δὲ πάσχομεν τῶν σχετλίων κακῶν; ἠρπᾶσθημεν ὑπὸ τῶν νῦν ἐχόντων βία καὶ παρανόμως, ἄρπασθεῖσαι δ' ἠμελήθημεν ὑπ' ἀδελφῶν καὶ πατέρων καὶ οἰκείων χρόνον τοσοῦτον, ὅσος ἡμᾶς πρὸς τὰ ἔχθιστα κεράσας ταῖς μεγίσταις ἀνάγκαις πεποίηκε νῦν ὑπὲρ τῶν βιασαμένων καὶ παρανομησάντων δεδιέναι μαχομένων καὶ κλαίειν θνησκόντων. οὐ γὰρ ἤλθετε τιμωρήσοντες ἡμῖν παρθένοις οὔσαις ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀδικοῦντας, ἀλλὰ νῦν ἀνδρῶν ἀποσπᾶτε γαμετὰς καὶ τέκνων μητέρας, οἰκτροτέραν βοήθειαν ἐκείνης τῆς ἀμελείας καὶ προδοσίας βοηθοῦντες ἡμῖν ταῖς ἀθλίαις.’ (19.3-4)

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<sup>118</sup> Such inclusion of first person speech, missing in Dionysius and Livy, is instead found in Ovid's *Fasti*, where Hersilia (although unnamed) speaks directly to the Sabine women rather than to the assembled men (3.210).

<sup>119</sup> As Dionysius' women carry their children, lament and induce tears from the men (2.45.5-2.46.1), Plutarch's women also bear their children and 'as if in a frenzy of possession,' move both armies to compassion (19.1-2). The speech of the Sabine women in Livy is 'a touching plea' that provokes a more restrained 'stillness and sudden hush' (*mouet res... silentium et repentina fit quies*, 1.13.4).

<sup>120</sup> Buszard (2010) 103.

<sup>121</sup> Livy 1.13.1.

*'For what harm or distress have we inflicted on you, that we have been made to suffer and are still suffering such unflinching evils? We were violently and lawlessly snatched away by those to whom we now belong, but we have been taken, we have been neglected by our kinsmen, our fathers and family for such a long time, we are now united with those who were most hateful to us through the strongest ties which have now made us fear for those who treated us so violently and lawlessly, when they go forth into battle and to lament them when they fall. For you did not come to avenge us upon our unjust captors while we were still maidens, but now you want to tear wives from their husbands and mothers from their children, and the aid which you now want to provide to us wretched women, is more pitiful than your former neglect and abandonment.'*

Such accusations of abandonment are recognisable characteristics of Greek female lament. For the Sabines, no longer captives but now wives and mothers, the protection of their natal family is technically no longer necessary. As such, their reproachful speech is essentially a manipulation of the genre, by clothing their moral dilemma in the words and deeds of lamentation. Whereas Livy's women blamed themselves and Dionysius' women served as mere mediators between men, the intertextual relationship between earlier Greek models of captive women and Plutarch's construction of the Roman scene reinforces the dramatic function of Hersilia's speech.

### **Force, Persuasion and Marriage**

Force and its relationship with persuasion emerges as a key theme of Hersilia's speech. She twice refers to the force of their abductors (βία, βιασαμένων), but it is clear by her assertion of the Sabine's wifely status that they have in fact been persuaded to accept their position. Earlier in the narrative, Plutarch recounts that the Sabines 'sent ambassadors with reasonable and moderate demands, namely, that Romulus should give back their women, disavow his deed of violence (τὸ τῆς βίας ἔργον), and then, by persuasion and law (πειθοῖ καὶ νόμῳ), establish a friendly relationship between the two peoples.' (16.2) Romulus rejected these overtures and applied persuasive tactics, not upon the Sabine men but the women by making them mistresses of their own households and providing them with attentive husbands who treated them with honour (19.6). Hersilia attaches no blame to the Sabine women for their conversion, for the Romans' force and persuasion was too powerful to overcome. Indeed, Gorgias exonerated Helen using a similar argument, claiming; 'whether she did what she did

because she was enamoured by sight, or persuaded by speech (λογος) and seized by force (βία)...in every way, she escapes the charge.’<sup>122</sup>

In a continuation of this theme, Hersilia’s speech moves to an emotional argument:

‘τοιαῦτα μὲν ἠγαπήθημεν ὑπὸ τούτων, τοιαῦτα δ’ ὑφ’ ὑμῶν ἐλευόμεθα. καὶ γὰρ εἰ δι’ ἄλλην αἰτίαν ἐμάχεσθε, παύσασθαι δι’ ἡμᾶς πενθεροῦς γεγονότας καὶ πάππους καὶ οἰκείους ὄντας ἐχρήν. εἰ δ’ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ὁ πόλεμός ἐστι, κομίσασθε ἡμᾶς μετὰ γαμβρῶν καὶ τέκνων, καὶ ἀπόδοτε ἡμῖν πατέρας καὶ οἰκείους, μηδ’ ἀφέλησθε παῖδας καὶ ἄνδρας. ἰκετεύομεν ὑμᾶς μὴ πάλιν αἰχμάλωτοι γενέσθαι.’ (19.4-5)

*‘Such is the affection that we have been shown by them, such the mercy shown to us by you. And even if we were fighting for some other reason, it is right that you should stop on our account, now that you have become fathers-in-law and grandfathers and kinsmen (with your enemies). If, however, the war is on our behalf, carry us away with your sons-in-law and their children, and so deliver us back to our our fathers and family, but do not rob us of our children and husbands. We beseech you that we never become captives again.’*

Hersilia stresses the women’s changed status and the new links that have been forged by marriage when she reminds the men that they are now simultaneous grandparent and father-in-law, husband and son-in-law. The act of supplication at the close of her speech again reminds the reader that the women’s status has been raised by marriage from captive to honoured wife.<sup>123</sup> At the same time, by apportioning blame to both sides—the Romans for their abduction, the Sabines for their lack of quick action—Hersilia’s words frame the women as victims twice over, worthy of sympathy and pity.<sup>124</sup> Unlike Livy’s women who blame themselves and who offer themselves as a willing instrument of sacrifice, Plutarch’s Hersilia clearly favours the affection of the Sabine’s new Roman husbands over the belated action of their fathers, revealing a rather pro-Roman stance. At the same time, Hersilia’s speech betrays some real authorial anxieties on Plutarch’s behalf. While Livy and Dionysius’ women were distressed due to the situation that had befallen their men, the speech of Plutarch’s Hersilia

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<sup>122</sup> *Gorg.* Hel. 20. Plutarch also applied this concept of force and persuasion to his views on marriage. In the *Amatorius*, he proposed that force and persuasion could work together to produce a harmonious conjugal partnership, considering that true blending (μῖξις) occurs with the first bite bite’ (δάκνον) of marriage. The after-effects are themselves persuasive, ‘for there can be no mixture of things that are not affected reciprocally one by the other’ (769e).

<sup>123</sup> Gottesman (2006) vi.

<sup>124</sup> Brown (1995) 309.

reveals the bitterness and resentment of the women's memories, having been made prisoners, seemingly abandoned by their natal families and forced into marriage with those who were 'most hateful' to them.<sup>125</sup>

However, the multiple layers of understanding attached to Hersilia's speech—supplication, reproach and lament, force and persuasion—all serve to underline the essentially political nature of the act. Hersilia's defence of the abduction-turned-marriage, despite the injustice of the women's initial position, addresses the inherent justice of the act, which Plutarch returns to in the *Comparison*, where he claims that 'by the subsequent honour, love, and just treatment (δικαιοσύνη) given to these women, [Romulus] made it clear that his act of violence and injustice (τὴν βίαν καὶ τὴν ἀδικίαν) was most fine, and one most befitting to promote political partnership' (πολιτικώτατον εἰς κοινωσίαν, *Comp.* 6.2). This honourable and just treatment included allowing them the choice to remain with their husbands if they wished, to be exempt from all labour except spinning, the right of way when walking, to hear no indecent words nor see a naked man, a robe bordered with purple and allowing their children to wear the bulla (20.3). Accordingly, since the deed was carried out in order to produce a common partnership (κοινωσίαν), Roman and Sabine alike would inhabit Rome in common (κοινῆ) and Romulus and the Sabine king Tatius would be joint kings and commanders (κοινῆ), Plutarch again locating the agreement in a geographical (and thus historical, rather than mythical) setting (19.7).<sup>126</sup> The abductions and Hersilia's defence of the new *status quo* are thus proved to be just by the partnership in common established between Roman and Sabine.

Plutarch's treatment of Hersilia and the abduction of the Sabine women is a further example of how force and persuasion can render considerable benefits to the state, if the recipient is forced or persuaded by the right people. While Dionysius represents his Sabine women as mere pawns in a man's game, both Plutarch and Livy represent the actions of Hersilia and the Sabine women as crucial in the development of the Roman state and marriage.<sup>127</sup> This principle is exemplified by the depiction of Tarpeia as an actively traitorous woman in each account. Welch posits that the negative characterisation of Tarpeia in Livy references the inherent danger of a woman who is not 'closed off'

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<sup>125</sup> Brown (1995) 308-9.

<sup>126</sup> Plutarch claims that the location was called the *Comitium*, from the Roman word 'conire,' or 'coire,' to come together. He also notes in the next chapter that the two kings did not at once hold council in common (ἐν κοινῷ) with one another, but each at first sat with his own hundred councillors apart, then afterwards they united them all into one body, indicating that the blending of the two peoples was understandably, not immediate (19.7-8).

<sup>127</sup> Miles (1997) 179-220. He argues that this story in Livy pre-enacts the dynamics of the Roman marriage ceremony.

by marriage.<sup>128</sup> Unattached, Tarpeia can be persuaded to act, not for the good of the state but for herself. Thus, marriage and the ‘closing off’ of women can be viewed as an integral component of both Livy and Plutarch’s episodes, a factor glossed over by Dionysius.<sup>129</sup>

Marriage and the state are therefore intertwined in the *Romulus*. For Plutarch however, the only legitimate type of *eros* was the type of affection that blossoms after marriage, not before.<sup>130</sup> In the *Amatorius*, he claimed that when properly directed, conjugal *eros* can control uproar in the *polis* and join *ethne* together in harmony.<sup>131</sup> Since *eros* was absent as an impetus for Romulus’ abduction plans, Hersilia’s defence of Roman marriage and her ability to persuade the Sabine men cemented Romulus’ proffered partnership between two nations in an echo of Plutarch’s claim in the *De Alexandri magni fortuna aut virtute* that Alexander’s Macedonian-Persian marriages joined two nations through moderate marriage and the joint ownership of children (γάμοις σώφροσι καὶ κοινωνίαις παίδων 329f).<sup>132</sup> This attainment of harmony is attested to in Romulus’ final words of the narrative, when he farewells his people and instructs them that if they practice self-restraint combined with courage (σωφροσύνην μετ’ ἀνδρείας), they will reach the ‘utmost heights of human power’ (28.2). Romulus’ exhortation unsurprisingly parallels Plato’s principle that when the mind can control the forces of *eros*, the resulting harmony is *sophrosyne*.<sup>133</sup>

Plutarch centres the justness of the Sabine abductions around Romulus’ desire for common partnership, claiming that this more than anything else, was what gave strengthened Rome and engendered goodwill (εὐνοίας, 16.5, *Comp.* 6.3). Since *eros* was not a motivating factor, Romulus’

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<sup>128</sup> Welch (2015) 181, 184: ‘Livy’s women are situated at the point of conflict between these two ideologies – women as objects, as subjects – and not surprisingly the results are ambiguous: while fathers find themselves at risk in this tense situation, and daughters also often suffer, husbands (or their non-espoused analogues, *i.e.* Tatius) generally come out ahead. In other words, individuals and families lose some ground, but the state broadens its citizen base. The only winner, in fact, is the groom – the one whose social role is most beneficial to an expanding state.’

<sup>129</sup> In fact, Dionysius presents a far more sympathetic version of the Tarpeia episode, noting (like Livy and Plutarch) that Tarpeia’s betrayal was motivated by her desire for the Sabine men’s gold ornaments, he also explains that according to the account given by Lucius Piso, she was ‘inspired by the desire of performing a noble deed, namely, to deprive the enemy of their defensive arms and thus deliver them up to her fellow citizens’ (2.38.3-40.3).

<sup>130</sup> Tsouvala (2008) 710.

<sup>131</sup> *Amat.* 767e. In the *Coniugalia praecepta*, Plutarch claims that the statesman who wishes for civic harmony must be able to maintain it first and foremost in himself and in his home (144b-c). Tsouvala (2014) 204.

<sup>132</sup> *De Alex. fort.* 329f. Mustakallio (2006) 46. In this, Plutarch and Livy appear to agree; both present marriage as a political institution that unites not only individuals and families but also enemies in a mutually beneficial relationship. Tsouvala (2014) 204.

<sup>133</sup> Pl. *Phdr.* 238a.

actions exemplify his natural statesmanship, despite his later deviation from the path of justice to tyranny. Hersilia's intervention is crucial in justifying Plutarch's positive approach, for he not only claims Rome's contemporary greatness was the result of Romulus' foundation of a common community, but also due to the establishment of Roman marriage stating; 'and to the respect, affection and stability (αἰδοῦς δὲ καὶ φιλίας καὶ βεβαιότητος) which he imparted to the marriage relation, time is witness. For in two hundred and thirty years no man ventured to leave his wife, nor any woman her husband' (*Comp.* 6.3).<sup>134</sup> In other words, it was not just the successful abduction of the Sabine women but their successful conversion from captives to wives, aided by Hersilia's intercession, that gave Romulus the *bona fides* of a true Roman statesman.<sup>135</sup>

Although women feature at significant points of the *Romulus*, it is Hersilia's intercession that draws together the themes explored through the action of women. The positive intermingling of public and private in the Roma, Rhea Silvia and Larentia episodes is conceptualised in the aftermath of the Sabine abductions. In the private sphere, the Sabine men allowed those women who wished it to remain; in public, Sabine and Roman were to live together in common.<sup>136</sup> The common threads of force and persuasion, marriage as a civilising unit and civic responsibility combine to produce a focus on the fundamental ethical qualities that contributed not only to Rome's burgeoning identity but also

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<sup>134</sup> In a later chapter, Plutarch enumerates Romulus' marriage laws; 'He also enacted certain laws, and among them one of severity, which forbids a wife to leave her husband, but permits a husband to put away his wife for using poisons, for substituting children, and for adultery; but if a man for any other reason sends his wife away, the law prescribes that half his substance shall belong to his wife, and the other half be consecrate to Ceres; and whosoever puts away his wife, shall make a sacrifice to the gods of the lower world' (22.3). Thus Romulus codifies into Roman law the mutual respect, affection and stability described in the *Comparison*.

<sup>135</sup> A similar abduction scenario is recreated near the end of the biography, when after the death of Romulus, the Gauls captured Rome and the city was attacked by some of its Latin neighbours. The Latin general Livius Postumus sent a message asking to renew the ancient relationship of affinity that Romulus had cemented through fresh intermarriage between the two peoples, but the Romans were hesitant (29.4). At this point of impasse, a maid called Philotis advises the men to employ her and other women in what was essentially a Trojan horse plan. She enters the enemy camp and raises a signal at night, at which point the Romans attacked and overcame the Latins. Again, Plutarch anchors this story in Roman collective social memory, linking the act with the Romans Capratine celebrations, complete with the honouring of maids in remembrance of their act (29.6). The fact that the woman involved was a servant rather than an elite woman proves how far the construction of a Roman collective identity had progressed since Romulus. Simultaneously, it demonstrates the change in Roman self-awareness. From a beginning where neighbouring tribes declined to intermarry with the Romans, it is the Romans who now hesitate to send their own women to a lesser tribe for intermarriage. Romulus' idea of harmony and commonality has been surpassed by Roman prestige and self-importance, a decline that Plutarch is clearly trying to draw attention to within the narrative. Also see, Plut. *Cam.* 33.1-6; Varro, *De Ling.* 6.18; Macrobian *Sat.* I.11.35-40.

<sup>136</sup> Tsouvala (2008) 710.



its to the subsequent greatness.<sup>137</sup> Nonetheless, his repeated insistence that the abductions were ultimately just betrays a measure of authorial anxiety regarding the morality of such a deed. While his source material recognised the inherent injustice of the act, Plutarch's interpretation goes beyond the 'end justifies the means' argument found in Livy, Dionysius or even Cicero. By incorporating the direct discourse of Hersilia, Plutarch frames the abduction of the Sabine women as the prime example of successful statesmanship in the *Life*. Without Hersilia's defence, Romulus' other moral failings would outweigh his political virtue, leaving Plutarch with a more ethically ambiguous biography.

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<sup>137</sup> In fact, Plutarch's constant references to geographical location, naming traditions and festivals established in the wake of each significant episode demonstrates his belief that such mythic stories were fundamental to the creation of a Roman collective identity.

## The *Life of Coriolanus*

*'True bravery has no need of bitter gall for it has been dipped in reason, but rage and fury are rotten and easily broken.'* Plutarch, *De cohibenda ira*. 458e.

Cut from a tragic cloth, Plutarch's *Life of Coriolanus* is one of a gifted soldier whose inability to understand the essentials of statesmanship leads him to unravel before the eyes of the reader. Like the intercession of Hersilia, the speech of his mother Volumnia takes place at a time of Roman social and moral crisis. Again, as with the *Romulus*, the historiographical precedents of Volumnia's role in Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus offers a comparative background from which we can consider how Plutarch adapted his source material to construct his ethical emphasis.

### Sources

Quite unusually for Plutarch, he only names one source-Dionysius of Halicarnassus-for the *Coriolanus* (*Comp.* 2.2), despite the inclusion of the man's career in Livy.<sup>138</sup> Unlike other *Lives* where he cites other sources or presents alternate versions of an episode where he is perhaps unsure which is more reliable, in this biography Plutarch appears to be satisfied with basing the narrative around one major source even though this may have allowed for errors to creep into his work.<sup>139</sup> Russell claims that the essentials of the *Coriolanus* are a transposition from the historical account of Dionysius to a biographical format, theorising that his unusual reliance on one source hinged on Dionysius' elaborate narrative.<sup>140</sup> Plutarch's references to Livy elsewhere in the *Lives* suggests that he was probably familiar with the historian's account in this case too (although he does not refer to it explicitly) and some close correspondences can be identified.<sup>141</sup> Indeed, the emphasis on the maternal authority of Volumnia may derive from Livy's presentation. Nevertheless, Plutarch still seems overall

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<sup>138</sup>Livy 2.33.5-2.40.13.

<sup>139</sup> For example, he confuses the names of the women: Coriolanus' mother is Veturia and his wife Volumnia in Livy and Dionysius' accounts.

<sup>140</sup> Russell (1963) 21. He does note however, that although Plutarch seems to follow a single source (Dionysius) to a much greater extent than he did in any other *Life*, there is still by his estimation, at least twenty percent of other material in the biography which Plutarch has either retrieved from other sources (excluding Livy) or has constructed on his own.

<sup>141</sup> Plutarch directly cites Livy in the *Lives* of *Caesar* (47.1, 47.2); *Camillus* (6.2); *Comp. Pel-Mar.* (1.5); *Lucullus* (28.7, 31.8) and *Sulla* (6.10), while there are strong correspondences between episodes in Plutarch and Livy in the *Lives* of *Aemilius Paulus*, *Brutus*, *Marcus Cato*, *Fabius Maximus*, *Marcellus*, *Publicola*, *Romulus*, *Tiberius Gracchus* and *Titus Flaminius*. Instances where the *Coriolanus* also corresponds with Livy: 6.1, 6.4, 7.1, 8.1, 24.1, 32.2, 39.3, 39.6.

to follow Dionysius more closely and in some instances, prefers his version of events over that of the Latin historian.<sup>142</sup>

In the *Coriolanus*, there are only fifteen instances of direct discourse, a relatively small amount despite Plutarch's preference for indirect speech. Of those, Volumnia's speeches contain 486 words out of a total of 1068 words of direct discourse; almost half of all speeches and twice as much as all of Coriolanus' direct discourse taken together. Her speech then, is unusually long considering Plutarch's preference for anecdotes and shorter speech scenes.<sup>143</sup> However, Russell's assertion that Dionysius was the favoured source because of his extended rhetorical structure does not explain why Plutarch decided on retaining such an unusually long speech, for the length of Volumnia's speech in the Greek historian's version was in keeping with the other extended sections of direct discourse in his narrative.<sup>144</sup> Plutarch clearly must have considered Volumnia's extended section of direct discourse as an essential means of articulating his chosen ethical themes.

### **The Ethical Framework of the *Coriolanus***

A complex individual, Coriolanus' gifts were numerous. Plutarch sets the scene early in the *Life*, describing him as man who embodied all the Roman requirements of *virtus*; his peers identifying his insensibility to pleasure, hardship and wealth as examples of his self-control, justice and courage (ἐγκράτειαν καὶ δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἀνδρείαν, 1.3-4). In Plutarch's view, true virtue (*arete*) requires both reason (*logos*) and philosophic education (*paideia*) alongside physical excellence (1.4). In particular, he claims that the combination of *logos* and *paideia* produces a softening of one's nature (ἐξημερῶσαι τὴν φύσιν ὑπὸ λόγου καὶ παιδείας, 1.4). However, he twice explicitly identifies Coriolanus' lack of *paideia* as the main cause of his faults (1.2, 1.4), adding that by indulging the high-spirited and contentious side of his nature instead (τῷ θυμοειδεῖ καὶ φιλονείκῳ μέρει τῆς ψυχῆς, 15.3) and allowing the irrational side of his nature (παθῶν, 4.2) to drive his pursuit of physical virtue, Coriolanus is unable to exhibit the gravity and mildness that were the chief virtues of a statesman (τὸ πλεῖστον ἀρετῆ πολιτικῆ, 15.3).

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<sup>142</sup> Instances where Plutarch closely follows Dionysius: 6.4, 9.6, 11.1, 13.2, 13.4, 28.1, 28-30, 32.2, 36.5. Instances where Plutarch favours Dionysius' version over a different version in Livy: 30.1, 14.1, 23.5, 26.2, 39.4.

<sup>143</sup> For example, Plutarch reduces the long speech by Menenius Agrippa in Dionysius (*Cor.* 6.4; Dion. Hal 6.83.3-86.5) and Coriolanus' speech to the people (*Cor.* 10.3; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 7.21.1-7.24.3) to a mere four lines each.

<sup>144</sup> While Volumnia's speech required sixteen chapters in Dionysius, such length was in keeping with the other main speeches in Books Seven-Eight, including Coriolanus' long diatribe against the people (8.29-36). Other long speeches include those of Coriolanus (8.5-9), Decius (7.40-47), Appius Claudius (8.48-54, 8.55-57) and those of Minucius (7.28-32, 8.23-29).

Without the self-control that *paideia* instills, Coriolanus aptly demonstrates Plutarch's precept that the irrational side of one's nature begets vice if educated badly.<sup>145</sup> And so, when thwarted in his attempts to be elected consul, which he believed should be his office by right of his military endeavours, Coriolanus reveals his untrained and passionate nature. His oligarchical tendencies, intractability, contentious nature and anger (*orge*) sally forth (1.3, 7.2, 18.3). In fact, from this point onwards, Coriolanus' *orge* and that of his opponents is explicitly described by Plutarch fifteen times, indicating that he wanted to frame it as the driving emotion behind Coriolanus' subsequent actions against his country (17.2, 18.2, 19.1, 19.3, 21.1, 21.4, 29.4, 30.1, 30.2, 30.4, 31.4, 33.4, 35.5, 36.1, 39.5).<sup>146</sup> Plutarch's presentation thus concurs with Plato's maxim that the *thumoeides* of a warrior would manifest as anger in one who could not understand what he should do.<sup>147</sup> Such an ethical focus is Plutarch's own innovation. Both Dionysius and Livy interpreted his haughty arrogance and subsequent anger as a political issue, positioning Coriolanus as a representative of the patrician clique over the rights of the people.<sup>148</sup>

### **Ethics and Women: Valeria and Volumnia**

Cast as an omnipotent mother, Volumnia has a pivotal role in the *Coriolanus*. If we work back from his ignominious death all the way back to his childhood, we find that Plutarch frames the mother-son relationship as representative of Coriolanus' main ethical weaknesses. Volumnia is the centre of her son's existence, a mother who he defers to in word and deed. He marries the woman that she chose and even continued to live under her roof with his family. For Coriolanus, her joy at his exploits was 'the highest honour' (ἐντιμώτατον) that he could seek (4.3). Plutarch compares this familial relationship to that of Epaminondas, who also regarded the fact that both his parents saw him defeating the Spartans at Leuctra as his greatest fortune. This explicit parallel surprises since Epaminondas represented Plutarch's ideal statesman, embodying the key attributes of *paideia*, *sophrosyne* and *andreia*.<sup>149</sup> However, a crucial element of Epaminondas' career was his friendship with Pericles and their shared desire to do what was best for Thebes. As Lucchesi suggests, in

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<sup>145</sup> *De virt. mor.* 441f-443d.

<sup>146</sup> By also describing the anger of Coriolanus' opponents, Plutarch makes it clear that rather than being confined to Coriolanus, such anger and lack of self-control was symptomatic of the Roman pursuit of physical *virtus* over more philosophically based *andreia*.

<sup>147</sup> *Pl. Resp* 439e-440d. *Phdr.* 237b-238c. Parry (2014).

<sup>148</sup> *Livy* 2.34.8, 2.35.3. *Dion. Hal. Ant. Rom.* 8.25-26.

<sup>149</sup> *Plut. Regum* 71.

Epaminondas, *eros* and friendship are founded on public values, while Coriolanus acts only to serve his private need to honour Volumnia.<sup>150</sup>

Plutarch acknowledges Coriolanus' lack of redeeming companionship when he references Plato, commenting that 'one who undertakes public business must avoid above all things that self-will (*authadeia*) which, as Plato says, is the 'companion of solitude' (15.4). He follows up this statement in the *Comparison* where he claims that Coriolanus' *authadeia* made his deeds and virtues (πράξεις καὶ ἀρετὰς) obnoxious in the eyes of the people (3.2).<sup>151</sup> Coriolanus' *authadeia* is an important component of Plutarch's ethical analysis, as it further reinforces how his spirited and irrational nature, without the benefit of *paideia*, effectively turned his virtues into vices, at least in the eyes of the others.<sup>152</sup> By only seeking glory or virtue from his mother rather than the state, Coriolanus is at the mercy of his irrational self. Indeed, Plutarch emphasised the ethical danger of this mother-son relationship with a concessive genitive absolute (καὶ τὴν οἰκίαν ὄκει γενομένων παίδων ὁμοῦ μετὰ τῆς μητρός, 4.4).<sup>153</sup>

It is perhaps unsurprising that in stark contrast to the strong mother-son connection, Coriolanus' relationship with his wife, Vergilia, is barely mentioned. Accordingly, her passive role reinforces Volumnia's importance and authority. There is no expectation in the narrative that she should speak to her husband. Instead, when Coriolanus meets mother and wife before Volumnia's pivotal speech scene, he pays attention only to Volumnia, as shown by the use of the singular personal pronoun *sou* (36.4).<sup>154</sup> The benefits (both public and private) rendered by an appropriate conjugal partnership are missing and instead the strong mother-son bond creates a collision between the private sphere and the political choices in Coriolanus' life.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Plut. *Pel.* 4.2-4. Lucchesi (2013) 220.

<sup>151</sup> Plutarch also addresses the effects of *authadeia* in the *Praecepta dei republicae*: 'For such concession to one's friends adorns those who give praise no less than those who receive it; but self-will (αὐθάδεια), says Plato, dwells with loneliness' (808d), which directly corresponds with Plato's edict in the *Letters*: 'αὐθάδεια ἐρημία σύννοκος' (4.321).

<sup>152</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 590a-b. Plato considered that *authadeia* fostered and intensified the lion and snake elements (τὸ λεοντῶδες τε καὶ ὀφειῶδες) of the soul, which represent the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul.

<sup>153</sup> Buszard (2010) 107.

<sup>154</sup> Lucchesi (2013) 220.

<sup>155</sup> Lucchesi (2013) 219, 226.

Despite this close and powerful relationship, when Coriolanus is exiled, he took leave of his mother and family and Plutarch does not mention any contact between mother and son until Volumnia meets him on the outskirts of the city. The impetus for her intercession is created by a group of elite Roman women, who implore her in her maternal capacity to persuade her son to change his current course of action. In these initial stages, Plutarch follows Dionysius' account closely. Both describe the women gathering together in supplication at the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, a site of particular significance.<sup>156</sup> The women directed their prayers, not to their own specific private gods or for their own safety necessarily, but for that of Rome and the community.

Among these women was Valeria, the sister of the celebrated Publicola, on whom Plutarch had already composed a *Life*. Plutarch notes that despite his death, Valeria still enjoyed 'her repute and honour in the city, where her life was thought to adorn her lineage' (33.1). While Dionysius has Valeria channeling her brother's persuasive leadership in a public, almost masculine speech to the gathered women on the steps of the temple, Plutarch bypasses this speech scene entirely, merely crediting Valeria with gathering the women together and conducting them to Volumnia's house.<sup>157</sup> Livy is even briefer, noting only that a large group of women went to Volumnia's house. It is their collective unity and numbers (*frequentes coeunt*) that provides strength, rather than any particular leadership. He wonders aloud whether they came together due to public policy or women's fear (*id publicum consilium an muliebris timor fuerit*), although he does not seem particularly interested in ascertaining which.<sup>158</sup>

Having gathered at the house of Volumnia, Valeria addresses Coriolanus' mother, Plutarch rendering her words in direct discourse. She begins by claiming that the women have come to Volumnia privately, 'as women to women, neither by senatorial edict nor by consular orders (οὔτε βουλῆς ψηφισαμένης οὔτ' ἄρχοντος κελεύσαντος), but by our god' (33.3). Such a statement directly contrasts Dionysius' extended description of the senatorial process that followed the women's private meeting.<sup>159</sup> While his account anchors the women's actions within a Roman institutional framework,

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<sup>156</sup> According to tradition, there were shrines of other deities on the site, all of whom allowed themselves to be dispossessed except for Terminus and Iuventas. These were then incorporated in the new temple, and the action of Terminus was regarded as a prophecy of the permanence of the cult and of Rome itself. Cic. *De rep.* 2.36; Livy 1.38:7, 55, 56; Plin. *HN* 3.70; Cass. Dio. 3.69, 4.61; Tac. *Hist.* 3.72; Plut. *Pub.* 13.14.

<sup>157</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.39.1-4.

<sup>158</sup> Livy 2.40.3.

<sup>159</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.43.3-7. He describes the women informing the consuls of what had passed at their meeting. The consuls then assembled the senate in order to debate whether the women should be permitted to go as a female delegation to Coriolanus (a debate that apparently dragged on to the evening hours).

it also transforms their private enterprise into an officially sanctioned civic delegation. Volumnia's speech in Dionysius, like that of Hersilia and the Sabine women is effectively endorsed and limited by masculine intervention. In contrast, Plutarch credits the women's action as an essentially private response forced upon them by the extenuating circumstances of civil war. By only presenting Valeria's direct discourse in a private setting (unlike Dionysius' public speech scene), Volumnia, like Hersilia, is the only woman in the narrative who speaks publicly and authoritatively.

Valeria continues, imploring Volumnia to take 'pity on (our) supplications...bearing this just and true testimony on behalf of our country...not only for ourselves but also for the whole Roman people' (33.3-4).<sup>160</sup> She references the contrast between Rome and the behaviour of Coriolanus, telling Volumnia that 'although (Rome) has suffered many wrongs from him, she has neither done nor planned of doing harm to you, on account of her anger' (δι' ὀργήν, 33.4). As the state is the victim of Coriolanus' lack of emotional control, Valeria hints that if Rome responded in kind, Volumnia would be its target. However, even though she claims that Rome expects no reasonable treatment from Coriolanus, the state does not pursue vengeance against one of her own citizens (33.4). Roman civic ideals, endorsed by Valeria, remain steadfast despite Coriolanus' treasonous acts. Collective identity, articulated by the 'just' acts of Rome's founder in the *Romulus* is reasserted here by Plutarch in order to highlight Coriolanus' preference for his private emotions over the needs of the fatherland.<sup>161</sup>

Plutarch's allusions to Roman cultural identity is further reinforced by Valeria's reference to the deeds of the Sabine women, claiming that Volumnia's (potential) success will 'lift you to a greater fame than that which the Sabine daughters bore' (ἐπιφανεστέραν φέροντα δόξαν ἥς αἱ Σαβίνων θυγατέρες ἔσχον, 33.3). Dionysius also mentions the Sabine women, relating that the women will receive *kleos* in the eye of their husbands if Volumnia is successful, but Plutarch's context is more specific.<sup>162</sup> The honoured reputation will be Volumnia's alone and he implicitly renders it as a public

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<sup>160</sup> '...οἰκτεῖρας τὴν ἰκετείαν...μαρτυρήσατε τῇ πατρίδι μαρτυρίαν ἀληθῆ καὶ δικαίαν... μὲν αὐταῖς καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις πολίταις...'

<sup>161</sup> This stance does not mean that Coriolanus rejects that Rome is his fatherland. As Mayer (1997) 49-55 notes, Plutarch omits references in Dionysius and Appian's versions that have Coriolanus rejecting Rome, not just politically but culturally, for the Volscians. In both traditions Coriolanus claims that; 'Fatherland is not the land that rejects me, but rather the land that makes me, a foreigner, a citizen.' (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.7.1, 8.34, App. *Italica*, frag. 4). In fact, Plutarch downplays Coriolanus' exile, makes no mention of his new Volscian citizenship; the emphasis is on his moral weaknesses that impact his relationship with the state (and his mother).

<sup>162</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.40.4. 'We shall show ourselves to be the true descendants of those women who by their own intercession put an end to the war that had arisen between Romulus and the Sabines and by bringing together both the commanders and the nations that made this city great from a small beginning.' Trans. Cary (1940).

rather than private recognition. As Valette suggests, this statement clearly articulates a call to Roman collective memory, for in framing the acts and words of the Sabine women as an *exemplum* of virtue, Volumnia's speech will echo the glorious defence of Rome's civic ideals.<sup>163</sup> At the same time, recalling the exploits of the Sabine women makes it possible for the reader to anticipate the success of what will follow, while anchoring Volumnia's anticipated speech in a tradition of effective female action reinforces its pragmatic efficiency.<sup>164</sup>

Volumnia's response to Valeria's impassioned entreaties is to immediately establish her maternal ethos:

‘καὶ τῶν κοινῶν ἡμῖν συμφορῶν, ᾧ γυναῖκες, ἴσον μέτεστι, καὶ ἰδίᾳ πράττομεν κακῶς ἀπολέσασαι τὴν Μαρκίου δόξαν καὶ ἀρετὴν, τὸ σῶμα δ' αὐτοῦ τοῖς τῶν πολεμίων ὅπλοις φρουρουμένον μᾶλλον ἢ σφζόμενον ἐφορῶσαι. μέγιστον δ' ἡμῖν τῶν ἀτυχημάτων ἐστίν, εἰ τὰ τῆς πατρίδος οὕτως ἐξησθῆναι ὥστ' ἐν ἡμῖν ἔχειν τὰς ἐλπίδας, οὐκ οἶδα γὰρ εἴ τινα ποιήσεται λόγον ἡμῶν ἐκεῖνος, εἴ γε μηδένα ποιεῖται τῆς πατρίδος, ἣν καὶ μητρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς καὶ τέκνων προετίμησεν. οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ χρῆσθε ἡμῖν λαβοῦσαι καὶ κομίζετε πρὸς ἐκεῖνον, εἰ μηδὲν ἄλλο, ταῖς ὑπὲρ τῆς πατρίδος ἰκεσίαις ἐναποπνεῦσαι δυναμένας.’ (33.5-6)

*'I for my part, o women, have an equal share with you in our common calamities, but I have my own evil to bear, in having lost the fame and virtue of Marcius, seeing his person protected by the arms of our enemies rather than preserved from death. And yet it is the greatest of our misfortunes that our country has become so weak as to place her hopes in us. For I do not know if the man will show any reason in regards to us, since he shows none for his country, which he honoured before his mother, wife and children. However, take us and use us and bring us to him; if nothing else, we can at least expire in the act of supplications for our country.'*

As Coriolanus' mother, the loss of his reflected glory and excellence (δόξα καὶ ἀρετή) inflicts a greater punishment on her personally than anyone, indicating that she drew a measure of public authority and self-worth from her son's achievements (33.5). Thus, her *ethos* is firmly based around her position as his mother and the authority this position imbues. Her claim that she is unsure if Coriolanus will hear her, considering his lack of regard for his country which he once set before his mother, wife and children, is disingenuous at best. She knows that contrary to her statement,

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<sup>163</sup> Valette (2012) 11.

<sup>164</sup> Valette (2012) 9.



Coriolanus had indeed placed his mother before all other considerations. By ordering his family as mother, then wife and children, Volumnia reinforces her authority as the *materfamilias* and first in her son's affections.

### A Mother Speaks

Having confirmed herself as the leader of the women's delegation, Volumnia proceeds to the Volscian camp accompanied by her daughter-in-law and grandchildren.<sup>165</sup> Plutarch describes him as amazed and confounded, his inflexible reasoning (ἀπαραιτήτοις λογισμοῖς) reversed as he is reduced by his emotions (τοῦ πάθους ἐλάττων, 34.2). The appearance of his mother and family affect him so forcefully that Plutarch has him carried away by his emotions (ὑπὸ ρεύματος φέρεσθαι τοῦ πάθους ἑαυτὸν ἐνδεδωκώς), a direct echo of Dionysius (φερόμενος ὑπὸ τῶν παθῶν ἐπὶ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον).<sup>166</sup> The emotional control of Plutarch's Volumnia however contrasts with Dionysius' mother who, with her strength failing, collapses with eyes fixed to the ground as she weeps.<sup>167</sup> Livy's mother refuses to even embrace him, such is her anger.<sup>168</sup> Instead of a tableau where both participants are overcome by emotion, be it anger or lamentation, Plutarch's Volumnia alone is controlled and prepared. As Coriolanus is already at the mercy of his passions, his emotional capitulation to his mother, the only person with whom he has a meaningful connection, is expected both by Volumnia and the reader.

Plutarch has already established the power of Volumnia's maternal authority through his characterisation of the mother-son relationship earlier in the narrative and subsequently through her own words to the assembled women. Such authority is problematic in that it demonstrates how the mother-son relationship has clouded Coriolanus' ability to separate his public *persona* from his private life, revealing his ethical weaknesses. Throughout Volumnia's speech, Plutarch continues to emphasise this maternal authority through her choice of address. She addresses Coriolanus three times as 'son' with the vocative 'ὦ παῖ' (35.1, 35.4, 36.1), rather than the 'ὦ Μάρκιε τέκνον' and 'ὦ τέκνον' favoured by Dionysius.<sup>169</sup> Dickey claims that, in Greek literature, τέκνον was used more often than παῖς in emotional scenes or when the familial relationship between speaker and addressee was emphasised.<sup>170</sup> In tragedy, the vocative ὦ παῖ also has a closer connection to a father-son address than

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<sup>165</sup> In all three accounts, it is Volumnia who is Coriolanus' focus. In an instant, his public *persona* drops and his private emotions take precedence. Livy pronounces him as demented (*amens consternatus*, 2.40.5) at the very sight of her.

<sup>166</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.45.1.

<sup>167</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.45.1.

<sup>168</sup> Livy 2.40.5. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.45.1, 8.46.1.

<sup>169</sup> Plut. *Cor.* 35.1, 35.4, 36.1. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.46.2, 8.48.1, 8.48.5, 8.51.2, 8.51.3.

<sup>170</sup> Dickey (1996) 68.

mother-child discourse, where ὃ τέκνον is more common.<sup>171</sup> Volumnia uses τέκνον but in reference to Coriolanus' own children, reflecting her more solicitous concern as a grandmother towards their welfare. As dependents, Coriolanus' children should benefit from the care of their parents, but as an adult, Coriolanus owes his mother and the state a duty of care instead (33.6, 35.1, 36.2). By consciously stepping away from Dionysius' phrasing, Plutarch again emphasises the power differential between mother and son and to a certain extent, masculinises Volumnia when he has her label Coriolanus as παῖς.

Volumnia now addresses her son. She claims, that in more usual circumstances, the sight of her son, the general, encamped with an army would have been a 'most joyful' sight, his presence at the head of a hostile army encamped against the walls of Rome provokes the opposite response (αἴς τὸ ἥδιστον θέαμα φοβερότατον ἢ τύχη πεποίηκεν, ἐμοὶ μὲν υἱόν, ταύτη δ' ἄνδρα τοῖς τῆς πατρίδος τείχεσιν ἰδεῖν ἀντικαθήμενον, 35.2). Volumnia thus presents Coriolanus with a personal dilemma. Not only is she unable to ask the gods both for a victory for Rome and deliverance for her son, it is in fact 'necessary' that his wife and children lose either Coriolanus or their country (35.3). Coriolanus' family are the victims of his *orge* and *authadeia* and she appeals, in the absence of his civic loyalties, to his familial obligations instead by reminding him of the repercussions for his mother, wife and children.

She further explores her untenable position as the mother of a Roman enemy stating; 'I will not wait to have the war decide this issue for me while I live, but unless I can persuade (πείσαιμι) you to place friendship and harmony (φιλίαν καὶ ὁμόνοιαν) over disagreement and evil... prepare yourself, for you cannot attack your country before first stepping over the corpse (νεκρὰν) of she who brought you into this world' (τὴν τεκοῦσαν, 35.3). She now turns her personal dilemma into an ultimatum. Coriolanus must resolve the current situation, or her body will become a corpse. While Dionysius' Volumnia essentially dares her son to kill her if he proceeds and Livy's mother presages her premature death, Plutarch's explicit suicide threat is an active rather than a passive threat which primarily concerns the withholding of maternity: a potent threat to the strong mother-son relationship.<sup>172</sup> Accordingly, Volumnia frames Coriolanus' obligations as a familial duty first and foremost.

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<sup>171</sup> Dickey (1966) 65.

<sup>172</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.51.2. Livy 2.40.8.

As Volumnia is caught in a personal dilemma between her son and her country, she constructs a reciprocal political dilemma for Coriolanus to resolve:

‘...εἰ μὲν οὖν ἀξιῶ σε τὴν πατρίδα σῶσαι Οὐλοῦσκους ἀπολέσαντα, χαλεπὴ σοὶ καὶ δυσδιαίτητος, ὃ παῖ, πρόκειται σκέψις: οὔτε γὰρ διαφθεῖραι τοὺς πολίτας καλόν, οὔτε τοὺς πεπιστευκότας προδοῦναι δίκαιον... (35.4)

*‘If, then, you deemed it worthy to save your country by ruining the Volscians, the decision before you would be difficult and hard to decide, my son, since it is neither good for a man to destroy his fellow-citizens, nor to abandon those who have put their trust in him.’*

If Coriolanus saves Rome by throwing over the Volscians, it would be unjust (δίκαιον). However, if he stays the course, destroying his fatherland is also dishonourable. Thus either alternative is ethically and culturally undesirable.<sup>173</sup> But Volumnia provides a possible solution by posing the idea of a truce, a tactic that would allow the Volscians to save face whilst simultaneously saving Rome. However, as she notes, ‘if such things come about, you will be seen as most responsible; if they are not, then you alone will bear the blame from both sides’ (35.4).<sup>174</sup> In fact, his reputation will be worse among his benefactors and friends, primarily because of his anger (ὕπ’ ὀργῆς).<sup>175</sup>

As Lausberg has observed, ‘because there is no way out of it, dilemma is a pathetic device which creates tension . . . and as such is popular in tragedy.’<sup>176</sup> Such tragic elements in what is essentially an ethical standoff should not surprise for Coriolanus’ ethical weaknesses lend a tragic theatricality to the defining episode of his *Life*. For a female character, this tragic context also allows the boundaries between public and private to be blurred and as a consequence, Volumnia’s dilemma effectively creates an ethical focus on her position as simultaneous mother, private individual and Roman citizen.<sup>177</sup> The fact that Volumnia is even engaging in this rhetorical pleading with her son

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<sup>173</sup> The use of ethical dilemma in rhetoric is a masterful exercise in persuasion. Quintilian describes the figure of dilemma thus: ‘An opponent may be given a choice between two alternatives, of which one must necessarily be true, and as a result, whichever one he chooses, he will harm his case’ (*Inst.* 5.10.69).

<sup>174</sup> ‘...ὧν μάλιστα μὲν αἴτιος ἔση γινομένων, μὴ γινομένων δὲ μόνος αἰτίαν ἔξεις παρ’ ἀμφοτέροις.’

<sup>175</sup> Since Coriolanus earlier political actions were undertaken to protect the interests of the senate (13.3-4, 16.4), Volumnia warns him that those very people will hold him responsible for the outcome of war against the Volscians. This will obviously matter to him more than the opinion of the common people, who he despised (15.4).

<sup>176</sup> Pandey (2014) 112.

<sup>177</sup> This ethical focus also ties into wider ranging Graeco-Roman anxieties regarding the traditional role of women as defenders of cultural *nomoi*. For more see McHardy & Marshall (2004).

indicates that she understands the Roman collective ideals of honour and country before all, for if Coriolanus had no interest in his Roman legacy, the dilemma would falter at its first hurdle. On the other hand, if he makes the ‘right’ decision, then he can make good his disappointments by acting as Rome’s ‘avenging spirit’ (ἀλάστορι, 35.5).<sup>178</sup> Despite his ethical weaknesses, Volumnia has presented Coriolanus with a potential solution to the crisis that would appeal to his angry and passionate nature.

At this point in the speech, Volumnia receives only a pregnant silence from her son. She then switches from an ethical argument to an emotional one. The structure again is essentially Dionysian, but while his mother relied on providing logical options and emotional guilt trips, Volumnia bombards her son with a *stasis* of three quick-fire questions:

‘τί σιγᾶς,’ εἶπεν, ‘ὦ παῖ; πότερον ὀργῇ καὶ μνησικακία πάντα συγχωρεῖν καλόν, οὐ καλὸν δὲ μητρὶ χάρισασθαι δεομένη περὶ τηλικούτων; ἢ τὸ μεμνηῖσθαι πεπονθότα κακῶς ἀνδρὶ μεγάλῳ προσήκει, τὸ δ’ εὐεργεσίας, αἷς εὐεργετοῦνται παῖδες ὑπὸ τῶν τεκόντων, σέβεσθαι καὶ τιμᾶν οὐκ ἀνδρὸς ἔργον ἐστὶ μεγάλου καὶ ἀγαθοῦ; (36.1-2)

*‘Why are you silent, my son? Is it right to sacrifice everything to anger and resentment, but wrong to gratify a mother in so great a prayer? A good man does not need to remember all the wrongs he has suffered, but is the reverence and honour of the benefits which children receive from their parents not also the duty of a great and good man?’*

Volumnia’s questions target Coriolanus’ anger and his lack of *pietas* towards his family (represented by his mother) and Rome. His failure to master his resentment has created his mother’s maternal bind and his own ethical dilemma, while Volumnia’s words reinforce Plutarch’s opening precept that Coriolanus’ inability to control his passions (through the application of *paideia*) has resulted in vice, for he has placed his anger above his obligations to both his family and Rome. Instead of acting like a true statesman, Coriolanus is only concerned with his own private emotional state.

Significantly, Coriolanus does not answer his mother’s questions. His unwillingness to practice dialectic demonstrates that he is either unaware of his ethical weaknesses, or perhaps more realistically, is disinclined to address them. His *orge*, *authadeia* and lack of *paideia* have obscured his self-knowledge and hampered his abilities to improve himself through the application of truth. Therefore, Volumnia’s questions have a philosophical as well as an oratorical context. She expands

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<sup>178</sup> Plutarch also uses ἀλάστωρ to describe the vengeful spirits of both Gaius Marius (*Mar.* 8.2) and Cicero (*Cic.* 47.4).

on this theme, incorporating some of the ethical weaknesses that Plutarch outlined earlier in the narrative regarding his lack of *pietas* for his mother and family. She reminds him of his anger and desire for revenge as a result of his treatment by the Roman people (21.1, 23.3) when she claims, ‘...and truly no man ought to cherish gratitude (χάρην) more than you, (who) bitterly seeks vengeance against ingratitude (ἀχαριστίαν) in this way’ (36.2). In fact, by punishing Rome, Coriolanus has not ‘shown his mother any gratitude’ (χάρην, 36.3).

Aside from the cultural expectations of familial *pietas*, Plutarch makes it clear in the opening chapters that Coriolanus not only accorded Volumnia the respect due to his mother, but also the familial gratitude (χάριτας) which would have been due to his father if he was alive, a double obligation that surely was the initial basis of Volumnia’s considerable maternal authority (4.4). Coriolanus, then, was well aware of his obligations towards his mother, having fulfilled them in the past. The obvious answer to Volumnia’s question is, if Coriolanus deeply cares about gratitude, considering his emotional response to the perceived ingratitude of Rome, naturally he should do anything to prove his gratitude towards his mother, who is first in his affections. By appealing to the natural bonds of family, Volumnia thus re-frames Coriolanus’ public issues with Rome into a private relationship between mother and son.

Volumnia’s final gesture of *pathos*, her ‘last hope’ (ἔσχάτη ἐλπίς) prostration ends her speech on a suppliant note, as she dramatically appeals to Coriolanus to judge her speech and to take his wife and children into account before passing sentence (36.3). The power reversal from authoritative figure to suppliant immediately revives the familial ties broken by his exile and temporarily at least restores Rome back to the forefront of his attentions. At this point, Coriolanus concedes defeat. He tells her that Rome will be safe ‘though by you alone’ (ὕπὸ σοῦ μόνης, 36.4) but at the expense of his life. His *authadeia*—the vice that fostered his irrational impulses of anger and high spirits— allowed him to be persuaded, not by Volumnia’s logical arguments but by her reference to his filial obligations. Indeed, he takes none of her outlined advice in rebuilding a peace between the two nations, but instead withdraws with the Volscians, allowing the war to continue (*Comp.* 4.2). Volumnia’s speech has not ‘cured’ Coriolanus of his faults. Her words only confirm his subservience to the irrational parts of his nature. He seeks no reconciliation and is left alone, whilst Volumnia returns to Rome and Valeria’s promised honour (33.4).<sup>179</sup> This resulting public honour, a ‘more conspicuous fame’ than that won by the Sabine women cements Volumnia’s action as a just and appropriate defence of the state and further reinforces the sharp distinction between the public rhetoric of mother and son.

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<sup>179</sup> Plutarch notes that the senate honoured the women’s love of honour (φιλοτιμίαν) with the erection of the Temple of Fortuna Muliebris; a sharp contrast to the hatred that Coriolanus’ arrogant desire for honour engendered among the people (17.3, 22.1, 37.3).

### **Ethics and Maternal Authority: Livy, Dionysius and Roman tradition**

The strength and narrative importance of Volumnia's maternal authority and emotional control not only directly reinforces the ethical framework of the Coriolanus, it also distinguishes Plutarch's Volumnia from the Livian and Dionysian versions. In contrast to Plutarch's authoritarian mother who lived for her son's military and political successes, Dionysius' mother has little maternal authority. Instead of confronting her son in the guise of a stern mother, she instead presents herself as a representative of the other Roman *matronae*.<sup>180</sup> It is only in the second part of her speech that she leaves aside her civic appeals and speaks directly to her son as a mother.<sup>181</sup> Where Plutarch's Volumnia establishes her authority to speak based on her motherhood, Dionysius' mother rejects such an approach, claiming that it simply would not work on a 'mind so hard and invulnerable.'<sup>182</sup> When she finally addresses her son, she claims that her authority instead comes from her election as a co-leader of the assembled women instead.<sup>183</sup>

Although there was a tradition of rhetorically proficient older mothers in Greek tragedy who would speak on civic and political issues, basing their appeals on cultural tradition and laws considered both natural and ancestral, Dionysius' mother relies on emotional argumentation and lamentation in order to argue her case to her son.<sup>184</sup> At all times during the speech scene in Dionysius, despite his exile and hostile status, Coriolanus still acts as head of his family; commanding the women to go home, to pass on his demands to the senate (treating his mother and the women as mere messengers) and even interrupting his mother's speech with a lengthy and angry reply.<sup>185</sup> For him, her place was not with Rome but at his side, sharing in his warped version of honour and glory.<sup>186</sup> Indeed Dionysius' Volumnia takes her son's side in his conflict with Rome, musing aloud that no sane mother would ever tell her son to spare a guilty party.<sup>187</sup> She eventually switches tack and tries to assert some authority, claiming that his body and soul are merely on loan from her and that he owes her both

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<sup>180</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.46.

<sup>181</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.51-3. Lucchesi (2013) 221.

<sup>182</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.41.6.

<sup>183</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.41.6.

<sup>184</sup> Foley (2001) 273. For example, the staging of the female speech between Volumnia and Valeria (33.3) echoes the interaction between Aethra and the chorus (Eur. *Suppl.* 42, 54, 63) regarding their need for Aethra to persuade her son to their line of thinking. Valeria implores Volumnia, while invoking the interest of the gods. In response to these entreaties, Aethra (Eur. *Suppl.* 9-26) and Volumnia (35.1-3) invoke the gods in a similar manner and resolve to try and persuade their sons as best they can.

<sup>185</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.47.3.

<sup>186</sup> Such a stance is linked with Dionysius' representation of Coriolanus as a man who saw his fatherland as any place that called him a citizen (see n. 159).

<sup>187</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.51.1.

gratitude and compliance.<sup>188</sup> Her words are powerful and emotive. She claims that; ‘you will be mine forever, and to me before all others you will owe gratitude (χάρην) for your life, and you will oblige me in everything I ask without alleging any excuse. For this is a right which the law of Nature (ὁ τῆς φύσεως νόμος) has prescribed for all who define reason through their senses (τοῖς αἰσθήσεως).’<sup>189</sup> While Plutarch echoes this request for gratitude and submission, Volumnia’s dramatic declaration in Dionysius’ version that she has never been free of grief or fear since Coriolanus attained manhood and her complaint that he has made her the most wretched of mothers (πασῶν ἀτυχεστάτην ἐποίησας μητέρων), dilute any real authority in her speech.<sup>190</sup> Her commands thus devolve into an emotional guilt trip rather than a demand for submission.

The power differential of the scene favours Coriolanus and his mother plays the victim. In an echo of the tragic woman’s supplication act, Volumnia falls at his feet, kissing them while the assembled women ‘cried out together, raising a loud and prolonged wailing,’ emotive enough for the Volscians to turn away their eyes.<sup>191</sup> This is not a Roman *matrona* who speaks in Dionysius, proud of her son’s public service, but a stereotypically Greek woman whose speech is almost ritualised in its expressions of grief and supplication. Although her emotional arguments are well developed, her maternal authority is weak. Such a lack of authority only reaffirms the distinction between public and private worlds. Dionysius’ Volumnia speaks as a woman who is primarily focused on her personal grief, while her physical weakness and role as a messenger between men reduces the moral importance of her speech. She acts in the best interests of the state, it is true, but we gain no real sense of her ethical attributes. She is merely a grief-stricken mother supplicating her son.

Livy presents a short but emotionally intense episode in which Volumnia immediately launches her furious speech at her son, repeatedly referencing the relationship between mother, son and state.<sup>192</sup> Her maternal rage is clear and insistent and her double meaning is also obvious. Coriolanus should consider both mothers that bore and nurtured him: Rome and herself who are simultaneously threatened by his actions.<sup>193</sup> Her strategy as Buszard notes is a species of *prosopopoeia*, which requires correspondence between the speaker and the *persona* assumed.<sup>194</sup> In other words, the idea of

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<sup>188</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.51-2.

<sup>189</sup> Dion. Hal. 8.51-2. *Ant. Rom.* Trans. adapted from Cary (1940).

<sup>190</sup> Dion. Hal. 8.51.4. *Ant. Rom.*

<sup>191</sup> Dion. Hal. 8.54.1. *Ant. Rom.*

<sup>192</sup> Livy 2.40.5-9.

<sup>193</sup> Cass. Dio 5.10 makes this link even more explicit in his version of events, with his Veturia exposing her breasts and stomach, exclaiming; ‘ιδού,’ ἔφη, ‘τέκνον, αὕτη σε ἔτεκεν, οὗτοί σε ἐξέθρεψαν,’ thus presenting herself as the physical evidence of the city in which he was born and reared.

<sup>194</sup> Buszard (2010) 105.

Rome as a mother and the mother as representative of Rome was considered valid in Livy's Roman context. Defiantly she casts herself against her son, for her role as a Roman mother meant that the welfare of the state must come before that of her children. She explicitly links the state with her motherhood when she asks him, 'could you lay waste this land, which gave birth and nurtured you?'<sup>195</sup> In her eyes, civic impiety is familial impiety. The binary swings (*terram quae te genuit atque aluit, exsulem deinde hostem*), repetition of negative conjunctions (*non, nisi, nec*) and opposition (*immatura mors aut, aut servitus longa*) reinforces this antagonism.<sup>196</sup>

Plutarch's Volumnia echoes the insistent questions and the exploitation of filial *pietas* of Livy's version, but the uncontrolled rage is absent. As Coriolanus' inability to restrain his anger is a main ethical theme of the *Life*, a similar irrational display by his mother would negate the very moral purpose of her speech, that is, to try to persuade Coriolanus that his anger has endangered his state and his family and must be controlled in order to save both. And so, Plutarch's mother is emotionally controlled and rational, providing Coriolanus and the reader with an extended rhetorical display of the 'right' moral attributes that the statesman ought to display. It is almost paradoxical that the man who received an ample Roman education demonstrates a complete lack of *paideia*, while Volumnia (whom we can assume received little to no formal education) displays the self-control and selflessness that he so conspicuously lacks.

Such control does not prevent Plutarch's Volumnia from exploiting her son's own emotional weaknesses and indeed, her *stasis* followed by her declaration regarding the expectations of gratitude also departs from the versions of Dionysius and Livy. While each presents Volumnia asking questions of her son, such questions are constructed in the method of *epiopsis* rather than *stasis*. Dionysius' mother expresses grief over her unhappy role as a passive observer of his military and public roles.<sup>197</sup> Livy's mother also aims to illicit shame when she asks him how her long life and unhappy old age should have given her the sight of her son as exile and enemy, how could he destroy the country which nurtured him and how indeed could his anger not fall away at the sight of the city?<sup>198</sup> Instead of asking questions that confront the central issues of the dispute, Livy and Dionysius' mothers ask

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<sup>195</sup> Livy 2.40.6.

<sup>196</sup> Livy 2.40.7-9. Valette (2012) 5.

<sup>197</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.51.1, 8.51.4. She does ask two questions that reference Coriolanus' fears that he will appear ungrateful towards the Volscians should he retreat from Rome; her first question alludes to the benefits and kindnesses that have already received from him. However, her second question takes the opposing stance when she asks whether the Volscians will in fact be angry with him if he refuses to shed Roman blood (8.49.2-3). As a result, she leaves Coriolanus in a quandary with no obvious answer to the dilemma.

<sup>198</sup> Livy 2.40.6-7.



questions in order to rebuke, shame and express their own grief and wretchedness. Only Plutarch's Volumnia attempts to both identify the ethical issues at play and provide an argument by which those issues can be addressed. Since Volumnia wields considerable authority over Coriolanus, his capitulation should be the appropriate response to her demands for gratitude. Her questions direct Coriolanus to submit to her guidance rather than her shaming.

As Plutarch clearly expands upon the construction of maternal authority found in the Livian version, despite his close adherence to the structure of Dionysius, we can reasonably postulate that he consciously chose to follow Roman models of authoritative female speech over more submissive Greek female stereotypes. There is certainly a Roman background of female motivational speech that we can draw on. Hallett argues that the supposed letters of Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, adopt the masculine function of a political advisor who viewed familial feeling as inseparable from appropriate civic and moral conduct.<sup>199</sup> Cornelia draws a line between personal ambition and civic duty stating: 'it is far better in every way that our enemies not perish and remain as they are, rather than that the state be destroyed and perish.'<sup>200</sup> Her concern for the state echoes Livy's Torquatus, who faulted his son's disrespect for his *maiestatem patriam* and who also placed the welfare of the state above his personal feelings for his son.<sup>201</sup> This is no mere appropriation of a traditionally masculine conception of appropriate moral and civic conduct. As Kahn notes, Volumnia 'embodies in an exaggerated, intensified form a construction of motherhood (that was) normative in Roman culture.'<sup>202</sup> Therefore, Volumnia's maternal authority, whilst a function of Plutarch's ethical framework, can also be seen in its own right as a relative Roman virtue as well for the prestige and honourary status of a Roman *matrona* underlined the assumption that Roman mothers were viewed as enforcers and upholders of masculine ideals of civic identity and principles.

In fact, we can view Volumnia's speech as a subordination of individuality over the needs of the state, in itself a demonstration of an almost genderless conception of civic *sophrosyne*.<sup>203</sup> Since such a

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<sup>199</sup> Hallett (2004). While the authorship of these two letters is contentious, I agree with Hallett in that regardless of who the author is, the Romans themselves believed that Cornelia wrote them.

<sup>200</sup> Nepos *fr.* 1 & 2. Trans. Skinner (2000). It is entirely possible that Plutarch read these letters as his references to Cornelius Nepos in the *Lives* indicate his acquaintance with his work (*Luc.* 43.2, *Marc.* 30.5, 31.8, *Tib.* 21.3).

<sup>201</sup> Livy 8.7.15.

<sup>202</sup> Kahn (1997) 147.

<sup>203</sup> North (1966) 2, 68-75. For example, in Sophocles, the *sophron* man was a man of restraint who contrasted with examples of *megalopsychia* and *hubris* as exemplified in the *Ajax*: the incompatibility of the courageous yet intransigent Ajax and the more reasonable ethos of Odysseus. By the time of the tragic poets, the relationship between *sophrosyne*, *hubris* and justice was explicit. In Aeschylus, the observation of limits was the essence of *sophrosyne*. Euripides however went beyond the other tragic poets both in the frequency with which he alludes to *sophrosyne* and the variety of meanings

defence of the state is accomplished by a woman in a public setting, Volumnia's words serve to further blur rather than strengthen the customary boundary between private and public. While Plutarch does not explicitly lay any blame at Volumnia's feet in regards to Coriolanus' privileging of his private emotions, her authority as a woman over a statesman and even her persuasiveness are problematic. In the *Comparison*, Plutarch reiterates this view when he describes the murder of Coriolanus by the Volscians. While the deed itself was neither just nor right, he supplied an excuse for it by not accepting a truce offered nor putting an end to the hostilities, instead allowing himself to be persuaded by the private words of women. His capitulation to his mother was not so much an honour to her, as it was a dishonour to his country (*Comp.* 4.2-4).

Coriolanus' devotion to Volumnia was greater than his devotion to Rome, but even his emotional concession to his mother would have provided redemption if he had acknowledged his faults and followed her advice to negotiate. Instead of cementing peace and putting the interests of Rome before himself, Coriolanus chooses only to remove himself from the war, thus confirming Plutarch's earlier comment that his *authadeia* and *orge* would transform his virtues into vices (1.2).<sup>204</sup> Ultimately, Volumnia is unable to save her son through her speech, who 'threw away for ever its golden opportunity' but she does save Rome (*Comp.* 4.2). Plutarch thus mediates his own ethical concerns through the words of Volumnia. Narrator and character are in agreement with regards to Coriolanus' deficiencies, providing two alternate, authoritative voices for the reader.

Plutarch's use of the tragic motif of the persuasive, older mother embeds his Roman *matrona* within the collective Graeco-Roman literary imagination, yet his knowledge and appreciation of Roman conceptions of maternal authority should not be underestimated. The clear links between Volumnia's angry rhetorical persuasion and Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi's letters reveal a sophisticated and subtle characterisation of female authority assumed via claims to maternity and its relationship to the state and *populus*. In the case of the *Coriolanus* however, Volumnia's maternal authority and her controlled rhetorical performance serve to underline the ethical weaknesses of her son whilst simultaneously locating her words in an authentic Roman setting.

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he gives to the word. He was the first tragic poet to exploit the inherent drama and tensions between *sophrosyne* and its established antitheses, as the victory of passion in the form of anger is common throughout his plays.

<sup>204</sup> 'Marcius bore witness for those who hold that a generous and noble nature, if it lacks discipline (*παιδεία*), is apt to produce much that is worthless along with its better fruits, like a rich soil deprived of the husbandman's culture.'

## Conclusion

On the whole, there are clear parallels between Plutarch's construction of Hersilia and Volumnia's intercessions. Both act with autonomy in contrast to Dionysius' representation of male sanctioned intervention. Both are rhetorically proficient, prepared and controlled compared to Livy's representation of emotionally compromised women. The civic crises in the *Romulus* and *Coriolanus* created an acceptable space for Hersilia and Volumnia to step into the public arena and each woman was prepared to sacrifice family and their own bodies in defence of the state. As such, they embody the Roman collective ideal of the state before private considerations. Indeed, the female chorus behind each woman (Roma, Acca Larentia, Philotis, the Sabine women, Valeria and elite Roman *matronae*) confirms the relative virtue of the female characters of each *Life*. Hersilia and Volumnia are leaders but not anomalies. Plutarch does not offer his reader mere Greek stereotypes of tragic female intercession; both women embody Livian virtues of female self-sacrifice and civic loyalty before all, which suggests that Plutarch identified, at some level, with Roman cultural concepts.<sup>205</sup>

More importantly perhaps, each woman's direct discourse supports and explores key elements of the ethical framework of the corresponding *Life*, a framework which reflects Plutarch's Platonic outlook. Hersilia's speech both confirms Romulus' ethical strengths of self-restraint and civic duty and the civilising function of marriage and partnership explored in the early chapter of the *Romulus*. Volumnia's speech in contrast emphasises the ethical weaknesses of her son: his anger, self-will, lack of self-restraint and education and his blurring of the line between public and private affairs. Her intercession therefore conjures multiple social and political anxieties to consider; anxieties and boundaries that become more complex and significant in the Late Republican biographies.

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<sup>205</sup> Mayer (1997) 14. He defines cultural assimilation as the incorporation or synthesis of other's concepts, words and customs in one's own culture/world view, while political assimilation is the identification with the state or society of a different people either in preference to or in addition to one's own identification. The extent of Plutarch's Roman acculturation is of course up for debate, but his referencing of Roman collective identity and his rendering of (elite) Roman female persuasion that supports such identity, suggests that he at least understood and agreed with such Roman contexts, at least in the ethical contexts of the *Romulus* and *Coriolanus*.

## Chapter 2: *Eros and Logos: The Women of the Life of Antony*

*'For to love in the confines of marriage is a far greater blessing than to be beloved; since it preserves and keeps people from falling into many errors.'* Plutarch, *Amatorius* 769e.

In the first chapter, we examined Plutarch's exploration of the mythical origins of Rome and the process of civilisation. The initial acts of force and persuasion in the *Romulus*, rendered in a dramatic fashion by the action and direct discourse of women, formed the Roman cornerstones of marriage and family. A more sophisticated social and political structure by the time of the *Coriolanus* brought with it a sharply delineated line between the public and private worlds of the public man. Accordingly, *paideia* and *sophrosyne* in particular—the education and moderation of the irrational forces of the mind—emerge as key requirements for Plutarch's ideal Roman statesman, highlighted by Volumnia's speech to her son.

This section will examine the *Life of Antony* and the complex interrelationship between the talented but flawed protagonist and the three most significant women in his life: Julia, Octavia and Cleopatra. The context and type of each woman's direct discourse varies. Julia intercedes with one, powerful sentence; Octavia privately implores her brother and Cleopatra speaks three times in short anecdotes, conducts a skillful interview with Octavian and then delivers the biography's longest speech as a private, formal lament. The variety of discourse reflects the introduction of new elements into the Late Republican political environment: the changing role of elite women, Rome versus the East and the explosion of wealth and power available for the victorious. Since elite Roman women of the time were able to participate in valuable political networking behind the scenes, women like Octavia and Julia could exercise influence without having to cross the boundary between private and public worlds.<sup>206</sup> However, as a public, political and powerful non-Roman woman, Cleopatra stridently crosses the threshold dividing male and female spheres. Her speech and influence over Antony is therefore dangerous, and, along with Fulvia, represents the subversive stereotype of the inappropriate 'manly' woman. The female speech scenes of the *Antony* can be viewed then, as a reflection of Plutarch's ethical concerns regarding such significant themes, which are presented at times from competing standpoints.

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<sup>206</sup> Hillard (1989) 165.

### The Ethical Framework of the *Antony*

One of Plutarch's cautionary *Lives*, the *Antony* (paired with the *Demetrius*) was also one of his longest, reflecting his ethical focus on the complex and difficult years at the end of the Republic.<sup>207</sup> He opens the pair with an explicit reference to Plato, commenting that his narrative concerns two men 'who bore most ample testimony to the truth of Plato's saying that great natures exhibit great vices, as well as great virtues' (1.7). Indeed the pair are the only biographies that Plutarch explicitly labels as 'bad and blameworthy' (φαύλων καὶ ψεγομένων, *Dem.* 1.7), which seems to be a revision of the moral programme outlined in the *proem* to the *Aemilius*, that is, that by reflecting upon examples of virtue, the reader can become a better person.<sup>208</sup>

While Plutarch introduces Plato's maxim to perhaps justify his selection of negative *exempla*, Plato actually argues in the *Republic* that such examples (albeit in poetry) only serve to teach bad behaviour rather than its avoidance.<sup>209</sup> However, Plutarch's treatise, *Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat*, implicitly argues against this point.<sup>210</sup> Plutarch reaffirms this stance in the *Demetrius* where he explains that just as doctors study sickness, examples of vice can be beneficial and instructive (*Dem.* 1.3), Duff noting that the verbal similarities between Plutarch and Plato's arguments are so obvious that the reader is probably expected to recognise the Platonic original.<sup>211</sup> Therefore, although there is a strong Platonic core to the ethical framework of the *Antony*, Plutarch is willing to modify his philosophical ideas in order to shape his own moral programme, which as we will see, is reflected in how he chooses to represent the actions of Cleopatra and Octavia in particular.<sup>212</sup>

Plutarch presents Antony as a complex man, who, despite being blessed with brilliant promise, allows the irrational part of his mind to dominate his actions. His 'great vices and virtues' were evident from the beginning. His generosity, love of high living and soldierly camaraderie were initially positive character traits but his proclivities for excessive feasting, drinking and debauchery (2.3-4, 4.3, 6.5,

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<sup>207</sup> Stadter (2000) 509.

<sup>208</sup> Duff (2004) 271.

<sup>209</sup> *Pl. Resp.* 401b-c, 396c-e. Duff (2004) 274-275.

<sup>210</sup> Duff (2004) 275.

<sup>211</sup> Duff (2004) 275. He claims that it is clear that in this section of the *Demetrius* that Plutarch is responding to the *Republic* 409a-b: 'But his soul should, when young, be inexperienced and uncontaminated by bad characters, if it is going to be fair and good and make healthy judgements about what is correct. So it is that noble people, when young, seem simple minded and are easily deceived by the wicked, because that do not have it within themselves examples compatible with anything that is bad.' Thus Plutarch can claim that reading about bad behaviour can be beneficial.

<sup>212</sup> Plutarch directly references Plato or his works four times in the *Antony-Demetrius*: (29.1, 26.1 (*Gorgias*), 70.1 (*Phaedrus*), *Dem.* 1.7 (Plato's plays).

9.3-9.6), combined with his need for guidance from negative influences like Curio, Fulvia and Cleopatra transformed these traits into liabilities.<sup>213</sup> Indeed, the teacher-pupil image is a ideal one for Plutarch in order to represent Antony as easily led by bad examples.<sup>214</sup> Such submissiveness and reliance on his senses brought weakness—Plutarch notes that the ‘simplicity of his nature and the slowness of his sense perception’ (ἐνῆν γὰρ ἀπλότης τῷ ἤθει καὶ βραδεῖα μὲν αἴσθησις) made him susceptible to flattery, because he trusted those about him and was easily captivated by praise (24.6-8). For a man who privileged what his senses provided, the irrational impact of flattery (*kolakeia*), pleasure and desire (*eros*) form the basis of Antony’s increasing psychological weakness. Beneker claims that the entire narrative is shaped to ‘demonstrate the failure of Antony to develop and exercise a moral virtue that would have allowed him to stave off the fatal influence of erotic desire’—a statement that is just as applicable to Antony’s susceptibility to flattery.<sup>215</sup>

### Sources

Plutarch’s sources for the *Antony* are varied. He directly cites his own grandfather Niarchus’ eyewitness accounts, the *Memoirs of Augustus* and those of Dellius, Philotas, Olympos, Cicero and Antony himself.<sup>216</sup> Pelling claims that the emphasis on Antony’s character and vices in the *Second Philippic* was congruent to Plutarch’s aims and explains to a great extent its influence on his narrative.<sup>217</sup> Accordingly (as in the *Second Philippic*), Plutarch contrasts the private and virtuous Julia with the dangerous influence of Fulvia, a differentiation that he extends to Antony’s last two wives, Octavia and Cleopatra.<sup>218</sup> A key component of this dichotomy served to portray Antony as the ‘weak husband,’ in itself a recognisable trope in the corpus of Late Republican political invective. Indeed, a comparison between the types of invective of the *Second Philippic* with character depiction in the

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<sup>213</sup> Curio made Antony more manageable (ἀπαιδεύτου γενομένου, 2.3), Fulvia taught and schooled him (διδασκάλια καὶ πεπαιδαγωγημένον, 10.3) and Cleopatra kept him under her instruction (διεπαιδαγώγει, 29.1). Jacobs (2011) 89. Plutarch noted in the *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae* that the quality of being soldierly (στρατιωτικοί, 823b) and generosity with gifts (μεγαλόδοροι, 822a-f) can be beneficial for the statesman.

<sup>214</sup> Swain (1990) 152-3.

<sup>215</sup> Beneker (2012) 153, 156.

<sup>216</sup> de Wet (1990) 81 Pelling (1979). Antony: 2.2,10.2; Cicero: 6.1 (here he directly cites the *Philippics*), 9.3; Augustus: 22.2; Dellius: 59.4; Olympos: 82.2; Niarchus: 68.4; Philotas (who was known to Plutarch through his grandfather Lamprias): 28.2, 4.7. Livy, Pollio, Sallust, Nepos, Strabo, Valerius Maximus and Velleius Paterculus have also been suggested as possible intermediary sources. Regarding Pollio, it is clear that Plutarch accepted his viewpoint regarding the beginning of Rome’s civil wars (*Caes.* 46.2), so it makes sense that he was an important source for his later Republican biographies, including the *Antony*.

<sup>217</sup> Pelling (1979) 90. Of course the contemporary nature of Cicero’s polemic would have been a factor, as well as the fact that Plutarch read Cicero and used him as a source in other *Lives*.

<sup>218</sup> Cic. *Phil.* 3.6.17, 2.24.58 (Julia); 2.5.11, 2.44.113 (Fulvia).

Antony uncovers many parallels.<sup>219</sup> As a result, Plutarch's characterisation of Antony's women conforms to this 'standard version' despite other traditions painting a slightly different picture.<sup>220</sup> This does not mean that Plutarch is uncritical of Cicero's negative portrayal of Antony. He refutes the orator's claim that Antony was the cause of the civil war (6.3) and also includes examples of Antony's exemplary behaviour not found in the other source material.<sup>221</sup>

The sources behind Appian and Cassius Dio's versions of the lives of Antony and Cleopatra are also important. Pelling asserts that verbal echoes and parallel structuring of events from 58BCE in Plutarch's work demonstrates regular contact with their source material.<sup>222</sup> Therefore, if we accept that Dio and Appian used similar sources and/or traditions at least sometimes independently of

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<sup>219</sup> In the *Second Philippic*, Cicero centres much of his invective around Antony's sexual conduct (2.15, 2.19, 2.44, 2.61, 2.69, 2.101), his gluttony/drunkenness (2.6, 2.63, 2.67, 2.81, 2.101, 2.105), his risky financial enterprises and spendthrift nature (2.35-6, 2.41, 2.43-6, 2.50, 2.65-6, 2.73-4, 2.67, 2.92-7, 2.103-4, 2.101, 2.109), his embarrassing of the Antonian family name (2.14, 2.58) and the eccentricity of his dress: 2.76, 2.86. Plutarch incorporates much of this Ciceronian invective, in particular his sexual conduct (2.3, 6.5, 9.3-4), his gluttony/drunkenness (2.3,4.2, 9.3-4 (Cicero specified as the source), 22.2, 24.1-2, 28.2, 29.1, 51.1, 56.4, 71.2-3), his financial status (4.4, 9.3-4, 34.4,28.5, 36.2, 37.1, 53.3-4) and his eccentricity of dress (29.1, 54.5). Valentina (2006). We can also see Cicero's influence on episodes that reflect badly on Antony; Curio's father banishing him from the house (2.45), giving over Pompey's house to debauchery (2.66-8) and approaching Fulvia in disguise (2.77).

<sup>220</sup> For example, Seneca uses Octavia as a negative model of excessive mourning for his wife in the *Consolatio ad Marciam* 2.3-4, claiming that on losing her son Marcellus, Octavia 'set no bounds to her tears and moans through all the rest of her life' and that 'she hated all mothers, and was inflamed most of all against Livia, because it seemed that the happiness which had once been held out to herself had passed to the other woman's son.' Aelius Donatus in the *Life of Virgil* (31) claimed that Octavia fainted on hearing about her son when the *Aeneid* was read aloud to her. Such emotions seem at odds with Plutarch's presentation of a woman who was restrained, dignified and prepared to sacrifice almost everything for the good of Rome. In fact, Plutarch's almost hagiographic portrait of Octavia depicts her not only as an exemplary wife and mother, but also as a munificent stepmother. Since in the Roman context, like today, the stepmother figure had negative connotations, Octavia's behaviour as a 'good' step-mother reinforces her virtue and self-restraint. For more see Gray-Fow (1988) and Watson (1995).

<sup>221</sup> Jacobs (2011) 121. For example, Plutarch's description of Antony's exemplary behaviour after the death of Caesar is absent from either Appian (2.124-135) or Dio's accounts, who instead credit Cicero or Antony and Lepidus together for the deeds that Plutarch credits solely to Antony (62.29-33). He also comments that Antony's love of giving and the largeness of his giving' meant that his soldiers 'preferred honour and favour from Antony to life and safety' (43.2-3).

<sup>222</sup> Pelling (1980) 76. App. *B. Civ.* 2.12.82 = Pollio 56F4C. Cornell (2013) 107. Pagan (2004) 110. Fowler (1896) 754-758 Appian's sources are unclear as he very rarely cited any, but as Fowler notes, Barbu's 1933 study indicates that Plutarch used contemporary sources wherever possible, while Kornemann (1898) made a good case that Appian and Plutarch followed Asinius Pollio in sections of their works.

Plutarch, it follows that their presentation of events can also shed light on Plutarch's own adaptation of his source material.<sup>223</sup>

## Julia

The first woman to enter the narrative is Antony's mother, Julia Antonia. Like Volumnia, she is introduced early, Plutarch describing her as one of the most noble and restrained women of her time (ταῖς ἀρίσταις τότε καὶ σωφρονεστάταις ἐνάμιλλος) and as the parent responsible for Antony's upbringing (2.1). Julia's virtues are illustrated in an anecdote concerning her relationship with her husband (Antony's father), Antonius Creticus. An associate came to him asking for money. Finding he had none, Antonius gave him a silver bowl instead. Julia, angry on finding the bowl missing, was prepared to torture the slaves until he confessed and begged her pardon (1.3). Creticus had little self-restraint with regards to his generosity, but importantly, he listened and deferred to his wife's good judgment. Plutarch thus introduces two important ideas that will be constantly referenced through Antony's career: generosity and submission to one's wife.<sup>224</sup>

We should expect then, considering the close mother-son dynamic that Plutarch establishes in the next chapter, that Julia would have a positive influence over her son.<sup>225</sup> However, instead of learning self-control and reason from his mother, Antony pursues other teachers, Curio in particular introducing him to the pleasures of *eros* and all the physical and financial excesses it entailed (2.3).<sup>226</sup> In a similar vein, Plutarch deems Antony's decision to spend time in formal military and oratorical training in Greece as ill-judged, commenting that his chosen Asiatic style of oratory, like his own life, was 'boastful, hot-tempered (φρυαγματίαν) and full of empty arrogance (κενοῦ γαυριάματος, 2.5). As Pelling notes, this is striking language for both φρυαγματίας and γαυρίαμα convey horse imagery: φρύαγμα being a violent snorting or whinnying of a horse, while γαυριάω can also be used

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<sup>223</sup> Pelling (1979) 77: 'The natural explanation is to suppose that all Plutarch's later accounts are informed by the same source or sources, and that this material was also available to Suetonius and Dio and this supports the hypothesis that Plutarch's four later versions are all based on the same store of material.'

<sup>224</sup> Beneker (2002) 145.

<sup>225</sup> Plutarch posits that Cicero's execution of Antony's stepfather (Julia's husband, Cornelius Lentulus) was the origin of Antony's 'excessive hatred' (σφοδρᾶς ἔχθρας) towards Cicero (2.1). As part of Plutarch's usual introductory background sketch, his portrayal of a son defending his mother in her grief establishes the mother-son dynamic just as it establishes the Antony-Cicero relationship.

<sup>226</sup> See Cic. *Phil.* 2.45.



to describe prancing.<sup>227</sup> Such animalistic imagery will be further exploited by Plutarch to describe Antony's psyche as the narrative unfolds.

Antony's rejection of a prudent lifestyle is further exemplified by his dissolute use of Pompey's former house, a man who Plutarch claimed was widely admired for his restraint (σωφροσύνη, 21.2). Antony's behavior also disgusts other Romans who exhibit *sophrosyne* (9.3-5). Despite his inability to emulate the restraint of others, Antony resolves to start afresh by re-marrying (10.3). However, his new wife Fulvia is the widow of Clodius, one of his former guides in dissipation. This is yet another ill-judged move since Plutarch claims that Fulvia wanted 'to rule a ruler and command a general' (ἄρχοντος ἄρχειν καὶ στρατηγοῦντος στρατηγεῖν, 10.3), also commenting that Cleopatra ought to thank Fulvia for teaching Antony to be controlled by a woman (πεπαιδαγωγημένον, 10.3). As Beneker notes, 'lacking self-control, Antony accepts a wife who desires to command him, something we have been expecting since the opening anecdote about Antony's father.'<sup>228</sup> With no thoughts for spinning or housekeeping, Fulvia is the complete opposite of Julia and the Roman female virtues she represents. This opposition between the two women becomes more apparent when the accounts of Julia and Fulvia's combined activities in Appian and Dio are taken into account.

Plutarch describes Fulvia actively waging war on Antony's behalf (28.1, 30.1), but he barely mentions Julia's activities during the same time. In contrast, Appian depicts Julia as extremely politically active and at times working closely with Fulvia herself, describing both women using their influence to prevent Antony from being outlawed by the senate after his defeat at Mutina in 43BCE. Furthermore, both Appian and Dio describe Julia as a messenger of Sextus Pompeius, bringing warships and potential allies from Sicily in order to forge an alliance against Octavian.<sup>229</sup> In addition, Appian places

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<sup>227</sup> Pelling (1988a) 120, 207. For example, Aesch. *Sept*: the snorting of horses (ἵππικῶν φρυαγμάτων, 245); the furious snorting of horses (μάργων ἵππικῶν φρυαγμάτων, 475). Plutarch also uses similar horse imagery to describe the empty arrogance (τὸ κενὸν φρύαγμα) of young men and the bridle needed to curb one's pride and ambitions (*Aem.* 27.1). While γαῦρος has the meaning of 'exhaling' or 'splendid, disdainful', the verb γαυριῶ also has the sense of bearing oneself proudly, to prance like a horse. Plutarch also utilises this imagery in the *Lycurgus*: '...rejoicing to see them, (the young men) like horses, prancing and neighing (ὥσπερ ἵπποις, γαυριῶσι καὶ φρυαττομένοις) for the contest' (22.1).

<sup>228</sup> Beneker (2012) 178.

<sup>229</sup> App. *B. Civ.* 3.8.51, 5.6.52-63. Appian reinforces her political importance by relating a letter Octavian apparently wrote to Julia, ostensibly to complain about her fleeing Italy, but in reality, as a way of opening indirect correspondence with the 'other side'. Plutarch does mention that Julia fled to Sextus Pompey with Fulvia (32.1), but this is separated from her direct discourse and he gives her no role in the political negotiations, just that she sought shelter from him. Cass. Dio. 38.15, 48.16. He relates that once Octavian discovers that Pompeius and Antony have been in contact via Julia, he immediately sent his own mother and himself married Scribonia (the sister of Pompeius' father-in-

Julia at the epicentre of the women's revolt over taxation led by Hortensia in 42BCE.<sup>230</sup> It is not unreasonable to think that Appian and Dio's source material was also available to Plutarch but he gives her part no mention, focusing only on the actions of Fulvia. That he chose not to include her involvement in the political machinations of the triumvirs suggests that Julia's characterisation was tailored to fit his model of the 'good' Roman *matrona*. As Julia's role in the narrative is confined to the domestic sphere, she accordingly escapes the smear of the politically interfering woman.

One of the first acts of the Second Triumvirate was a round of brutal proscriptions, raising necessary cash and disposing of enemies simultaneously. Antony and Octavian haggled over the list during a three-day conference, Antony conceding the name of his uncle Lucius Caesar in return for the head of Cicero. Plutarch's opinion regarding this type of horse-trading is unequivocal, stating that 'nothing could be more savage or cruel than this exchange' (19.3). With Antony shamefully (*καταισχύνοντα*) abusing his power, Julia stepped into the breach to protect her natal Julian family. The context of Julia's speech is dramatic. Lucius, pursued by assassins (*τῶν σφαγέων*) seeks refuge under his sister's roof. The executioners, having entered her house, try to force their way into Julia's own chamber (*τὸ δωμάτιον αὐτῆς*) where Lucius is apparently hiding. Julia, standing in the doorway with her arms spread wide repeatedly (*πολλάκις*) and loudly shouts (*ἔβόα*):

‘οὐκ ἀποκτενεῖτε Καίσαρα Λεύκιον, ἐὰν μὴ πρότερον ἐμὲ ἀποκτείνητε τὴν τὸν αὐτοκράτορα τεκοῦσαν.’ (20.3)

*‘You will not kill Lucius Caesar unless you first kill me, the mother of your imperator.’*

The proscriptions, highlighted by Antony's action against his uncle, threaten the social and political fabric of Rome. Julia's dramatic speech, thus, is delivered in the same context of crisis as those of Hersilia and Volumnia, who also sought to protect the interests of the state from the actions of their family members. Once again, there are power inversions at play. Lucius, as a male Julian, should by rights protect and lead his sister. But it is he who seeks her protection, which is all the greater due to

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law) in order to strengthen their alliance. Sextus certainly believed that there was now an agreement between himself and Antony against Octavian, which proves that Julia's role as an envoy between the two generals was an important and politically crucial rather than a situation in which Julia had to flee to any safe refuge for she could have travelled directly to Antony with Fulvia if safety was her only concern.

<sup>230</sup> App. *B. Civ.* 5.5.52, 5.7.63.

her position as the mother of an emperor. And like Volumnia, Julia does not shrink from contravening her powerful son's decisions.

The imagery of a woman guarding a domestic space, in particular the inner sanctum of the bedchamber is striking. Appian has his Julia dashing into the Forum and reproaching Antony in public, invading a masculine space and earning the wrath (but also the acquiescence) of her son.<sup>231</sup> By placing Julia's speech in a domestic context, Plutarch depicts her agency in an appropriate rather than transgressive setting. As she physically guards the final limen (ἐν ταῖς θύραις στήσα), the outermost doorways trespassed by Lucius' executioners, Julia's speech and body blocks the symbolic boundary between public and private life. Here, as with Hersilia, Julia's body serves as an ideological boundary between conflicting males, assuming the ancient woman's willingness to physically sacrifice herself for the common good.

Her speech was ultimately successful, with Antony pardoning Lucius (20.3). Rather than using this episode to reflect on his behaviour however, Antony immediately 'threw himself once more into his old life of pleasure and debauchery (ἡδυπαθῆ καὶ ἀκόλαστον) as soon as he had shaken off (ἀνεχαίτισε) some of his troubles' (21.1). Once again, the horse imagery of ἀνεχαίτισε represents Antony as one who wishes to throw off the constraints of reason and discipline for unbridled pleasure.<sup>232</sup> Thus, Antony is swept back by his passions (τοῖς πάθεσιν, 24.1) into his customary mode of life. This is Plutarch's first explicit introduction of Antony's πάθη and it coincides neatly with the exit of Julia on one hand and the introduction of Cleopatra on the other.

### Cleopatra

After the triumvirs' victory at Philippi, Antony remained in the East. While he was in Cilicia, he summoned Cleopatra to Tarsus in order to answer charges that she aided Cassius after the death of Caesar. With her entrance into the narrative, the malignant influence of *eros* and flattery begin to affect Antony.<sup>233</sup> His quiescent passions (ἀτρεμούντων παθῶν) are aroused by his desire (ἔρωος) for the Egyptian queen, whom Plutarch describes as Antony's 'ultimate evil' (τελευταῖον κακόν, 25.1).

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<sup>231</sup> App. B. Civ. 4.6.37.

<sup>232</sup> ἀναχαιτίζω: to throw the mane back, rear up. Pelling (1988a) 169. He notes that the attempt to escape from a restraint may be specified by a genitive of separation: here τῶν πραγμάτων, a rare construction. Incidentally, Plutarch also claims that Demetrius put a garrison into the Museum so that the people might not again shake off the yoke (ἀναχαιτίσαντα) and give him further trouble (Dem. 34.5).

<sup>233</sup> Beneker (2002) 155. He claims that Plutarch entwines *eros* and Cleopatra in the text, inviting the reader to think of them as one and the same.

Flattery is a recurring theme in the *Lives* and Plutarch warns the reader of Antony's susceptibility to flattery immediately before the Tarsus episode in three closely spaced anecdotes (21.2, 24.4, 24.7-8).<sup>234</sup> In his work dedicated to flattery, the *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur*, Plutarch claims that sycophants seek to gain influence through sensual pleasure and Cleopatra's entrance into the narrative exemplifies the artifice of the hedonistic flatterer.<sup>235</sup>

When Dellius, Antony's right-hand man, recognises Cleopatra's wit (ἐν τοῖς λόγοις δεινότητα), he persuades the Egyptian queen to go to Antony, 'decked out in fine array, as Homer would say' (25.2). This alludes to an episode in the *Iliad*, where Hera decides to seduce Zeus by donning a robe made by Athena, borrowing a magical strap from Aphrodite and employing charm (φιλότητα) in order to control Zeus.<sup>236</sup> Following the goddess' methods, Cleopatra decks herself out in fine clothing with a full display of pomp and theatrics. She appears, reclining beneath a canopy spangled with gold, adorned like Aphrodite, while boys like 'Loves' (Ἔρωσιν) stood on either side and fanned her (26.2); a decadent display tailor-made for a man who loved luxury and pleasure (2.3, 9.6, 17.3, 21.1). The similarity of this scene with Lucan's description of the Egyptian queen's palace demonstrates that Plutarch was following existing preconceptions of the Eastern seductress and her skills of pomp and seduction.<sup>237</sup> In fact, the Homeric allusion accentuates the artificial nature of Cleopatra's intentions, for her Aphrodite costume (like Hera's) is a pretence deployed in order to beguile a man she despised (κατεφρόνησε, 26.1).<sup>238</sup> As his τελευταῖον κακὸν, Cleopatra is no wondrous reincarnation of love and desire. Instead she is the destructive Aphrodite of Euripides's *Hippolytus*.<sup>239</sup>

The reader also senses a shift in power from Antony to the Egyptian queen. Plutarch twice invites the reader to imagine Cleopatra's tableau as a painting with two focal points; one is the dazzling display of Cleopatra followed by a growing crowd, and the other is of Antony left abandoned in the *agora* (26.2-3).<sup>240</sup> Cleopatra is aware that she holds the upper hand and so refuses Antony's summons for dinner. Antony instead goes to her, an expected response given the precedent set by his capitulation

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<sup>234</sup> Nerdahl (2011) 298: On Plutarch's exploration of flattery in the *Lives*, see Russell (1973) 117–29, and Duff (2002) 226–28, 235–36).

<sup>235</sup> *Quomodo adul.* 51b, 54d-55a.

<sup>236</sup> Hom. *Il.* 14.154-198.

<sup>237</sup> Luc. *Phars.* 10.105-140.

<sup>238</sup> Kostuch (2014) 8.

<sup>239</sup> Brenk (1992) 4456.

<sup>240</sup> Brenk (1992) 4455. Plutarch notes that Antony attempted to surpass Cleopatra the next day by staging his own banquet but was hopelessly outdone by the Egyptian queen's splendour and elegance (27.1).

to Fulvia and further back, his father's submission to his wife Julia.<sup>241</sup> In Appian's version, Cleopatra without apology skillfully answers Antony's charges, persuading him with her intelligence (τὴν σύνεσιν) as well as her beauty.<sup>242</sup> While Plutarch also describes Cleopatra being at the peak of her physical appearance and intellectual power (λαμπροτάτην ἔχουσι καὶ τὸ φρονεῖν ἀκμάζουσι 25.3), he claims, like Hera, it is her utilisation of 'charms' (φίλτροις) and her luxurious theatricality that persuades Antony and we hear nothing of the verbal defence she is supposed to present (25.4).

### Cleopatra and the 'knack' of flattery

Cleopatra's persuasive flattery is a crucial aspect of her characterisation. Plutarch's well-known claim that her discourse had a greater effect than her beauty has often been taken as a criticism of her physical accomplishments (27.2). But rather than a function of comparison or complaint, his description of her well-honed persuasive skills betrays admiration for such talents. Not only was the tone of her voice pleasing, her tongue was 'like an instrument of many strings' (27.3). He returns to this imagery less than two chapters later when he describes how Cleopatra divided her flattery, 'not into the four forms of which Plato speaks, but into many' (29.1). For Plutarch's educated reader, this reference immediately calls to mind the section of the *Gorgias* where Plato explores the corresponding forms of *technai* and *emperiai*. Plato conceptualises *technai* as arts or skills that are based on knowledge that aims to benefit the body and soul. On the other side, *empeiriai* are the irrational (ἄλογον) 'knacks' of flattery that aim at fulfilling desire and ignoring what is best.<sup>243</sup>

Moss claims that Plato condemns flattery on both metaphysical and ethical charges in the *Gorgias* since it deals in illusions rather than reality and pleasure instead of the the good. More specifically, Plato implies that 'flattery uses pleasure as a tool of deception, and that this is effective because people who go for pleasure are easily deceived and taken in by illusions.'<sup>244</sup> Antony's predilections for what his senses provide have already been well established. With the appearance of Cleopatra

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<sup>241</sup> Beneker (2002) 156.

<sup>242</sup> App. *B. Civ.* 5.1.8.

<sup>243</sup> Pl. *Grg.* 464c-e. He lists the four forms of *technai* as medicine, legislation, justice and gymnastics; *empeiriai* as pastry-cooking, rhetoric and cosmetics and sophistry. *Technai* 'always bestow their care for the best advantage respectively of the body and the soul' (464c). *Empeiriai* aim 'to fulfil desires (462c7, 462d9-e1), the filling up of the appetites (503c5-6), with no thought of what is best' (465a2, 464d1-2).

<sup>244</sup> Moss (2006) 13-14. Flattery 'makes the body and the soul seem to be in good condition but not to be so one bit more' (Pl. *Grg.* 464a8-b1). It hides its own true nature and pretends to be something else: 'having put on the mask of each of the parts [of the crafts of soul-care and body-care] it pretends to be that part whose mask it wears' (464c7-d1). Flattery 'is not at all concerned with what's best; with the lure of what is pleasantest at the moment it lures foolishness and deceives it' (464d1-2)... it guesses at what is pleasant without [thought of] what is best' (465a2).

however, Antony's dormant passions are aroused by his desire for the Egyptian queen and the pleasures she represents. With her erotic demonstration and flattery, Cleopatra captures Antony (ἀλίσκεται, 25.1), just as Plutarch had earlier noted that he was easily captured (ἠλίσκετο ῥαδίως, 24.7) by flatterers.<sup>245</sup> By focusing on her skills as a flatterer *par excellence*, surpassing even Plato's template, Plutarch explains how the Egyptian queen will keep Antony under her malevolent instruction and warns how his acceptance and indeed preference for illusion will blind him to reason and truth.<sup>246</sup>

As a statesman in her own right, it is unsurprising that the first example of Cleopatra's direct discourse concerns statecraft. While fishing, Antony was annoyed at coming up empty handed in front of the Egyptian queen. He ordered a slave to secretly tie some fish to his line so he could display his success. Cleopatra, seeing through his ruse, summoned some observers the following day and had an attendant attach a salted herring to the line that Antony duly caught. Amid the ensuing laughter, Cleopatra tells him;

‘παράδος ἡμῖν,’ ἔφη, ‘τὸν κάλαμον, αὐτόκρατορ, τοῖς Φαρίταις καὶ Κανωβίταις ἀλιεῦσιν: ἡ δὲ σὴ θήρα πόλεις εἰσὶ καὶ βασιλεῖαι καὶ ἥπειροι.’(29.4)

*‘Hand over to us your fishing-rod, imperator, for the fishermen of Pharos and Canopus; your sport is that of cities, kingdoms, and continents.’*

Cleopatra appears to guide Antony back to his real business of conquest despite her previous diligence in coaxing him into dissipation. She both flatters and instructs but by publicly outwitting him, she causes Antony (and the reader) to remember who the senior partner in the relationship is. While it may appear that there is tension between Plutarch's earlier description of Cleopatra's words as mere sophistry and the actual positive guidance she imparts, the anecdote is ostensibly about Antony's public shaming by a woman, for almost immediately after her speech, Antony receives word from Fulvia who has been waging war on his behalf. Effectively bested by two women in the public arena—one telling him what his duty ought to be, the other actively pursuing it—Antony is stirred into action (30.1). Fulvia dies shortly after and Cleopatra's words now appear almost prophetic, for

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<sup>245</sup> Plutarch uses similar phrasing to describe Lamia's mastery over Demetrius (16.4).

<sup>246</sup> Plutarch uses Antony as an example of a man manipulated by flattery in the *Quomodo adulator* (56e, 61a).

her death allows Antony and Octavian to re-establish a relationship, which in turn allows Antony to resume hunting an empire in the East.<sup>247</sup>

### **Cleopatra and Octavia**

As a stark contrast to Cleopatra's theatrical pageantry, Plutarch introduces Octavia in more muted but far more positive tones. The new *détente* between Octavian and Antony which appeared genuine on the surface was nevertheless insecure. It is at this point that extra security was offered by Fortune in the form of Octavia. Plutarch describes her as 'a wonder of a woman' (θαυμαστόν γυναικός, 31.1). Everyone (ἅπαντες) wished for a marriage between them for such a union 'would restore the harmony of the republic and be their [*i.e* the Roman people's] salvation' (πάντων πραγμάτων αὐτοῖς σωτηρίαν ἔσσεσθαι καὶ σύγκρασιν, 31.2). As Buszard notes, the use of such vague adjectives (ἅπαντες, αὐτοῖς) emphasises Octavia's political importance.<sup>248</sup> The people see her as their insurance against civil war, as she could bind the two men together with her great beauty, dignity and intelligence (ἐπὶ κάλλει τοσοῦτῳ σεμνότητι καὶ νοῦν, 31.2).

Antony should have considered such a combination of conjugal and public harmony as ideal and indeed, Octavia's entrance introduces the concept of Antony's reason 'fighting' against his desire for the Egyptian queen (ἀλλ' ἔτι τῷ λόγῳ περὶ γε τούτου πρὸς τὸν ἔρωτα τῆς Αἰγυπτίας μαχόμενος, 31.2).<sup>249</sup> Initially, reason wins out. Antony returns to Rome, marries Octavia and re-engages in the political sphere (31.3-33.1). But the re-emergence of Antony's ambitions reinvigorates his irrational nature and he becomes aggravated at constantly being bested by Octavian. Here Cleopatra makes her reappearance, with an Egyptian seer (Plutarch equivocates as to whether the seer spoke truthfully or at the behest of Cleopatra), warning Antony that while his *daimon* would 'prance' (γαῦρος) on its own, it would be humbled and cowed in Octavian's presence (33.2).<sup>250</sup> With yet another equine allusion, Antony decides to depart from Italy, taking Octavia with him as far as Greece, where he shakes off his Roman habits and adopts Greek dress and custom (33.3-4). Plutarch says nothing of the conjugal relationship while in Athens in contrast to Appian who describes Antony enjoying the

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<sup>247</sup> App. *B. Civ.* 6.59. He claimed that Fulvia became ill on account of the anger of Antony, who had left her while she was sick and had not visited her even when he was going away. Plutarch does not reference the emotional relationship between Antony and Fulvia at this point- perhaps to avoid shifting any focus away from Antony's erotic capitulation to Cleopatra.

<sup>248</sup> Buszard (2010) 97.

<sup>249</sup> Beneker (2002) 161. Pelling instead interprets *logos* here to depict his struggle against his *eros* for Cleopatra. But as Beneker argues, 'the most important word is *machomenos*; if Antony is doing battle against *eros*, he must be fighting by means of his reason, whether *logos* names his reason or not.'

<sup>250</sup> Pelling (1988) 207.

Greek atmosphere ‘in the company of Octavia, with whom he was very much in love, being by nature excessively fond of women’ (πολὺς γὰρ καὶ ἐς τήνδε ἐρρῦη, ταχὺς ὢν ἐς ἔρωτας γυναικῶν).<sup>251</sup> Octavia is ostensibly by Antony’s side, yet we hear nothing of what, if any, influence she has over her husband.

At the end of spring, Antony sailed to Tarentum to meet Octavian with the three hundred ships that he had earlier promised as assistance. Octavian however demurred and gave excuses not to meet. At her own request, Antony sends Octavia to her brother in order to convince him to come to Tarentum as originally planned (35.1).<sup>252</sup> Plutarch describes her astutely meeting first with Octavian’s closest advisors, Agrippa and Maecenas, a move which reinforces her *nous*. By mentioning her pregnancy and second daughter (Plutarch employs the diminutive θυγάτριον, 35.1), Octavia is framed as a mother, a device that accords her a measure of maternal authority and perhaps impartiality.<sup>253</sup> Plutarch then relates in indirect speech Octavia’s pleas and copious tears begging Octavian, ‘not to permit her, after being most happy, to become a most wretched woman. For now, all men (ἅπαντας ἀνθρώπους) looked to her as the wife of one emperor and the sister of another’ (35.2). Plutarch then switches to direct discourse:

‘εἰ δὲ τὰ χεῖρω κρατήσκειν,’ ἔφη, ‘καὶ γένοιτο πόλεμος, ὑμῶν μὲν ἄδηλον ὅτω κρατεῖν ἢ κρατεῖσθαι πέπρωται, τὰ ἐμὰ δ’ ἀμφοτέρως ἄθλια. (35.3)

*‘But if the worst should gain the upper hand and there should be war, it is unclear which one of you is destined to conquer or be conquered, but in either case my lot will be one of misery.’*

Although Appian and Cassius Dio also agree that Octavia played an important role at the conference, the expansion of Octavia’s role here is Plutarch’s own creation.<sup>254</sup> Whilst her brief speech implies

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<sup>251</sup> App. *B. Civ.* 5.8.76.

<sup>252</sup> Appian merely remarks that she went to her brother to act as negotiator (*B. Civ.* 5.93).

<sup>253</sup> If Plutarch depicted her here primarily as a sister or wife, she would appear less impartial. But as a mother of (future) Roman citizens, her words represent their (and the Roman people’s) concerns.

<sup>254</sup> App. *B. Civ.* 5.10.93. Appian’s Octavia has no authority and she makes no speech. His scene involves a back and forth between brother and sister in indirect speech, with Octavia refuting many of the charges her brother brings against her husband. Octavian finally agrees to meet after Antony sends assurances that he had not been secretly seeking an alliance with Lepidus.

Cass. Dio 48.54.3. He has the two men hashing out their mutual grievances with each other, but as neither wanted war they became reconciled, ‘chiefly through the instrumentality of Octavia,’ although he does not enumerate how she effected this reconciliation. Octavia’s influence, while useful, was clearly not critical for an agreement in either Appian or Dio’s accounts.



that her misery would be a result of either of the two men she loved being defeated, her invocation of the *populus Romanus* as ἅπαντες, echoing the hopes of ἅπαντες in 31.4, makes it clear that the cause of her misery would be the political and social ramifications of a preventable war. As with Volumnia and Hersilia, Octavia frames her direct speech as an ethical dilemma. As each man theoretically represents Rome as well as being a family member, she cannot take a side for she must remain faithful to both.

While Octavian does not appear particularly invested in the welfare of the people of Rome, he loved his sister (31.2) and so consents to being received and entertained by Antony for her sake (35.4).<sup>255</sup> Like Coriolanus, Octavian's susceptibility to an appeal based on familial considerations blurs the proper boundary between a statesman's public and private emotions.<sup>256</sup> However, as Octavia's speech is a virtuous and knowledgeable response to a potential civic crisis, Octavian's acquiescence is framed as the only acceptable solution, for a refusal would have made war between the two triumvirs a strong possibility. Her intercession resulted in a 'noble spectacle'—Antony's army and Octavian's fleet wait peacefully while the two men met in a friendly manner—an implication that Octavia had prevented war (35.3).

Octavia's subsequent actions reinforce Plutarch's theme that her intercession was one based on virtue and reason. After both men agree to their original deal (Antony receives two legions for his Parthian campaign, Octavian one hundred galleys), Octavia obtains further concessions from each. She negotiates a further twenty light ships for Octavian and an extra thousand soldiers for her husband (35.4). By fortifying the military resources of both men, Octavia strengthens the interests of Rome against its enemies and demonstrates the political virtue and the reasoning abilities that Antony needs in order to control his irrational desires.

Despite the successful outcome at Tarentum, the re-emergence of Antony's ambitions again reinvigorates his passionate nature and his self-restraint falters when the choice between pleasure and civic duty presents itself. Plutarch claims that; 'the evil which had been sleeping for a long time, namely, his desire (ἔρωζ) for Cleopatra, which everyone thought had been charmed away and lulled to rest by better considerations (βελτίοσι λογισμοῖς), blazed up again with renewed courage as he drew near to Syria' (36.1). Here, Plutarch associates Octavia with *logismos*. Her charms and the

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<sup>255</sup> If we take Plutarch's comments regarding the proscriptions into account for example.

<sup>256</sup> Hillard (1983) 11. He notes that a Roman woman's influence on a politician usually served to undermine the credibility of that politician.

political benefits that their marriage offers are the better considerations that he spurns when under the influence of *eros* and Cleopatra.<sup>257</sup> When Antony engages his reasoning faculties, he can recognise the benefits of his Roman marriage. But the pull of his senses and his susceptibility to flattery is stronger than the reason which Octavia represents.

It is no coincidence that in this very chapter Plutarch employs yet more equine imagery by conceptualising Antony's lack of restraint in Platonic terms, claiming that Antony 'like the disobedient and unrestrained beast of the soul (τὸ δυσπειθὲς καὶ ἀκόλαστον τῆς ψυχῆς ὑποζύγιον) of which Plato speaks, spurned all good counsels and sent Fonteius Capito to bring Cleopatra to Syria' (36.1).<sup>258</sup> This reference to the 'chariot allegory' in the *Phaedrus* exemplifies Antony's psychological battle with irrationality and reason.<sup>259</sup> In Plato's allegory, the white horse represents the *thumos*, the black horse the appetitive part of the soul, which are guided by the charioteer who symbolises reason (*to logistikon*).<sup>260</sup> With discipline, Antony should be able to control both his horses and thus attain appropriate self-restraint. However, as we have already seen, Antony has longed to shake off the bridle of restraint and reason in order to pursue pleasure. When he spurns the chance for moral improvement under the guidance of Octavia and instead summons Cleopatra, Antony allows his white horse to follow the black, which means his *thumos*, unchecked by reason, will lead him in a detrimental and aggressive fashion. The allusion to Plato's allegory therefore neatly encapsulates the animalistic struggle between Antony's preference for irrational pleasure over the steadying hand of reason.

Plutarch further explores the dichotomy between Octavia and Cleopatra in the aftermath of Antony's failed Parthian campaign. The war, despite excellent preparation goes badly as a result of Antony's

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<sup>257</sup> Plutarch refers to Antony's possession of and forfeiture of *logismos* repeatedly throughout the Life. He has *logismos* when at war (17.2, 50.3), but loses it when he is under the influence of Cleopatra (14.3, 37.4, 66.4). Late in the narrative, Plutarch notes that Alexas the Laodicean, who had also been Cleopatra's most effective instrument against Antony had managed to overthrow the considerations (ἐν αὐτῷ λογισμῶν) arising in his mind in favour of Octavia (72.2). It is important to note here that Plutarch at times uses *logismos* almost interchangeably with *logos* to denote the rational part of the soul. In the *De virtute morali*, he claims that it is reason (*ho logismos*), which guides the passionate part of the soul (*to pathetikon*, 445b).

<sup>258</sup> Thayer's Greek Lexicon describes ὑπό ζυγόν ὄν, as 'under the yoke,' 'a beast of burden' (so from Theognis, and Herodotus down), which aptly describes the submissiveness of Antony to his passions as well as conveying further animalistic imagery.

<sup>259</sup> Pl. *Phdr.* 253c-257b. Uebersax (2007).

<sup>260</sup> Pl. *Phdr.* 253e-254a. The white horse, joined with temperance and modesty (μετὰ σωφροσύνης τε καὶ αἰδοῦς) and guided by reason (λόγῳ) will restrain himself when the charioteer sees the 'love inspiring vision' (τὸ ἐρωτικὸν ὄμμα). The unruly horse however springs wildly forward forcing the charioteer and the good horse to approach his beloved and propose the joys of love (ἀφροδισίων).

preoccupation with the Egyptian queen. No longer the master of his own reasoning abilities (οὐκ ὄντα τῶν ἑαυτοῦ λογισμῶν), Plutarch claims that he is under the influence of drugs or magic instead (37.4).<sup>261</sup> At his lowest ebb, Antony flees to a small village and sends for Cleopatra, who arrived ‘bringing an abundance of clothing and money for the soldiers’ (51.1-2). But Plutarch qualifies this statement, explaining that ‘some say’ (εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ λέγοντες) that all he received was clothing and that he had to distribute his own money to his troops in her name (51.2).<sup>262</sup> For a ruler with vast resources, it seems unthinkable that Cleopatra would arrive with only clothing for Antony’s starved and bedraggled army.

At the same time, Octavia made it known that she wished to sail to her husband’s side, but Antony orders her to return to Athens.<sup>263</sup> Despite being dismissed, she sends on an impressive assortment of equipment for Antony, including a large quantity of clothing for his soldiers, horses, money, gifts for his officers and friends and two thousand picked soldiers equipped as praetorian cohorts with splendid armour (53.2). Once again, Plutarch has expanded Octavia’s deeds in comparison to the other sources. Appian only describes a troop of Italian horse; Dio, troops and unspecified gifts.<sup>264</sup> In comparison to Cleopatra’s paltry offerings, Octavia’s gifts comprised of the essentials needed for maintaining the loyalty and morale of his staff who had much of their spoils stolen by the Parthians during their march through Asia (48.2).

### **Octavia and the *technai* of knowledge**

Given Plutarch’s employment of the Platonic paradigm of *emperiai* to describe the nature of Cleopatra’s flattery, the reader’s attention is drawn to what seems to be the contrasting practical knowledge (*technai*) of Octavia. While her position as a true craftsman in the Platonic model may be inconclusive, we get a clearer idea of Plutarch’s conception of *techne* in the prologue of the *Demetrius*. He comments on the difference between the the senses (αἰσθήσεις) and the arts (τέχναι),

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<sup>261</sup> When he sends her away, he becomes a different man and is able to defeat the Parthians and employ reasoning (λογισμῶ χρησάμενος, 50.3). See note 236.

<sup>262</sup> Plutarch’s account corresponds with Dio who notes that ‘money also came to him from Cleopatra, so that to each of the infantrymen four hundred sesterces were given and to the rest a proportionate allowance. But inasmuch as the amount sent was not enough for them, he paid the remainder from his own funds, taking the expense upon himself and giving Cleopatra the credit for the favour’ (49.31.4).

<sup>263</sup> Octavia ‘saw through the pretext and was distressed’ (καίπερ ἀχθομένη και νοῦσα τὴν πρόφασιν, 53.2) but Plutarch does not elaborate on what this pretext was. Dio claims that Antony immediately sent Octavia back to Italy so that she might not share his danger while he was fighting the Parthians (48.54.4). Clearly Plutarch has referenced the same tradition as Dio but chooses not to explain Antony’s subterfuge, effectively removing any sympathy the reader may have for Antony’s position, however duplicitous his excuse may have been.

<sup>264</sup> App. *B. Civ.* 5.14.138. Cass. Dio 49.33.4.

noting that while both have the power of making distinctions, they differ in the use to which one puts such distinctions (*Dem.* 1.1). In particular, he claims that *technai* which proceed with the application of reason (τέχναι μετὰ λόγου), select and adopt what is appropriate and avoid and reject what is not (*Dem.*1.2). Hence, the most consummate arts of all in his opinion are temperance, justice, and wisdom (σωφροσύνη καὶ δικαιοσύνη καὶ φρόνησις), since their function is to distinguish between what is good and just from what is bad and unjust (*Dem.* 1.3). Indeed, if we return to the *De virtute morali*, Plutarch divides virtue into the same three categories, claiming that; ‘when (virtue) considers what we must do or avoid, it is called temperance (φρόνησις); when it controls our desires and lays down for them the limitations of moderation and convenience in our pleasures, it is called self-restraint (σωφροσύνη); when it has to do with men's relations to one another and their commercial dealings, it is called justice (δικαιοσύνη).’<sup>265</sup>

In other words, Plutarch considers the *technai* of virtue to be the most important crafts of all. Certainly, Octavia’s exemplary role as a faithful wife despite Antony’s ill-treatment is evidence of her self-restraint, while her practical wisdom and commitment to equity is also evident from her successful negotiations between husband and brother on behalf of the state.<sup>266</sup> While Plutarch only explicitly describes Octavia as intelligent and dignified, the constructed dichotomy between the destructive influence of Cleopatra’s *emperiai* and Octavia’s speech and action combined with the repeated references to Plato’s concepts suggests that Plutarch expects the philosophically-trained reader to regard Octavia as possessing *technai*/practical knowledge. Her actions are not merely due to her *fides* or even innate goodness—she serves Rome and to ‘save’ Antony from himself.<sup>267</sup>

The potential for Antony to recognise and be drawn to virtue is reflected in Cleopatra’s concerted efforts to prevent Octavia having any influence over him. She works on Antony’s irrational side by feigning love sickness (ἐρᾶν αὐτὴ προσεποιεῖτο, 53.3) and employing her flatterers (οἱ κόλακες, 53.4)

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<sup>265</sup> *De virt. mor.* 440f-441a. Trans. adapted from Helmbold (1939).

<sup>266</sup> Of course, he envisaged such arts as the virtues of statesmen, rather than women in a private context. Again in the *De virtute morali*, Plutarch explains that *phronesis* is the virtue of practical reason and when the contemplative aspect of the mind (τὸ θεωρητικός) is occupied in an active relationship with the practical and passionate, *phronesis* comes to subsist in accordance with reason (443f). In addition, Plutarch describes both *sophrosyne* and *dikaiosune* as means of two extremes, the former regulating the desires to a mean between lack of feeling and intemperance and justice distributing to itself in bonds neither more nor less than is due (445a). He adds that the temperate person is one who has harmonised the irrational, blending it with reason and is thus equipped with great persuasion and a wonderful gentleness (446d).

<sup>267</sup> *Dem.* 1.1. Here the arts of virtue are called τελειόταται that is, not only 'most perfect' but also most efficacious in achieving the worthwhile goal (τέλη) of moral improvement. Duff (2004) 274.

to convince him that she was utterly devoted to him alone.<sup>268</sup> In particular, her employees accuse Antony of being unfeeling (ἀπαθῆ, 53.4), again reinforcing Plutarch's constructed link between Antony's irrational mind and his *eros* for Cleopatra (24.1). Her flatterers compare the two women, calling Octavia a politically expedient wife while Cleopatra, a queen in her own right, desired only the private name of Antony's beloved (ἐρωμένην, 53.5), their words 'melting' and enervating' Antony (ἐξέτηξαν καὶ ἀπεθήλυναν, 53.6). Cleopatra continues to work, persuading Antony's man Canidius with large bribes to convince Antony to allow her to remain by his side lest Octavia would again succeed in ending the war (56.2).<sup>269</sup> That such flattery was persuasive demonstrates how Antony's irrational emotions have taken over any considerations he may have had for his public role. Consequently, he turns his mind to a definitive break with Octavian (53.6).

Octavia, as commanded, returns home to Rome and continues to work private channels of patronage on Antony's behalf, caring for all of his children (including those he had with Fulvia) in 'a noble and magnificent manner' (54.2). Octavian orders her to leave Antony's house but she refuses, telling him that she will remain since it would be a terrible thing to plunge Rome into a civil war on account of Antony's passion (ἔρωτα) and Octavian's resentment on behalf of his sister (54.1), once again putting the welfare of the state before familial considerations. Nevertheless, just a few lines after her initial refusal, Antony finally orders Octavia to quit his house. She is described 'in tears of distress that she would be regarded as one of the causes of the war,' repeating the theme of both her speech and indirect discourse to her brother (57.2). Octavia's focus on helping Antony construct a career based on the common good have been superseded by Cleopatra's *empeiriai* and his new state based on the principles of pleasure. Rome and *logos* have been left behind.

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<sup>268</sup> Kostuch (2014) 11. When Cleopatra feigned fatal infatuation in Antony, she was using the knowledge of the symptoms of love described earlier by Sappho and many poets following her. The symptoms were: an impression that death was imminent, anxiety, obsessive thoughts, hazy gaze, a listless look, loss of beauty, paleness, weakness and tearfulness: Sapph. *frag.* 31; Theoc. *Id.* 2; Apoll. *Rhod.* 3. 287, 446-457, 761-765, 1016, 1152.

<sup>269</sup> Later in the narrative, Plutarch describes one of Antony's friends as Cleopatra's most effective instrument against Antony, who had overthrown the considerations arising in his mind (ἐν αὐτῷ λογισμῶν, 72.2) in favour of Octavia.

## Cleopatra Ascendant

With Octavia removed from Antony's life, the effects of his irrational desire for Cleopatra dominate him in a way that now compromises him publicly. Plutarch enumerates the proof of Antony's weakness, including the rubbing of Cleopatra's feet in public, helping to carry her litter, reading her love letters instead of dispensing justice and ordering the Ephesians to salute her as mistress (59.1). While he adds that most of these charges were false, in listing them regardless, Plutarch recycles Roman gossip in order to reinforce Antony's intellectual and emotional capitulation. Firmly holding the upper hand, Cleopatra cultivates her *hubris*, with her next two episodes of speech directly illustrating this theme. The Egyptian queen was suspicious that Geminius, one of Antony's friends, was acting in the interests of Octavia rather than hers (59.2). When publicly asked what his purpose was at Antony's headquarters, he declared that it was his duty to tell Antony that the only way that the situation could be improved was if Cleopatra would be sent back to Egypt. At this statement, Antony grew angry but said nothing. It is Cleopatra who speaks for both of them:

‘καλῶς,’ ἔφη, ‘πεποίηκας, ὃ Γεμίνιε, τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἄνευ βασάνων ἐξομολογησάμενος.’  
(59.3)

*‘You have done well, Geminius, to confess the truth without being put to the torture.’*

She displays her *hubris* in threatening to torture a Roman citizen but significantly, since she does not actually protest the accuracy of his words, she implicitly acknowledges that she is leading Antony towards his downfall.<sup>270</sup> Antony's lack of response underlines his submissive position in the partnership. Furthermore, Cleopatra drives home her advantage by having her flatterers (οἱ Κλεοπάτρας κόλακες, 59.3) drive away the remainder of Antony's Roman friends who could not accept the sophistry and decadence of the Alexandrian court, removing any vestiges of reason and Roman loyalty from Antony's circle. War is now all but certain.

When hostilities between Antony and Octavian finally commence, Octavian gains the advantage over Antony's forces by occupying a strategic position at Toruné (meaning ladle). Antony and his friends were worried, but Cleopatra in a jeering tone (σκώπτουσα) asks them:

‘τί δεινόν,’ ἔλεγεν, ‘εἰ Καῖσαρ ἐπὶ τορύνῃ κάθηται;’ (62.3)

*‘What's so terrible if Caesar sits upon a ladle?’*

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<sup>270</sup> Beneker (2002) 166.

Cleopatra's *hubris* (ladle was also slang for penis) is such that she completely underestimates Octavian's position.<sup>271</sup> Unfortunately, her control of Antony meant that she now dictated his military strategy. As Plutarch earlier noted, when left to his own devices, Antony was still capable of brilliant generalship. In this instance, he considered his forces to be far superior on land. But he decided to let his navy lead, to please Cleopatra. He was now, 'an appendage of the woman' (62.1) and just as the soul of a lover (τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ ἐρῶντος) lives in another's body, he followed Cleopatra 'as if he had become incorporate with her' (66.4). Here, Plutarch foreshadows the defeat that is surely to come as a result of her authority. The guidance that he has been seeking his whole life has culminated in the false, irrational leadership of Cleopatra. This in consequence has rendered him blind to reason, the strength of his military resources and the loyalty and affection of his men (68.2-3).

### **The Death of Eros**

After being soundly defeated at Actium, Antony prepares to defend Alexandria but after a series of desertions claims betrayal at Cleopatra's hands.<sup>272</sup> Fearing his anger, Cleopatra flees to her mausoleum and sends a message to Antony claiming that she is dead (76.2). Once again believing Cleopatra's sophistry, Antony asks his freedman Eros to kill him, but, unable to do so, Eros kills himself.<sup>273</sup> Antony thanks his dead freedman for teaching (διδάσκεις) him what he needed to do and turns the sword on himself, yet botches the job and is summoned to Cleopatra's tomb (76.5). Plutarch's characterisation of the Greek freedman as a virtual moral mirror of Antony reinforces his central theme that *eros* was Antony's most influential and destructive teacher. Despite the realisation that Cleopatra had again betrayed him, Antony was still eager (προθύμως, 77.1) to be reunited with her and die in her arms. Devoid of reason, Antony surrenders to *eros* and dies without addressing or redeeming his major ethical flaws.

With Antony's suicide and the figurative death of Eros, we find a dramatic shift in Plutarch's presentation of Cleopatra. She had tried to engineer Antony's suicide, but when he arrives mortally wounded at the doors of her mausoleum, Plutarch comments that there was never a more piteous sight than that of the queen and her women struggling to hoist a bloody and imploring Antony inside (77.2). Once reunited, Cleopatra tears her clothes and breasts, calling Antony master, husband, and imperator; 'indeed, she almost forgot her own ills in her pity for his' (77.3), emotional detail that is

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<sup>271</sup> Goldsworthy (2010) 415.

<sup>272</sup> Cass. Dio 51.10.4 is explicit; Cleopatra caused the desertion of the navy.

<sup>273</sup> Plutarch has elaborated on other sources. Cass. Dio 51.10.7 merely describes the freedman as 'one of those present.'

completely absent from Dio's account.<sup>274</sup> The *Realpolitik* of Cleopatra's earlier machinations seems to have been replaced by true conjugal *eros*. No longer perfumed, decadent and spouting flattery, Cleopatra is dirty, disheveled and authentic in her grief. In fact, her reaction to the invasion of the mausoleum by Octavian's entourage is to try and stab herself, confirming her very real distress (79.2).

Antony's death amid such a touching and private scene should theoretically draw the narrative to a close. The protagonist is dead and the devastating effects of his ethical weaknesses are readily apparent. But Plutarch continues the narrative for another ten chapters with the focus now entirely on Cleopatra, representing her as a grieving, yet still cunning wife.<sup>275</sup> Her mourning lacerations are so deep that they bring on a fever. Plutarch claims that Cleopatra welcomed anything that might bring about her death, but Octavian's threats towards her children caused her to regain her health (82.2). This is the first time that Plutarch mentions her maternal status in such a sympathetic context, which now places Octavian in the role of antagonist, a role occupied up to this point by the Egyptian queen. When Octavian comes to visit her upon her sickbed, Cleopatra's *emperiai* again come to the fore. Where pomp and dazzling effects once served her well, she now uses her new role as a grieving and broken wife in order to flatter and persuade (83.1).

During their interview, Octavian refutes Cleopatra's arguments that she had only acted out of fear of Antony, at which she immediately changes her tone and seeks to arouse his pity via prayers 'as one who above all things clung to life' (83.2). Octavian, who expected a suicidal and desperate woman, finds himself being played by an experienced showman who persuades him that she will do anything to save herself. This gambit was successful, for when her steward Seleucus denies that the list of possessions that she gave to Octavian was in fact a complete inventory, Cleopatra assaults him. She then turns to Octavian and claims:

‘ἀλλ’ οὐ δεινόν,’ ὦ Καῖσαρ, εἰ σὺ μὲν ἠξιώσας ἀφικέσθαι πρὸς ἐμὲ καὶ προσειπεῖν οὕτω πράττουσαν, οἱ δὲ δοῦλοί μου κατηγοροῦσιν εἶ τι τῶν γυναικείων ἀπεθέμην, οὐκ ἐμαυτῆ δῆπουθεν, ἢ τάλαινα, κόσμον, ἀλλ’ ὅπως Ὀκταουία καὶ Λιβία τῆ σῆ μικρὰ δοῦσα δι ἐκείνων ἴλεώ σου τύχοιμι καὶ πραοτέρου;’ (83.4)

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<sup>274</sup> Cass. Dio 51.10. He only notes that once Antony has discovered that Cleopatra was still alive, he had bystanders carry him to her mausoleum and to hoist him up by the ropes that were hanging there to lift the stone blocks; there is no mention of her reaction.

<sup>275</sup> Antony's burial is only briefly mentioned at 82.1, in contrast to Cleopatra's theatrical suicide scene that spans 85.1-86.4.



*'But is it not a terrible thing, O Caesar, that when you have deemed it worthy to come to me and speak to me despite being in this way, my slaves accuse me of laying aside some of my feminine trifles—not for myself, indeed, wretched woman that I am—but in order that I may make some small gifts to Octavia and your Livia, and through their graciousness I might happen to find you more gentle?'*

Cleopatra gives the appearance of wishing to recede back into the private sphere. Instead of blaming her blatant asset hiding on her desire to protect her realm and position, she claims that she undertook such actions only to smooth over any private communication she may have with Octavian's female family. This in itself was an appropriate course of action for a Roman woman and in fact, she echoes Octavia's earlier speech to her brother. Octavia claimed that her misery (ἄθλια) could only be alleviated by friendship between the two men. Cleopatra hopes that her wretched state (τάλαινα) can be alleviated by the friendship of the two Roman women. Octavian is pleased with the answer and leaves her 'supposing that he had deceived her, but rather deceived by her' (83.5).

Cleopatra's persuasive performance seems to correspond with her earlier behaviour which questions the authenticity of her grief. In Dio's version of events, Cleopatra's artfully arranged demeanour and flattery were aimed at inflaming Octavian's passions so that she could retain her royal rank and dignity.<sup>276</sup> She tells Octavian that she no longer wants to live to arouse his pity, but only after suspecting his real motive (taking her to Rome to feature in his triumph) does she actually conceive a real desire to die.<sup>277</sup> Plutarch's treatment of the scene is far less cynical as his Cleopatra is suicidal from the point of Antony's death. Her deceitful performance is designed to remove Octavian's ever constant guard so that she can fulfil her plan to join Antony in death. While her persuasive performance is entirely in keeping with her earlier characterisation, her motives have now changed entirely.

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<sup>276</sup> Cass. Dio 51.12.

<sup>277</sup> Cass. Dio 51.12-13.

### Cleopatra's Lament: True conjugal eros

Thanks to her successful meeting with Octavian, Cleopatra receives ready permission to pour libations for Antony at his tomb. At his urn, she delivers her last and longest speech:

‘ὦ φίλε Ἀντώνιε,’ εἶπεν, ‘ἔθαπτον μὲν δε πρώην ἔτι χερσὶν ἐλευθέραις, σπένδω δὲ νῦν αἰχμάλωτος οὖσα, καὶ φρουρουμένη μήτε κοπετοῖς μήτε θρήνοις αἰκίσασθαι τὸ δοῦλον τοῦτο σῶμα καὶ τηρούμενον ἐπὶ τοὺς κατὰ σοῦ θριάμβους. ἄλλας δὲ μὴ προσδέχου τιμὰς ἢ χοάς: ἀλλ’ αὐταῖ σοι τελευταῖαι Κλεοπάτρας ἀγομένης. ζῶντας μὲν γὰρ ἡμᾶς οὐθὲν ἀλλήλων διέστησε, κινδυνεύομεν δὲ τῷ θανάτῳ διαμείψασθαι τοὺς τόπους: σὺ μὲν ὁ Ῥωμαῖος ἐνταῦθα κείμενος, ἐγὼ δ’ ἡ δύστηνος ἐν Ἰταλία, τοσοῦτο τῆς σῆς μεταλαβοῦσα χώρας μόνον. ἀλλ’ εἰ δὴ τις τῶν ἐκεῖ θεῶν ἀλκὴ καὶ δύναμις ‘οἱ γὰρ ἐνταῦθα προὔδωκαν ἡμᾶς’, μὴ πρόη ζῶσαν τὴν σεαυτοῦ γυναῖκα, μηδ’ ἐν ἐμοὶ περιῖδης θριαμβευόμενον σεαυτόν, ἀλλ’ ἐνταῦθά με κρύψον μετὰ σεαυτοῦ καὶ σύνθαπον, ὡς ἐμοὶ μυρίων κακῶν ὄντων οὐδὲν οὕτω μέγα καὶ δεινὸν ἔστιν ὡς ὁ βραχὺς οὗτος χρόνος ὄν σοῦ χωρὶς ἔζηκα.’ (84.2-84.4)

*‘O beloved Antony, I buried you recently with hands still free; however, now I pour libations for you as a prisoner, and so watched over that I cannot disfigure this body with fists or tears-a slave's body- and closely watched that it may adorn the triumph over you. Do not expect other honours or libations; these are the last to you from Cleopatra the captive. For though in life nothing could separate us, in death we are likely to exchange places; you, the Roman, lie here, while I, the wretched woman, lie in Italy, gaining only so much of your country as my portion. But if indeed there is any strength or power in the gods of that place (for the gods here have abandoned us), do not desert your wife while she lives, nor allow a triumph to be celebrated over you in my person, but hide and bury me here with you, since out of all my countless evils not one is as great and dreadful as this short time that I have lived apart from you.’*

Primarily, Cleopatra's lament indicates a dramatic shift from the public theatricality and role-play of her previous relationship with Antony to a private, rather humble affair. She speaks of burying him with her own hands and although her female attendants are present (84.2), they do not join her in a chorus of lamentation. The spotlight is on Cleopatra alone. Significantly, she claims that she is Antony's wife (σεαυτοῦ γυναῖκα). Such a speech of a wife mourning her husband whilst surrounded by women is a recognisable tragic construct; the invocation of Antony (μὴ πρόη ζῶσαν τὴν σεαυτοῦ γυναῖκα) evokes a tragic scene while Pelling notes that there was often an intrusion of wedding (no

longer a mistress but now a wife) and funeral imagery in tragedy.<sup>278</sup> The speech itself follows what Dué describes as the standard format for a formal lament—namely that a lament opens with a direct address (ὦ φίλε Αντώνιε), followed by a narrative of the past or future, and closing with a renewed address accompanied by further expressions of grief.<sup>279</sup> Usually, a traditional lament includes a refrain or complaint to the dead man, but Plutarch does not include any such reproach, nor perhaps surprisingly any vows for vengeance.<sup>280</sup> Also, Cleopatra does not linger over Antony's sterling qualities as one might expect, but instead speaks of herself and her present and future predicament as a captive.<sup>281</sup> She claims a reversal of position, noting that while Antony is buried in Egypt, she is likely to be buried in Rome and while they were inseparable in life as the Inimitable Livers, their society of Partners in Death seems likely to be dissolved as a result of her captivity.

Her wish to be together in death as they were in life may perhaps appear disingenuous since she was willing earlier to abandon Antony and let him die alone. However, her authentic distress at her mausoleum appears to have been a defining moment for the Egyptian queen. Her closing words proclaim that the worst of all her calamities has been the short time separated from her husband, echoing Antony's earlier declaration that Cleopatra's apparent death had taken away his only remaining excuse for clinging to life (76.3). Cleopatra does not wish to be led in triumph, but Plutarch softens the tone by applying the verb θριαμβευόμενον to Antony in the passive rather than having Cleopatra speak of her desires in the active voice.<sup>282</sup> Almost as a delayed answer to Antony's final advice that she should try anything to save herself without disgrace (77.4), Cleopatra now seeks his support and guidance so that they may be buried together (σύνθαψον), just as they were Partners in Death (συναποθανουμένων, 71.3). She not only relinquishes her role as Antony's instructor, she also acknowledges that her proper place as a wife is under her husband's instruction, even after his death.

Through her lament, Plutarch has neutralised Cleopatra. The shift in tone, from censure to sympathy suggests that Plutarch wanted to refocus his treatment of *eros* from a negative to a more optimistic representation. She is no longer dangerous, not merely because she is politically and physically

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<sup>278</sup> Pelling (1988) 317-318. He links the invocation passage with tragic scenes, especially Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*.

<sup>279</sup> Dué (2006) 9-10. Pilarski (2006) 7.

<sup>280</sup> As Dido does regarding Aeneas for example (*Aen.* 4.607-29). As Alexiou (1974) 134 claims, there is no example of a lament in Greek antiquity which has lost all traces of refrain. As Pelling (1988) 317, observes, this is one.

<sup>281</sup> Pelling (1988) 317.

<sup>282</sup> Gurval (2011) 71. Pelling (1988) 317. Note Livy *fr.* 54 (133) has Cleopatra claiming that 'I will not be led in triumph' (οὐ θριαμβεύσομαι). Volumnia's phrasing however (ἐπόψομαι θριαμβευόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν πολιτῶν, *Cor.* 35.3) parallels Cleopatra.

powerless, but because she authentically submits to true conjugal *eros* and abandons the artifice and flattery that she utilised throughout the narrative. This scene is the real ethical climax of the biography rather than the death of Antony, for Antony learnt nothing except that he was a subject to *eros*. As Pelling notes, no other source contains such an extended lament by Cleopatra, thus it is fair to assume that the speech is Plutarch's invention.<sup>283</sup> As the length of the speech and its recognisably standardised nature, with its ring composition, antitheses and chiasmas, contrasts the earlier examples of Cleopatra's much shorter and informal direct discourse, we can also assume that Plutarch constructed her lament in this way in order to draw attention, both to the tragedy of the scene and also to Cleopatra's final emotional capitulation to Antony.

Plutarch's precept in the *Amatorius* that; 'to love in the confines of marriage (ἐρᾶν ἐν γάμῳ) is a far greater blessing than to be beloved (ἐρᾶσθαι), since it preserves and keeps people from falling into many errors,' encapsulates the potential of both Antony and Cleopatra.<sup>284</sup> If Antony had submitted to a true conjugal partnership with Octavia, or had Cleopatra played the proper role of a wife rather than the sensual flatterer, the outcome for all involved (and Rome) could have been different. The theatrical nature of the lament, positioned at the close of the *Antony* therefore offers an appropriate context in which Cleopatra can deliver a positive ethical performance. The language of lament effectively manipulates the reader, inducing sympathy just as it simultaneously neutralises her dangerous speech.<sup>285</sup> There is no immediate purpose or expected outcome to her words. Rather, her speech reveals her new emotional state, one that re-categorises Cleopatra from a dangerous *femme fatale* to a grieving wife. Her decision to kill herself and hence be reunited with her husband rather than ending her days as a disgraced Roman slave is tragic rather than futile, reinforcing Plutarch's belief that virtue can indeed be learned. As a result, Cleopatra's theatrical and triumphant suicide is a fitting end to the *Antony*, an act that completely overshadows the demise of her husband.

It is also worth considering that Plutarch's change of tone from censure to sympathy perhaps finds its roots in his source material, especially Horace, who shifts from describing Cleopatra in *Ode* 3.7 as a *fatale monstrum* to a *ferocior mulier*, unwilling to be led in triumph.<sup>286</sup> The accounts of Dellius,

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<sup>283</sup> Pelling (1988) 316.

<sup>284</sup> *Amat.* 769e.

<sup>285</sup> Dué (2006) 9.

<sup>286</sup> Hor. *Carm.* 3.7. Luce (1963) sees the phrase '*fatale monstrum*' as a pivotal point of *Ode* 3.7. Where before she was characterised as a dangerous siren, after this phrase, she receives plaudits for her Stoic resolution and courage. He contends that Horace's use of *monstrum* was not necessarily a term of opprobrium but rather as a way of signaling the complexities and contradictions in her character and career (253), a viewpoint that applies equally to Plutarch's presentation of Cleopatra in

Olympos and Augustus may have preserved the tinge of admiration felt for the Egyptian queen's manner of death, in particular its association with the Roman conception of the 'good' social suicide.<sup>287</sup> Certainly her intentions in Dio, Plutarch and Florus are presented as a political statement against Octavian.<sup>288</sup> But at the same time, Plutarch's change in attitude, from hostility to sympathy is the most complex and nuanced of the differing accounts. With the Roman paternalistic structure reaffirmed with Octavian's victory, Plutarch, as a Greek watching the ever-constant march of Roman hegemony over the Mediterranean, perhaps also identifies with Cleopatra's defeat.<sup>289</sup> His post-colonial stance, in addition to his acceptance of eye-witness material and his ethical focus on *eros* may explain why his account is the most sympathetic regarding Cleopatra's last days.

## Conclusion

The portrayal of the speech and action of the women in the *Antony* is complex. Plutarch constructs multiple dichotomies that are illustrated through Platonic allusions and personified by women: the battle between Antony's reason and desire; Roman self-restraint versus Eastern decadence; flattery versus knowledge and civic duty versus selfish pleasure. As Antony lacks restraint, his private life (as with Coriolanus) infects his public *persona*. As such, the consummate arts of temperance, justice, and wisdom that Plutarch outlined in the *Demetrius* are beyond Antony's reach. It is the teachers that he rejects (Julia and Octavia) who possess the traits that he lacks. And although the women of the *Life* do not interact with one another, Plutarch's characterisation of each woman's speech synergistically reinforces Antony's ethical weaknesses.

Initially, Octavia's speech in defence of civic harmony appears to be similar in context to that of Volumnia. However, it is Julia's utilisation of maternal authority and defence of communal decency that has a more marked resemblance to the speech of Coriolanus' mother. Instead Octavia's personal sacrifices and intercession on behalf of the community have more in common with Hersilia's selfless intervention, which is all the more striking given that Octavia's *fides* and proffered conjugal partnership can be seen as a direct result of Hersilia and Romulus' civic deeds. In rejecting a proper and virtuous Roman marriage, Antony also rejects mental and civic harmony for the adept flattery

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the last ten chapters. However, as above, Plutarch has softened Cleopatra's speech; she is unwilling to be a participant in a triumph over Antony rather than being unwilling to be personally triumphed over.

<sup>287</sup> Eli (2006) 3. The suicide of the public figure, such as the general or the senator, was an act that affirmed one's own status and control and 'the right to choose a death worthy of a free man.'

<sup>288</sup> Cass. Dio 51.14.6. Flor. 2.21.10-11.

<sup>289</sup> Luce (1963) 254. He notes that in the poetry and propaganda of the period, the struggle against Antony and Cleopatra was represented as an 'ideological conflict between barbarism and civilisation, East and West.' Plutarch, as a Greek, may have viewed this slightly differently.

and manipulation of a non-Roman woman, whose own *hubris* and desire for dominance steers both herself and Antony—Plato’s unrestrained horse—to a tragic conclusion. Thus, as in the *Coriolanus*, female speech serves to highlight the negative aspects of the protagonist’s moral character. Significantly, the inclusion of contrasting female voices also corresponds with Antony’s fractured psychology, for Cleopatra and Octavia represent his potential for vice and virtue respectively. In fact, just as Plutarch wished for his biographies to act as an ethical mirror for his audience, Julia, Octavia and Cleopatra act as intratextual ethical mirrors for Antony’s own self-reflection. The fact that his life choices were negative rests upon his exercise of free will rather than on an irredeemable nature. Antony’s lack of true understanding upon his death compared to Cleopatra’s slip into authentic acquiescence and lament heightens the sense of tragedy and opportunity lost.

### Chapter 3: The Andromache Model: Supportive Wives and Lamentation

*'Nature has endowed women with a charming face, a persuasive voice, a seductive physical beauty and has thus given the dissolute (ἀκολάστῳ) woman great advantages for the beguilement of pleasure, but for the restrained (σώφρονι), great resources also to gain the goodwill (εὐνοίαν) and friendship (φιλίαν) of her husband.'* Plutarch, *Amatorius* 769c-d.<sup>290</sup>

The previous chapters have focused on the public and political effects of female speech, either through public discourse or private channels. This chapter will focus on the intimate speeches of the wives Cornelia, Porcia and Licinia in the *Lives of Pompey, Brutus and Gaius Gracchus*. The shift of emphasis from public to private worlds means that the direct discourse of the Roman wives is less crucial to the ethical framework of their *Lives* than those of the women of the *Romulus, Coriolanus* and *Antony*. Nevertheless, their speech still plays an important, dramatic role in focusing the reader on the ethical issues and authorial anxieties within each biography.

In the *Romulus*, Plutarch presented the abduction and subsequent marriage of the Sabine women as a just act, one that joined two peoples together in harmony (*Comp.* 6.2-4). The concept of the duality of marriage—ostensibly a private relationship but one that has public ramifications—was also briefly touched on in the *Antony*, where the positive effects of Antony's marriage with Octavia were manifest, despite his rejection of reason and the core Roman values that Hersilia and Romulus inspired. If we turn to the *Moralia*, we find that Plutarch's thoughts regarding the conjugal relationship were complex and well developed, blending Aristotelian and Platonic principles. In the *De virtute morali*, he writes:

*'When a morally good man has married a woman according to custom and intends to be attentive to her and be with her justly and temperately (δικαίως καὶ σωφρόνως), in time, when association has produced a passion, he perceives that loving and affection (τὸ φιλεῖν) are being developed by his reason (τῷ λογισμῷ)... The same thing happens also with respect to good rulers in cities and neighbours and relatives by marriage; for having begun to associate dutifully with one another on account of some need, later without noticing it they are carried toward loving (τὸ φιλεῖν), with reason drawing them along and aiding in the persuasion of the passionate part (448d-f).'<sup>291</sup>*

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<sup>290</sup> Trans. Barberà (2007).

<sup>291</sup> Trans. Beneker (2012) 25.

The same vocabulary of reason and restraint of passion that encapsulates Plutarch's conception of individual moral virtue therefore also applies to the conjugal partnership. The τὸ φιλεῖν which Plutarch describes as the result of a harmonious marriage can be related back to Aristotle's concept in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, in that the friendship of marriage (τῆ φιλία) may be based on the loving of each partner's virtue, rather than mere utility or pleasure.<sup>292</sup> However, Plutarch also ascribes to the Platonic view that *eros* is an emotion, bred by kindness and habit into a good disposition.<sup>293</sup> The principle of reciprocal kindness effectively collapses the opposition between *philia* and *aphrodisia* since both elements combined with kindness contribute to a true and virtuous partnership.<sup>294</sup> Thus the benefits of such a union represent both public and private virtue for each spouse becomes more honest, brave and virtuous as a result of true partnership.<sup>295</sup> As we shall see, Plutarch's composite view of the ethical dimensions of marriage is reflected in how he treats the spoken interaction in the three relationships where the wife has a speaking role.

Aside from the ethical implications of wifely speech, Buszard has outlined parallels between Andromache's address to Hektor in the *Iliad* and Cornelia, Porcia and Licinia's speeches to their husbands.<sup>296</sup> Delivered before Hektor's departure to the battlefield, Andromache's speech focuses the narrative on the deeds of her husband. From Hektor's point of view, Andromache's anticipatory grief at his death and her ensuing misery can be interpreted as a memorial to his own imperishable glory.<sup>297</sup> The Homeric precursor is understandable considering the tragic and epic modelling examined in the previous chapters. Given Plutarch's ethical emphasis, such wifely lament and anxiety looks back to the past rather than the future by dramatising the ethical chain of events that leads to crisis and its resolution. Simultaneously, the use of Andromache as a model for the Roman women's speech encourages the reader to view their actions through a classical Greek lens, for her lament is an illustration of the marital ideal in which the wife is utterly devoted to her husband. However,

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<sup>292</sup> Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1162a.1-20.

<sup>293</sup> Beneker (2012) 27, 31: 'Plato discusses the intersection of *eros* and *philia* in a marital context, but not in a way that provides Plutarch with the full foundation for his conclusions. He is still very much dependent on Aristotle for his notion of friendship as a 'state of affairs' between spouses, though Platonic ideas continue to shape his view.' Plut. *Amat.* 676b: 'The mutual kindness called conjugal, which is intermixed by time and custom with necessity. But in that wedlock which love supports and inspires, in the first place, as in Plato's *Commonwealth*, there will be no such language as 'yours' and 'mine.'

<sup>294</sup> Brenk (1988) 460.

<sup>295</sup> Lucchesi (2013) 214.

<sup>296</sup> Hom. *Il.* 6.407-39. Buszard (2010). He finds four speeches in the *Lives* that ascribe to the Andromache model; the other being Aristomache's intercession between her brother, Dion, and his estranged wife (*Dion* 51.1-5).

<sup>297</sup> Perkell (2008) 93.



Plutarch's interest in the civic virtue of women means that he subverts and adapts the Andromache model in order to better display his wives' relative Roman virtue.

### ***The Life of Pompey***

The *Pompey* is a biography tinged with authorial regret. Unlike Antony, whose self-destruction was a drawn out affair, Plutarch views Pompey as a man who reached the pinnacle of statesmanship only to weaken himself in the latter stages of his career, in part due to his last two marriages. As with Antony and Coriolanus, Plutarch saw Pompey's decline as a result of his lack of self-restraint and wisdom in his private life. However, while the domestic behaviour of Coriolanus and Antony was recognisably detrimental, Pompey's personal life was technically virtuous. The Roman people adored him, his later wives loved him and even at the bleakest hour when he abandoned Rome, Plutarch claims that, 'Pompey was a man to be envied for the universal good will (εὐνοίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων) felt towards him, because, though many blamed his generalship, there was no-one who hated him' (61.4). Pompey's decline was not due to any fundamental moral flaws. Rather, Plutarch reserves his criticism for the private faults that affected his political virtue, utilising examples from Pompey's private life and later marriages to illustrate his growing disengagement from public life and subsequent failure as a statesman.<sup>298</sup>

Plutarch's biography is our most comprehensive account of the great general's life, preserving many incidents and details that occur in no other extant works. He was obviously interested in Pompey as an ethical case study; the man appears seventeen times as both a positive and negative *exemplum* in the *Moralia*, while he plays a role in nearly half of all the Roman *Lives*.<sup>299</sup> In fact, Pelling convincingly argues that the *Lives* of Crassus, Caesar, Cato, Brutus, Antony and Pompey were written as a single project and more or less based on the same pool of source material.<sup>300</sup> Plutarch directly cites Pompey's contemporaries Caesar, Cicero, Pollio and Posidonius and indicates knowledge of Pompey's personal historian, Theophanes, in the narrative.<sup>301</sup> It is also clear from the traditions preserved in the later material of Appian, Dio Cassius and Florus that Plutarch was at least aware of both pro and anti-Pompeian source material.<sup>302</sup> Significantly, the shadow of Alexander the Great, in

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<sup>298</sup> Jacobs (2011) 255.

<sup>299</sup> Jacobs (2011) 244. Pompey in the *Moralia*: *De cap. ex in.* 89e, 91a; *De fort. Rom.* 319d, 319e, 324a; *Symposiacs* 8.717e, 9.737b; *De sera* 553b; *De Alex. fort.* 336e; *Maxime* 779a; *Prae. ger. reip.* 804d, 805c, 809a-b, 810c, 815e-f; *An seni.* 785f-786a, 791a. Pompey plays a role in the *Lives* of Sulla, Sertorius, Lucullus, Crassus, Caesar, Cicero, Brutus, Antony.

<sup>300</sup> Pelling (1979) 47-96.

<sup>301</sup> Caesar: 68.3, 69.5; Cicero: 42.7, 63.1, 64.4; Pollio: 72.3; Theophanes: 37.2; Posidonius: 42.5.

<sup>302</sup> de Wet (1990) 119.

many ways Plutarch's ideal statesman, looms large in the biography. As Alexander was paired with Pompey's rival Caesar, Pompey's weaknesses in comparison to these two men are amplified.<sup>303</sup>

Pompey's public life began well. His father Pompeius Strabo was universally hated, but Pompey was loved for his modest way of life (σωφροσύνη περὶ δίαιταν), his persuasive speech (πιθανότης λόγου), his trustworthy character (πίστις ἤθους) and for his skill of giving without arrogance and receiving with dignity (1.3)—all attributes of the ideal statesman. This flattering portrait of the younger man is reinforced through Plutarch's careful selection of his source material. Pompey's loyalty to Sulla is stressed in the early chapters and Plutarch warns the reader to be cautious of accounts that portrayed Pompey as acting with unnatural cruelty towards Sulla's enemies (10.4-5).<sup>304</sup> Furthermore, Plutarch's presentation of Pompey's involvement in war against Sertorius and the death of the father of the tyrannicide Brutus seems to follow a pro-Pompeian tradition, having more in common with the eulogising reports of Sallust, Cicero and Lucan despite conflicting accounts in Florus, Valerius Maximus, Livy and Appian (all source material with which Plutarch was familiar).<sup>305</sup>

Regarding Pompey's acclaimed surname of 'Magnus,' Plutarch observes that the Romans did not bestow such titles merely as a reward for *virtus*, but as a reward for those who truly embodied the virtues of statesmanship (13.6). Indeed, Plutarch presents Pompey's burning of potentially incriminating letters in Sertorius' possession after his victory in Spain as being in the interests of political stability (20.3), while his repatriation of captured Cilician pirates to cities was a deed aimed at civilising their vices and savagery (28.3). In other words, the general was concerned not merely with military outcomes and glory, but with a greater social good. Through this careful selection of positive source material, Plutarch constantly reinforces Pompey's political virtue.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> Plutarch describes his physical resemblance to Alexander. However, 'since many also applied the name to him in his earlier years, Pompey did not decline it, so that presently some called him Alexander in derision' (2.2).

<sup>304</sup> His involvement in the murders of Carbo and Ahenobarbus are framed as an example of Pompey acting under instruction and Plutarch comments that despite being 'compelled to punish those enemies of Sulla who were most eminent, and whose capture was notorious; as to the rest, he suffered as many as possible to escape detection, and even helped to send some out of the country' (10.5).

<sup>305</sup> De Wet (1990) 122-124. He comments that such anti-Pompeian views also preserved by Valerius Maximus must have been known to Plutarch as he quotes him as a source in the *Life of Brutus*. For Brutus the Elder: Flor. 3.23/2.11.1; Val. Max: 6.2.8; Sertorius: Flor. 2.10.9; Livy *Per.* 91-96; App. *B. Civ.* 1.13.109-115; Sall. *Ep. Cn. Pomp. Ad Sen.* 4-10; Cic. *Leg. Man.* 10.28, 11.30; Luc. *Phars.* 7.15-17.

<sup>306</sup> His temperate way of living: 2.5-6, 18.2; military skills: 6.3-7.3, 8.2, 11.2, 12.1, 12.3-5, 18.1, 20.3, 21.1-2, 26.3-4, 28.2, 32.6-7, 33.1-2, 34.5, 35.2-3, his trustworthy nature: 6.2-4, 11.1, 13.1, 15.3, persuasive manner: 13.1, 21.3-4, 33.4-5.

### **The Ethical Framework of the Pompey: *eros* and self-control**

Essentially, the *Pompey* is a biography of two contrasting halves. While Pompey is initially loyal, dignified, restrained and courageous, the lack of control of his private desires eventually comes to negatively affect him. This crucial issue is outlined early with a series of three anecdotes. The first details his relationship with the beautiful courtesan Flora, who rejects the overtures of Pompey's friend Geminius due to her ongoing relationship with Pompey. Geminius approaches Pompey who immediately turns Flora over to his friend, severing their intimate relationship 'although he seemed to be captivated by her' (ἐρᾶν δοκοῦντα, 2.3). This relationship appears to have been based on genuine feeling rather than a professional one. Plutarch describes Flora as 'sick for a long time with grief and longing' at their rupture, underscoring Pompey's remarkable self-restraint. However, the description of Pompey leaving his bite marks on Flora dents his appearance of dignity (τὸ σεμνὸν, 1.3), revealing a passionate side to his character.<sup>307</sup> The incident introduces another facet of Pompey's characterisation: his generosity towards his friends. While his self-control ought to be admired, the severing of what undoubtedly seems to have been a close relationship instead depicts Pompey as a man who does not understand or respect his inner feelings. Stadter comments that this anecdote prepares the reader to discover that, as the *Life* unfolds, Pompey will at crucial points abandon his own best interests and those of the state to serve his friends.<sup>308</sup>

In the second erotically based anecdote, Plutarch recounts that he treated his mistress (the wife of his freedman Demetrius), a woman who apparently had the greatest influence over him, with a lack of generosity and regard that was unusual for him, lest anyone should think him conquered by her famous beauty (2.4). Again, Pompey demonstrates his self-restraint in an intimate relationship, but in this instance he fears the public implications of any perceived private weakness. At this stage, Pompey is not dominated by his desires, yet Plutarch immediately follows these two anecdotes with a foreshadowing comment. Despite such caution, 'he could not escape the criticisms of his enemies on this flaw, but was censured for his relationships with married women, to gratify whom, it was observed (προέσθαι), he neglected many public interests' (πολλὰ τῶν κοινῶν, 2.5). As Beneker notes, this third anecdote complements the description of Pompey's relationship with Flora and Demetrius' wife, by making a more general statement regarding Pompey's erotic affairs. To some degree, Plutarch signals the questionable status of these allegations: these were claims circulated by his enemies and his neglect of public duty was only a matter of opinion ('it was observed'). The theme

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<sup>307</sup> Stadter (1995) 220.

<sup>308</sup> Stadter (1995) 233. Plutarch was obviously interested in the effects of a statesman's deference to others; the essay *De vitioso pudore* explores *dysōpia* (the embarrassment that compels us to grant an unjustified request; compliancy), which he characterised as a passion (528d) and one of the extremes between one's desired (and restrained) disposition (529a).

of self-control was a main focus of the *Antony* and here Plutarch's anxieties regarding the effects of unrestrained *eros* on a man's public duties are also apparent. Therefore, the anecdotes concerning Pompey's lack of self-awareness and personal conduct signal that they may become problematic for the general as the *Life* unfolds.

Nevertheless, Pompey's early marriages serve to highlight his self-restraint at this point of his life. His first marriage to Antistia was a public transaction. On trial for theft of public property, Pompey's defence was so impressive that the judge Antistius became enamoured of him (ἐρασθῆναι) and offered him his daughter's hand in marriage.<sup>309</sup> Having secured the inevitable acquittal, the spectators (who understood the secret arrangement between the two men) shouted 'Talasio' in unison (4.3). Plutarch's approval of Pompey contracting the marriage for political purposes rather than for passion is clear by his insertion of the Talasio origin story from the Sabine abduction (as detailed in the *Romulus*), noting here that it was an acclamation of approval and rejoicing (4.4). His subsequent divorce from Antistia, marriage to Sulla's stepdaughter Aemilia (9.1-2) and consequent marriage and divorce of Mucia (42.7) all appear to be politically advantageous decisions for Pompey.<sup>310</sup> His marriages at this stage are devoid of *eros* or sentiment. Instead he has his eye firmly fixed on his public position and future advancement.<sup>311</sup>

### **Julia, *eros* and marriage**

So far, Plutarch presents a generally positive view of the ambitious, talented and restrained young general, although he has foreshadowed his latent weaknesses in regards to his susceptibility to *eros* and his friends. At the mid-point of the narrative however, Plutarch interjects with a rare authorial intervention: 'how happy would it have been for him if he had ended his life at this point, up to which he enjoyed the good fortune of Alexander!' (46.1)<sup>312</sup> It is at this point that he marries Julia, the daughter of Caesar, which 'nobody expected' (οὐδενὸς ἂν προσδοκήσαντος 47.6). This new marriage

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<sup>309</sup> Beneker (2005) 71. He adds; 'given that we are expecting future problems associated with Pompey's *eros*, it is ironic that his first marriage is arranged because Antistius has an *eros* for him.'

<sup>310</sup> Plutarch claims that Mucia had been unfaithful and that was the reason for the divorce, adding that the reason is stated in Cicero's letters (42.7). However, in a letter to Atticus (*Att.* 1.12.3) Cicero only says that Pompey's divorce of Mucia was heartily approved, which may refer to politics rather than private affairs.

<sup>311</sup> Haley (1985) 50: The divorce from Antistia and the subsequent marriage to Aemilia parallels the circumstances in which Caesar found himself with Sulla. Given the same choice however, Caesar adamantly refused to divorce his wife (*Caes.* 1.1).

<sup>312</sup> A remark that echoes the sentiments of Vell. Pat. 2.48.2.

and political alliance signals the end of Pompey's ascendancy and Plutarch focuses the remainder of the narrative on Pompey's slow decline and weak response to *eros*.<sup>313</sup>

Initially, Pompey's latest marriage appears to be in the mould of his previous politically motivated alliances, but when political violence breaks out, he makes his first public mistake. Instead of stepping into the political void left by the withdrawal of Bibulus and Lucullus and acting decisively against the trepidations of Clodius, Pompey 'gave way weakly to his passion for his young wife' (ἐμαλάσσετο τῷ τῆς κόρης ἔρωτι, 48.5).<sup>314</sup> Instead of attending to his public duties as the foremost statesman in Rome, he 'devoted himself (προσεῖχεν) for the most part to her, spent his time with her in villas and gardens, so that even Clodius... despised him and engaged in most daring deeds' (48.5). He would not take heed of Culleo (προσέσχε, echoing προσεῖχεν above) who begged him to divorce Julia and thus exchange the friendship of Caesar for the senate. Instead, Pompey decides to support Cicero by providing a large escort force for his brother, resulting in a bloodbath between his men and those of Clodius (49.3). As a result, Clodius publicly mocked him, asking his supporters, 'who is a licentious dictator?' (τίς ἐστὶν αὐτοκράτωρ ἀκόλαστος; 48.7). By enumerating such mistakes and repercussions in quick succession, Plutarch makes it clear that Pompey's new focus on his private life has affected his political abilities. Indeed, Pompey's fear that his intimate relationships may make him appear weak has been realised. Clodius' insult that Pompey was debauched mirrors Antony's incontinence due to the effects of *eros* and the ἀκόλαστοι letters of Mithridates earlier in the narrative (37.2), confirming Pompey's transformation from one in command to one who is now weakened.

This weakness is further reinforced by another anecdote regarding Pompey and Julia's conjugal relationship. Pompey incurred criticism because he 'handed over his provinces and his armies to legates who were his friends, while he himself spent his time with his wife among the pleasure-places of Italy... either because he loved her, or because she loved him so that he could not bear to leave her' (εἴτε ἐρῶν αὐτῆς, εἴτε ἐρῶσαν ὑπομένων ἀπολιπεῖν, 53.1). Beneker comments that Plutarch has

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<sup>313</sup> Beneker (2005) 75. Duff (2002) 252: The two parts of his *Life* are amply demonstrated by the contrast between Pompey's two triumphal returns to Rome. In both instances, he returns to acclaim and quashes accusations that he would try to take power by force (21.3-4, 43). In his first return, he was successful in persuading all of his intentions to disband his army and was awarded a second triumph and the consulship. On his second return however, Cato blocked his plans to enter the city before his triumph and Pompey's plans to neutralise Cato through marriage alliance and his lavish spending brought him into ill-repute (44.1-4). Now, under the domination of Crassus and Caesar, Pompey is unable to persuade his political opponents; he has been weakened.

<sup>314</sup> Regarding the marriage alliances of Caesar and Pompey: 'Cato vehemently protested, and cried out that it was intolerable to have the supreme power prostituted by marriage alliances and to see men helping one another to powers and armies and provinces by means of women' (*Caes.* 14.5)

simplified matters by offering no other reason for Pompey's failure to administer his provinces other than devotion to Julia.<sup>315</sup> His conjugal relationship has negatively impacted his public duties and the reason appears to be that despite their shared *eros*, Julia and Pompey had not yet developed the true friendship (*philia*) of marriage, one that only develops through the application of reason, justice and restraint. It is true that Julia was most affectionate towards him (τὸ φίλανδρον), mainly because of his *sophrosyne* (ἀίτιον ἔουκεν ἢ τε σωφροσύνη, 53.2), but Pompey's inability to apply reason in his conjugal life means that an increasing antithesis between reason and passion develops in the latter half of the narrative. Indeed as in the *Antony*, Plutarch repeatedly criticises Pompey for his lack of *logismos* (33.5, 57.3, 61.2, 67.4, 76.6); a direct consequence of his erotically based marital relationship.<sup>316</sup> Without true marital friendship, Pompey's marriage hinders his public life. Consequently, the Caesar-Pompey alliance, cemented by the charms (φίλτρα) of Julia, is now seen as a 'suspicious and deceptive...partnership based on self-interest,' a perception of which Pompey is completely unaware (70.4).<sup>317</sup> The foreshadowing Flora-Demetrius anecdotes regarding Pompey's lack of self-awareness are confirmed and his love for Julia has now destroyed his self-restraint, which will yield disastrous results.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> Beneker (2012) 219. He argues; 'In reality, by taking a pro-consular assignment, Pompey retained *imperium* and gained control of an army, which supplemented the forces he had received when commissioned to protect the grain supply. By remaining in Rome, he kept himself at the centre of politics during a period of increasing uncertainty, and so he was available two years later when the state required a sole ruler.'

<sup>316</sup> Duff (2002) 81-82: Pompey was criticised in the *Comparison* for this: Agesilaus was successful because he followed his 'best reasonings' (τοῖς ἀρίστοις ὡς ἐβούλετο λογισμοῖς, *Comp.* 4.5).

<sup>317</sup> Note the parallel with the 'charms' of Cleopatra in the *Life of Antony* (25.4).

<sup>318</sup> In stark contrast to Pompey, Plutarch portrays Caesar as the more disciplined statesman, despite his own, apparent deep love for his daughter. His enduring grief after her death was demonstrated by his generous gifts of spectacles and feasts for his soldiers and the populace in her honour, although she was 'long since dead' (*Caes.* 55.2). Such private feeling however did not affect his public duties as it did Pompey. Caesar thus had a significant advantage over his rival, which was perhaps becoming apparent. After Julia's death in childbirth, the people accorded her a public funeral. Although Plutarch says this was more out of pity for Julia than for the favour of either Caesar or Pompey, nevertheless it was thought that the people gave the larger share of their public honour to Caesar than to Pompey, who was actually present (*Caes.* 53.5). Others perhaps may interpret Caesar's actions as cynical politicking but Plutarch prefers to interpret them as sincere indications of his personal affection.

## Cornelia

Pompey's decline thus predicted, it does not surprise that despite his grief at the death of Julia in childbirth, Pompey quickly re-marries another much younger woman. Despite the valid political advantages to the marriage, as with Julia, there was disquiet about their marriage due to the large age difference between husband and wife, Pompey's neglect of public affairs and his disregard for the illegality of his third consulship (55.2-3). Plutarch is full of praise for the young widow Cornelia, describing her as well versed in literature, geometry, playing the lyre and as one who benefitted from listening to philosophic arguments (περὶ γράμματα καλῶς ἤσκητο καὶ περὶ λύραν καὶ γεωμετρίαν, καὶ λόγων φιλοσόφων εἴθιστο χρησίμως ἀκούειν 55.1). Her undoubted *paideia* and virtue indicate that Cornelia ought to have been a positive influence on her husband. Instead Plutarch notes Pompey's disregard for the line between his private and public life, when neglecting 'the unhappy condition of the city, which had chosen him as her physician and put herself in his sole charge,' he chose to instead deck himself in garlands and celebrate his nuptials (55.3).<sup>319</sup> Lucan echoes such criticism when he has the ghost of Julia blame Pompey's marriage to Cornelia for the beginning of the Civil War.<sup>320</sup> However, while Julia can be viewed as merely a symptom of Pompey's poor choices and lack of discipline, Cornelia's more active role and subsequent speech to her husband is significant in elaborating Plutarch's ethical focus.

Interestingly, Plutarch notes that like Julia, Cornelia too had many charms (πολλὰ φίλτρα 55.1), indicating that this marriage like the last would drag Pompey into further unsuitable alliances. Accordingly, Pompey begins to favour Cornelia's relations to the point that it gains him a bad reputation (55.4, 55.7). And as with his relationship with Julia, Pompey devotes more time to the distractions of his private life than his public duties. Plutarch relates that shortly after their marriage, Pompey was taken ill at Naples, a renowned pleasure resort (57.1). The local celebrations at his recovery boosted his confidence and he began to grow contemptuous of Caesar, who meanwhile was back in Rome, devoting himself to public affairs 'with greater vigour' (58.1). This spirit of arrogance which went 'beyond calculations based upon facts' (τοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν πραγμάτων λογισμούς, 57.3), was in Plutarch's eyes the primary cause for the war and Pompey's defeat.<sup>321</sup> Like Antony, Pompey's unrestrained *eros* for his wife allows his *hubris* to affect his ability to make logical decisions. The

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<sup>319</sup> Beneker (2012) 221.

<sup>320</sup> Haley (1985) 56. Luc. *Phars.* 3.21-3. Vell. Pat. 2.54.2.

<sup>321</sup> Plutarch reinforces the destructive nature of this new found arrogance when Pompey readily believes reports that Caesar's soldiers are disgruntled and ready to defect to the Pompeian side at a moment's notice: 'In this way, then, Pompey was elated, and his confidence filled him with so great a contempt for his adversary that he mocked at those who were afraid of the war' (57.4-5).

symmetry between Pompey's public decline and Plutarch's emphasis on the general's private life informs the reader that both are intertwined. Facing a restrained and focused Caesar, Pompey is underprepared and lacking.<sup>322</sup>

Through such foreshadowing, Plutarch frames Pompey's defeat by Caesar as almost inevitable, despite the great force at his disposal.<sup>323</sup> When Caesar marches on Rome, the senate meets Pompey in the Forum, where Marcellus orders him to defend Rome (59.1). Confronted with some resistance amid reports of Caesar's advance, Pompey grows downhearted (ἀθαρσῶς, 60.3), meek (πρώως, 60.5) unable to follow his own reasoning (τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ λογισμοῖς, 61.2), and to the chagrin of the senate abandons Rome. His decision to leave the city and meet Caesar at Pharsalus is presented as Pompey's decision alone and Plutarch explicitly links these disastrous decisions with his prioritisation of his private life.<sup>324</sup> In the *Comparison*, he notes that 'after conveying away with him his own wife and children, Pompey left those of the other citizens defenceless and took to flight' (3.4), completely relinquishing his primary duty as a statesman, that is, to care for and protect his fellow citizens.

### **Tragic and Epic Models: Cornelia's Lament**

Caesar's victory at Pharsalus confirms Pompey's transformation from celebrated general to 'a man senseless and paralysed' (παράφρονι καὶ παραπλήγι, 72.1). Fleeing the battlefield, Pompey moved to Mitylene where Cornelia and his son were patiently waiting for news of his victory.<sup>325</sup> Surprised by the tears of the Pompeian messenger, in an echo of her husband, Cornelia cast herself upon the ground and lay there a long time bereft of sense and speech (ἔκφρων καὶ ἄναυδος, 74.2). Cornelia's distress for Pompey, who at this point is still alive, alludes to a common tragic device of lamentation in advance of death, perhaps best exemplified by Euripides' Hecuba, who also throws herself to the ground in anticipatory lamentation.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> Beneker (2003) maintains that Plutarch deliberately minimised Caesar's erotic/private life, making him more like Alexander and thus more restrained and focused than Pompey.

<sup>323</sup> 'His navy was simply irresistible, since he had five hundred ships of war, while the number of his light galleys and fast cruisers was immense; his cavalry numbered seven thousand, the flower of Rome and Italy, preeminent in lineage, wealth, and courage' (64.1).

<sup>324</sup> Cass. Dio 41.3.3 claims that the decision to abandon Rome was made by the two consuls ('the care of the city was committed to the consuls and to the other magistrates, as was the custom.')

<sup>325</sup> App. *B Civ.* 2.12. 83. Cass. Dio 42.2.2-4, Luc. *Phars.* 5.722-815.

<sup>326</sup> Eur. *Hec.* 438-500. Papadi (2007) 149-150: For example; Hecuba (*II.* 24.200-216) weeps for Priam while he is still alive; Andromache does the same for Hector (*II.* 6.405); Antigone (*Ant.* 839-851, 858-871, 891-928) and Polyxena (*Hec.* 402) weep for their own deaths in advance.



Plutarch's representation of Cornelia as a tragic heroine is also found in Lucan's *Pharsalia* with both writers probably relying on common source material.<sup>327</sup> Although the context is similar in both accounts, Plutarch casts Cornelia's relationship with Pompey in a different light to Lucan's portrayal. Lucan describes Pompey sending Cornelia to Mitylene for safety, having 'been made fearful and reluctant to fight out of fear for his wife.'<sup>328</sup> So fearful is he that Cornelia be shielded from the effects of his *fortuna*, he sends her away so that she, his *pars optima*, may survive in the event of his defeat.<sup>329</sup> While husband and wife are still apart, Lucan focuses on Cornelia's emotional distress. She was unable to sleep and after Pharsalus was tormented by foreboding as she waited anxiously for bad news.<sup>330</sup> She is an equal participant in the destructive emotional relationship. In contrast, Plutarch omits all details from Cornelia's point of view until she is reunited with her husband. Rather than anticipating disaster, she hopefully waits, trusting in her husband's abilities. By depicting Cornelia as an unsuspecting party, Plutarch effectively places the majority of the blame on Pompey. It is his ethical weaknesses that have led him to crisis. For all that the reader can surmise, Cornelia has merely followed her husband's instructions in leaving Rome.

Shocked by the unexpected news of her husband's defeat, Cornelia regains her senses with difficulty and 'perceiving that the occasion was not one for tears and lamentations,' she runs through the city to Pompey's ship (74.2). As she reached him, Pompey met her and caught her in his arms as she began to fall:

‘ὄρῳ σε,’ εἶπεν, ‘ ἄνερ, οὐ τῆς σῆς τύχης ἔργον, ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐμῆς, προσερριμμένον ἐνὶ σκάφει τὸν πρὸ τῶν Κορνηλίας γάμων πεντακοσίας ναυσὶ ταύτην περιπλεύσαντα τὴν θάλασσαν, τί μ’ ἤλθεσ ἰδεῖν καὶ οὐκ ἀπέλιπες τῷ βαρεῖ δαίμονι τὴν καὶ σὲ δυστυχίας ἀναπλήσασαν τοσαύτης; ὡς εὐτυχῆς μὲν ἂν ἤμην γυνὴ πρὸ τοῦ Πόπλιον ἐν Πάρθοις ἀκοῦσαι τὸν παρθένιον ἄνδρα κείμενον ἀποθανοῦσα, σώφρων δὲ καὶ μετ’ ἐκεῖνον, ὥσπερ ὄρμησα, τὸν ἐμαυτῆς προεμένη βίον ἐσωζόμεν δ’ ἄρα καὶ Πομπηῖῳ Μάγων συμφορὰ γενέσθαι’ (74.3)

*‘I see you, husband, not by your fortune, but by mine, reduced to a mere ship, you who before your marriage with Cornelia sailed this sea with five hundred ships. Why have you come to see me, and why didn’t you leave to her cruel destiny one who has infected you also with such an evil fortune? What a fortunate woman I had been if I had died before hearing that*

<sup>327</sup> Cornelia appears in Books 5 (722-815), 8 (41-158, 577-661) and 9 (55-108, 167-181). Bruère (1951) 231; Lucan and Plutarch probably used Livy as a historical source.

<sup>328</sup> Luc. *Phars.* 722-731.

<sup>329</sup> Bruère (1951) 224.

<sup>330</sup> Luc. *Phars.* 805-813. Bruère (1951) 226.

*Publius, whose virgin bride I was, was killed among the Parthians. And how wise if, even after his death, as I was eager to do, I had given up own life but I was spared, it seems, to bring ruin upon Pompey the Great.'*

The parallel with Andromache's lament in the *Iliad* is striking. The physical context is similar; husband and wife meet in the open, with both wives carrying their sons.<sup>331</sup> Pompey, like Hektor is disheartened and seeks out his wife, who mourns his death in advance. However, while Andromache's focus is on her own private woe ('it would be better to go down to the grave if I lose you'), Cornelia is more concerned for Pompey's public glory.<sup>332</sup> And while Andromache blames Hektor's prowess (μέγος) for his doom, Cornelia considers herself as the origin of Pompey's ruin. She asserts that if she had been wise (σώφρων), she would have killed herself after the death of Crassus, thus avoiding the repeat of a public crisis.<sup>333</sup> Her self-blame has public ramifications because Pompey's defeated army and Rome share the bad luck she has apparently given to her husband. However, her statement: 'what a happy woman I had been if I had died before hearing that Publius... was killed among the Parthians,' is a perfect parallel of Plutarch's earlier authorial statement regarding the apex of Pompey's career (46.1). Combined with Plutarch's earlier statement and the subsequent public effects of Julia and Pompey's marriage, the reader understands that the crisis is actually Pompey's fault, not Cornelia's. Pompey's *eros*, reliance on friends and preference for his private life over public duty have placed Cornelia, an educated and virtuous woman, in the position of willing scapegoat. Although Pompey does not blame her for his misfortune, neither does he address his own faults, although he does acknowledge the duality of their fortunes (75.1). By accepting personal responsibility for Pharsalus, Plutarch's Cornelia exhibits her exemplary Roman civic virtue

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<sup>331</sup> Hom. *Il.* 6.395-400. Buszard (2010) 89: The son with Cornelia is by Pompey's former wife Mucia, a distinction Plutarch does not mention.

<sup>332</sup> Hom. *Il.* 6.410.

<sup>333</sup> Papadi (2007) 151-2. Again, we find a tragic parallel between Cornelia's sense of *sophrosyne* and shame and Euripides's Phaedra, who also decided suicide was the best option when she could no longer fight her passion with *sophrosyne*. Eur. *Hip.* 398-402. Lucan's Cornelia also claims responsibility for her husband's predicament (*o coniunx, ego te scelerata peremi*, 8.639), and indeed for the war itself (*haud ego culpa libera bellorum*, 8.647-48), and she too expresses a will to die (*moriar*, 8.653). However, the emotional scene of the parting of Pompey and Cornelia before Pharsalus (5.722-815) frames their relationship as a co-dependant one and the reader is left with the impression that Cornelia's self-blame stems primarily from her grief rather than from any logical insight or wisdom.

in contrast to her husband, who abandoned Rome when it needed him most.<sup>334</sup> The Andromache model is therefore subverted by Cornelia's less selfish and more civically minded stance.<sup>335</sup>

Pompey decides that the best plan is to escape before Caesar's forces arrive and he offers the view that Parthia would be the best refuge for their little group. But Theophanes thought that Parthia would be a terrible place for Cornelia, owing to the Parthians 'aggression and licentiousness' (ὄβρει καὶ ἀκολασίᾳ, 76.6), which is slightly ironic considering Pompey's own lack of restraint and contempt for Caesar was partially responsible for their present situation. Instead he suggests Egypt, as it was closer and whose ruler was indebted to Pompey (76.5).<sup>336</sup> Plutarch says that it was the safety of Cornelia alone (τοῦτο μόνον) that made him choose Egypt, although it was no real calculation on his behalf (λογισμός, 76.6). While Appian and Lucan claim that the safety of Cornelia was an important, though not necessarily the determining factor, Velleius Paterculus claimed that Pompey chose Egypt precisely for the public reasons that Theophanes outlined.<sup>337</sup> Plutarch is the most adamant that Cornelia was the sole cause of Pompey's ill-founded plan, a decision once again lacking rationality.<sup>338</sup> Pompey's actions are now solely dictated by his private considerations and all reason and thought of public duty is gone.

Pompey's next actions reinforce this weakness. When he does reach the shores of Egypt, his friends advise him to flee when they notice that the Egyptians approached in a mere fishing boat rather than with the splendid reception they were expecting (78.2). Cornelia also senses doom and in a repeat of her earlier actions at Mitylene, begins to lament his approaching death (προαποθρηνοῦσαν αὐτὸν τὸ τέλος, 78.4). Pompey however, on recognising one of the Egyptian entourage as a former Roman friend, ignores the warnings. As a good Roman wife, Cornelia accepts her husband's decision, regardless of the expected outcome. Pompey is killed in front of her eyes and the very last sentence of the narrative describes Cornelia taking his ashes back to rest at their Alban villa (80.6). This ending is fitting as it underscores Pompey's preference for his private life whilst simultaneously reinforcing Cornelia's characterisation as a devoted wife. In fact, Plutarch's conclusion closely parallels Antony's

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<sup>334</sup> Buszard (2010) 89-90.

<sup>335</sup> Pompey's optimistic reply (75.1) also subverts Hektor's reply to Andromache (Hom. *Il.* 6.450-460) when he tells his wife that he expects to see her unhappy as a Greek slave.

<sup>336</sup> Owing to the favours Pompey showed his father Ptolemy XII Auletes.

<sup>337</sup> App. *B. Civ.* 2.12.83. Luc. *Phars.* 396-416. Vell. Pat. 2.53.1-2. Bruère (1951) 225: Lucan claimed that Pompey's detour to Mitylene slowed down Pompey, so he arrived in Egypt after the news of Caesar's victory had arrived. If he had set off immediately without stopping to meet his wife, he may have been safe.

<sup>338</sup> Plutarch muses that if there was no longer any consideration (λογισμός) in Pompey's plans, then an evil genius (δαίμων) was guiding him instead (76.6).

death scene, in that both men die in the arms of their wives and are mourned appropriately in private by them.<sup>339</sup> The omission of any further reference to Cornelia in the public arena accentuates Cornelia's innocence and virtue, instead drawing attention to the humble and ignominious end of her husband.<sup>340</sup>

Pompey's two main ethical weaknesses were his inability to properly develop a virtuous conjugal partnership with his last two wives and his capacity to be turned from his own plans and reason by friends and family (*Comp.* 1.3). The two are intertwined; Julia brings him into alliance with Caesar, an alliance that is later shown by Plutarch to have been a sham, while his last wife Cornelia affects his post-Pharsalus plans to such an extent that his death becomes almost self-fulfilling. The deterioration of Pompey's reasoning, self-restraint and self-awareness from the first part of his life are important reinforcers of Plutarch's ethical focus. Pompey had all the virtues of an Alexander-like statesman but effectively threw it away in his later life because of his over-reliance on his friends and wives rather than his own reasoning.

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<sup>339</sup> Beneker (2002) 121.

<sup>340</sup> Cass. Dio 42.5.7 notes that Cornelia was pardoned by Caesar and later returned to Rome. Luc. *Phars.* 9.167-185 has Cornelia give a second, more elaborate funeral for her husband.

## ***The Life of Brutus***

Plutarch's presentation of Brutus in the *Life of Brutus* is interesting, as he initially embodies all the qualities that Plutarch considered essential for the ideal statesman. In contrast to Pompey and his later wives, Brutus' interaction with his wife Porcia exemplifies the innate moral goodness of both and it is clearly Plutarch's intention that such virtue was reinforced through Porcia's speech to her husband. However, despite his obvious moral virtues, Brutus' dogmatic adherence to philosophic ideals led Rome into another Triumvirate and ten more years of civil war. While Brutus' strong moral qualities end up impeding his ability to become a great statesman, Porcia's role in the narrative serves to reinforce Plutarch's ideas regarding the ideal marriage and how such a relationship consequently affects each partner for the better.

### **Sources**

Again, as with his other Republican *Lives*, Plutarch uses a range of source material in order to develop the character of Brutus. Pelling notes that a large proportion of the narrative parallels that of Appian, as with the *Pompey*, probably due to their shared use of Pollio.<sup>341</sup> His even handed approach means that he appears to have incorporated pro-tyrannicide material, biographical information and further intimate and contemporary accounts. The Porcia anecdotes seem to be drawn from the βιβλίδιον μικρὸν ἀπομνημονευμάτων Βρούτου of her son Bibulus, while he also quotes the memoirs of Messala Corvinus, Octavian, Nicolaus of Damascus and the more obscure work of Volumnius.<sup>342</sup> The authentic Greek philosophical jargon of Brutus' philosophical discussions with potential conspirators (e.g.: συμφιλοσοφεῖν, 24.1) suggests Empylus of Rhodes as a source, who published a history of the conspiracy.<sup>343</sup> Such disparate material once again confirms Plutarch's careful selection and modification of his available source material to suit his ethical purpose.

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<sup>341</sup> Pelling (1979) 86-87.

<sup>342</sup> Messala: 40.1-2, 42.4, 45.1; Octavian: 41.4; Nicolaus of Damascus: 53.4 Volumnius: 48.1-2, 51.1. Pelling (1979) 86-87. He adds, 'It is of course possible, if Plutarch drew Pollio's account from a historical intermediary, that it was this writer rather than Plutarch who combined Pollio with Messala and Volumnius-but it is much more likely that the combination is due to Plutarch himself: this seems another instance in which he found the Pollio-source lacking in biographical and dramatic detail, and chose to supplement it from other, more promising, versions.'

<sup>343</sup> Pelling (1979) 87.

## Ethical Framework

The narrative opens with Plutarch's usual outline of the protagonist's family. His lineage included the famous Republican heroes Junius Brutus and Servilius Ahala, ancestors who helped to cast Brutus' later fame as a tyrannicide as self-fulfilling (1.1, 1.3).<sup>344</sup> However, while Plutarch noted that Junius Brutus 'had a disposition which was hard by nature and unsoftened by culture (οὐ μαλακὸν ἔχων ὑπὸ λόγου, 1.1), Brutus modified his disposition by means of education and culture (παιδεία καὶ λόγῳ), which he blended harmoniously for the greater good (πρὸς τὸ καλόν, 1.2). As a philosopher, Brutus was reared (ἐντραφεῖς) on Plato's doctrines (*Dion* 1.1, *Comp.* 1.1) and he was devoted to his maternal uncle Cato the Younger (2.1). His pursuit of learning is illustrated by various anecdotes in the early chapters, with Plutarch describing his exquisite letter writing in both Latin and Greek (2.3-4) and his concentration on books and learning even before battle (4.3-4). Swain notes that Brutus shared Cato's Stoicism, but Plutarch under-plays this aspect and the reader is left with the impression that Brutus derived his high moral and political standards from the teachings of the Academy rather than Stoicism.<sup>345</sup>

Plutarch makes it clear that his pursuit of philosophical education was a practical consideration (ταῖς πρακτικαῖς ὁρμαῖς, 1.2). Brutus wished to mould himself into the perfect statesman.<sup>346</sup> Like Pompey, his virtue (ἀρετὴν) 'made him beloved by the multitude, his friends, and not hated even by his enemies, who even called him a man of the greatest moderation and justice (σωφρονέστατος καὶ δικαιοτάτος)...He kept his purpose erect and unbending in defence of what was honourable and just (29.2-3, 32.1).<sup>347</sup> Furthermore, Brutus actively cultivated his *sophrosyne* by restricting his sleep and moderating his food intake in order to transact as much business and learning as possible (36.1, 4.4). Thus, the combination of justice and self-restraint; the hallmarks of the virtuous public man, is evident. As an educated man who constantly strove to habituate his self-control, Brutus' moral

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<sup>344</sup> Livy 4.13.

<sup>345</sup> Swain (1990) 194, 202. Swain believes the emphasis on Platonism (and the passing over of his Stoic traits) are because of the *synkreisis* with Dion, as Platonism is a common theme of both the *Brutus* and *Dion*.

<sup>346</sup> Swain (1990) 202-3. Sedley (1997) 42. Brutus' reputation as a philosopher was of course well-known to his contemporaries. Cicero dedicated the *De finibus*, *De natura deorum*, the *Tusculanae Disputationes* and the *Paradoxa Stoicorum* to him as well as commemorating him in the *Brutus*. Both Quintilian. (*Inst.* 10.1) and Tacitus (*Dial.* 21) rated his gifts as a philosopher higher than his rhetorical skills.

<sup>347</sup> Plutarch describes Aristides in almost exactly the same way: 'Of all his virtues, it was his justice that most impressed the multitude, because of its most continual and most general exercise' (*Arist.* 6.1).

credentials appear impeccable, a stark contrast to Antony and Coriolanus' lack of *paideia* and *sophrosyne*.

In his public duties, Brutus demonstrated his training and subsequent virtue. By dint of his reasoning (ἐκ λογισμοῦ), he was a powerful and persuasive speaker and was immune to flattery (6.4-5). According to Plutarch, he was so persuasive that only he was able to calm the agitated multitude after Caesar's assassination (18.5-6).<sup>348</sup> In fact, Brutus' persuasive power is directly linked to his public display of virtue and justice, a relationship that holds in the private as well as the public sphere.<sup>349</sup> Like Romulus, his consideration for the good of the state ahead of private considerations is powerfully conveyed by an anecdote regarding Brutus' decision to ally himself with Pompey instead of Caesar. Despite the fact that Pompey murdered his father, Brutus believed it was his duty to put the public good (τὰ κοινὰ) above his own. Considering that Pompey's grounds for going to war were better than Caesar's, he chose the Pompeian side (4.1).

After Pompey's eventual defeat at Pharsalus, Caesar pardoned Brutus and asked him his thoughts on Pompey's next move. His accurate conjecture that Pompey would flee to Egypt convinced Caesar (6.2). The modern scholar Africa claims that his 'distasteful act' settled Brutus' grudge against Pompey and served to ingratiate himself with Caesar.<sup>350</sup> However, Plutarch makes no comment on Brutus' motives for assisting Caesar, which, if the reader takes Brutus' character sketch into account (and his previous collaboration with his enemy Pompey), implies that his motives are to not to be taken as nefarious but rather as another indication of his honesty.

Despite such sterling qualities, Plutarch quickly introduces one of Brutus' inherent weaknesses. The influence of Cassius, a less virtuous man with a violent temper, caused Brutus to turn away from Caesar despite his proffered kindness.<sup>351</sup> Here Plutarch introduces another one of his rare authorial statements. If Brutus had been content to be second to Caesar at this time, he could eventually have been the first man in Rome. But the combination of Cassius' influence and his concern that his power and fame would dwindle under Caesar compelled him to involve himself in the conspiracy against

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<sup>348</sup> Africa (1978) 620. According to Cicero, Brutus raised a bloody dagger aloft and called out Cicero's name (*Phil.* 2.28) Nicolaus of Damascus (*FGrH* F 130.25) says that Brutus tried to harangue the crowd outside the Senate, but his speech was ineffective. Plutarch lets Brutus sway the crowd until Cinna offended them by disparaging Caesar, and a riot ensued.

<sup>349</sup> van Raalte (2005) 110.

<sup>350</sup> Africa (1978) 613.

<sup>351</sup> Caesar himself was aware of this influence although he had faith in Brutus' character (8.1).

him (8.2). The parallel with Pompey's reliance on his friends and desire for glory is rather ironic, considering the former's downfall was witnessed by Brutus himself.

Brutus' unbending adherence to his noble ideals also contributed to the tragic latter part of his life. His focus on just action caused him to let Antony live against the advice of the other conspirators (18.2). His second (and according to Plutarch), fatal mistake was in allowing Antony to conduct a public funeral for Caesar (20.1). As Desmond aptly notes: 'Plutarch treads carefully with the ideal of a philosopher-king and even regards it as a potentially dangerous one. Such caution may be due to his Platonic insistence on the irreducible plurality of reality: nobody is perfect and ideals need to be adapted to the complexity of actual life.'<sup>352</sup> Brutus was unable to adapt theoretical virtue to suit the more Machiavellian tactics needed in the messy Late Republican political environment. Too much the philosopher and not enough the king, Brutus' virtues begin to work against him and eventually become liabilities.

### **Porcia**

The role of Porcia within the narrative is both complex and significant. As the daughter of Cato, she is the bridge between Brutus and the man he so admired. Like Brutus, Cato was persuasive, disciplined, a follower of philosophical, ethical and political doctrines and was committed to the pursuit of every virtue, in particular the goodness of unbending justice (δικαιοσύνην ἀτενὲς, *Cat. min.* 4.1, 5.3, 26.4). And like Brutus, this inflexibility and dogmatic adherence to a particular set of virtues contributed to his own downfall. Cato's suicide was also in keeping with his philosophical outlook and Plutarch ends his biography with a note about Porcia, stating; 'and still more true is it that the daughter of Cato was deficient neither in restraint nor courage (σωφροσύνης οὔτε ἀνδρείας). She... knew of the conspiracy itself, and gave up her life in a manner worthy of her noble birth and virtue' (εὐγενείας καὶ ἀρετῆς, *Cat. Min.* 73.4). Porcia's lineage is thus an important facet of her characterisation in the *Life*.

Plutarch introduces Porcia within the nocturnal privacy of the marital bedroom (13.2).<sup>353</sup> Although controlled in public, Brutus' feelings regarding his involvement in the conspiracy against Caesar surface in private. Porcia, sharing his bed (οὐκ ἐλάνθανε τὴν γυναῖκα συναναπαυομένην), perceives that her husband's deliberations are beset by perplexity and anxiety (τῷ λογισμῷ καὶ διατρίβων ἐν

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<sup>352</sup> Desmond (2011) 85.

<sup>353</sup> Plutarch comments here; 'Porcia, as has been said, was a daughter of Cato'. This is a slip on Plutarch's behalf, for he obviously meant to incorporate this information earlier in the *Life of Brutus* or elsewhere but neglected to do so.



ταῖς ἀπορίαις, 13.1). This introduction of Porcia in an intimate and domestic context seems straightforward. Indeed as Beneker notes, her insertion into the narrative could have merely served as a literary device in order to present Brutus' private thoughts to the reader.<sup>354</sup> But as the chapter unfolds, the focus remains on Porcia, revealing Plutarch's thoughts on the reciprocal nature of their marriage.

Although a widow with a young son, she nevertheless is described as very young (κόρην), affectionate, fond of her husband and full of spirit and sense (φιλόστοργος δ' ἡ Πορκία καὶ φίλανδρος οὔσα καὶ μεστή φρονήματος νοῦν ἔχοντος, 13.3). The emphasis on her affectionate nature (φιλόστοργος, φίλανδρος) indicates that their marriage fits Plutarch's ideal of true and stable partnership (τὸ φιλεῖν). Julia was also affectionate towards her husband Pompey (τὸ φίλανδρον, *Pomp.* 53.1), but Plutarch's elaboration of both Porcia and Brutus' substantial moral qualities indicates that this affection is based on reciprocal admiration rather than mere *eros*. His description of Porcia as φρονήματος clarifies that her youth is no barrier to her virtue or intellectual capacity, mirroring Brutus' own φρόνημα (8.1, 13.1).<sup>355</sup> For the daughter of Cato and wife of Brutus, these qualities were essential.<sup>356</sup> Her sensible nature echoes another of Plutarch's ideal wives, Octavia, who was σεμνότητα καὶ νοῦν ἔχουσιν, (*Ant.* 31.2) and the older Ismenodora in the *Amatorius* whose sense (νοῦν ἔχουσα) Plutarch claimed enabled her to be a contributing partner in her marriage.<sup>357</sup> Moreover, Porcia's self-restraint and wisdom (σωφροσύνη καὶ φρόνησις) fits Plutarch's description of the 'most consummate arts' in the *Demetrius* (1.3) in yet another parallel with Octavia.

However, although Octavia, Cornelia and Porcia all share similar attributes, only Porcia is a true marriage partner to her husband. In the *Conjugalium praecepta*, Plutarch advises that a wife gains the greatest hold on her husband through her conversation, character, company and virtue (ὀμιλία τε καὶ ἦθει καὶ συμπεριφορᾷ... ἦθει καὶ ἀρετῇ), which she must convey by being accommodating, inoffensive and agreeable (ὕαρμοστα καὶ ἄλυπα καὶ προσφιλεῖ παρέχειν).<sup>358</sup> Plutarch's description of Porcia's affection, virtue and intimate physical proximity to her husband leaves the reader with the impression that their marriage has reached the Aristotelian model of established mutual affection based on the love of each other's virtue, rather than a partnership of mere utility or pleasure.

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<sup>354</sup> Beneker (2012) 40.

<sup>355</sup> Plutarch also described Porcia as φρόνημα in the *De mul. vir.* 243c.

<sup>356</sup> Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1144b17, *Pol.* 1277b25. Aristotle believed φρόνημα was an essential element of a person's *ethos* (along with virtue and goodwill) and that both political and thinking abilities were required.

<sup>357</sup> *Amat.* 754d. Beneker (2012) 40-41.

<sup>358</sup> *Con. prae.* 141b.

Porcia's reaction to her husband reinforces this context of mutual understanding. Despite sensing her husband's turmoil, Porcia deems it sensible not to question Brutus until she had first tested herself. In secret, she takes a small knife and made a deep cut in her thigh, enough to lose a substantial amount of blood and cause a fever (13.4). Confronted by a distressed Brutus, Porcia speaks:

‘ἐγὼ, Βρούτε, Κάτωνος οὔσα θυγάτηρ εἰς τὸν σὸν ἐδόθην οἶκον οὐχ ὥσπερ αἱ παλλακευόμεναι, κοίτης μεθέξουσα καὶ τραπέζης μόνον, ἀλλὰ κοινωνὸς μὲν ἀγαθῶν εἶναι, κοινωνὸς δὲ ἀνιαρῶν. τὰ μὲν οὖν σὰ πάντα περὶ τὸν γάμον ἄμεμπτα: τῶν δὲ παρ’ ἐμοῦ τίς ἀπόδειξις ἢ χάρις, εἰ μήτε σοι πάθος ἀπόρρητον συνδιοίσω μήτε φροντίδα πίστεως δεομένην; οἶδ’ ὅτι γυναικεία φύσις ἀσθενὴς δοκεῖ λόγον ἐνεγκεῖν ἀπόρρητον ἀλλ’, ἔστι τίς, ὃ Βρούτε, καὶ τροφῆς ἀγαθῆς καὶ ὁμιλίας χρηστῆς εἰς ἧθος ἰσχύς: ἐμοὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ Κάτωνος εἶναι θυγατέρα καὶ τὸ Βρούτου γυναῖκα πρόσσεστιν οἷς πρότερον μὲν ἦττον ἐπεποίθειν, νῦν δ’ ἐμαυτὴν ἔγνωκα καὶ πρὸς πόνον ἀήττητον εἶναι.’ (13.4-5)

*‘Brutus, I am Cato's daughter, and I was brought into your house, not, like a concubine to merely share your bed and board, but to be a partner in your good fortunes and a partner in your troubles. You are entirely without reproach as a husband; but how can I demonstrate any gratitude if I can not bear with you your secret suffering nor the anxiety which need a trustworthy confidant? I know that woman's nature seems too weak to bear a secret but O Brutus, a good upbringing and good companionship strengthen one's character; and at least I can say that I am the daughter of Cato and the wife of Brutus. Before this I was less convinced by these (advantages), but now I know that I am superior even to pain.’*

There is much in her speech that re-confirms Porcia's status as the ideal marriage partner. Her aims are two-fold: to define her relationship with Brutus and secondly, to establish her capacity and thus the right to share in her husband's troubles.<sup>359</sup> She claims her right as a wife to be Brutus' partner (κοινωνός) in both times of joy and trouble, rather than a mere concubine to be used for utility and pleasure. Just as Brutus' philosophical education and persuasive qualities have strengthened his character, her good upbringing (τροφῆς ἀγαθῆς) and companionship with Brutus (ὁμιλίας) have strengthened hers—the exact qualities with which Plutarch claimed a wife would gain the greatest hold over her husband. She reminds Brutus of her qualities in order to remind him of their partnership, one that has been cemented by an attraction of each other's virtues. Significantly, Porcia is not seeking to influence Brutus' activities in any way but merely to share his troubles. She is the quintessential

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<sup>359</sup> Buszard (2010) 87.

‘good’ wife who restricts herself to the private sphere only, understanding that her husband’s public activities are his domain. Her self-inflicted wound also reminds the reader of her father Cato, while the nature of her self-mutilation parallels that of the Stoic Arria Major, who Pliny described as stabbing herself as a didactic example for her husband.<sup>360</sup> The relationship between Roman self-sacrifice and the common good is made explicit.

Her gratitude (χάρις), which she feels she must share with him, calls to mind Plutarch’s precept that the mutual kindness of marriage (χαίρειν) fosters dear love, which fosters a relationship where there is neither ‘yours’ and ‘mine’ but a joining of souls and mutual respect.<sup>361</sup> As a partner, Porcia must give kindness and expect it in return, a reciprocal arrangement that Volumnia called attention to in her speech to Coriolanus (albeit in the context of a parent-child relationship). Having recited her credentials, Porcia expects to be a partner in Brutus’ secret *pathos*. In case he is unsure that she has the strength to bear his anxieties, she reminds him twice that she is the daughter of Cato. By bearing the physical pain of her wound, she honours both her heritage and the marriage partnership. As a result, Porcia demonstrates the source and strength of her *nous*, despite her closing remark that she was until that point, unsure if her virtues were enough.<sup>362</sup> By wounding herself, Porcia tested herself as much as she did the validity of their relationship.

In contrast, Dio portrays Porcia’s response in a different light, claiming that Porcia questioned Brutus and on receiving no reply, assumed that he distrusted her resolve on account of her feminine frailty. She tells him; ‘so do not fear, but tell me everything you are concealing from me, for neither fire, nor lashes, nor goads will force me to divulge a word; I was not born to that extent a woman. Hence, if you still distrust me, it is better for me to die than to live; otherwise let no one think me longer the daughter of Cato or your wife.’<sup>363</sup> The anxiety of Dio’s Porcia is aimed solely at proving herself a worthy daughter and wife but she makes no reference to reciprocal nature of the marital partnership. In Plutarch, Brutus’ reply to Porcia is telling. Brutus lifts his hands to the heavens and prays to succeed in his conspiratory role so that he may prove himself a worthy husband (13.6). His reaction demonstrates his reciprocal affection and confirms that her claims of wifely virtue were valid.<sup>364</sup> Since Plutarch believed that the harmony of a true conjugal partnership paralleled the public

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<sup>360</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 3.16.

<sup>361</sup> *Amat.* 767e.

<sup>362</sup> Beneker (2012) 42.

<sup>363</sup> Cass. Dio 44.13.1-4. Trans. Cary (1916).

<sup>364</sup> Beneker (2012) 43.

relationship between a ruler and the state, Brutus' confirmation of their mutual respect and affection strengthens his own resolve.<sup>365</sup>

Plutarch does not state that Brutus takes Porcia into his confidence at this point (Dio claims that he does), but later in the narrative he notes that on the day appointed for the assassination, Brutus left home with a dagger 'to the knowledge of his wife alone' (14.3), confirming the success of Porcia's speech.<sup>366</sup> However, despite her proven physical resolve, Porcia cannot contain her distress and anxiety on the appointed day. She is so distressed waiting for news that she can only remain within the house with difficulty. At every sound, 'like women in the Bacchic frenzy' (ὅσπερ αἱ κατάσχετοι τοῖς βακχικοῖς πάθεσιν, 15.4) Porcia and her women seek news until overcome with nervous exhaustion, she collapses and faints in her bed-chamber. The emotive language (distressed, frenzied, enfeebled with madness, faint with helpless stupor, unable to speak, 15.4-5) is stereotypically weak and feminine.<sup>367</sup> In private, Porcia can release and reflect the anxieties that Brutus was previously churning over in a gendered and appropriate way.

The tumult raised by Porcia is so great that a rumour soon spreads that she is dead and a messenger is sent to Brutus informing him of her demise. Brutus's reaction is restrained. Although thrown into confusion (συνεταράχθη) by the news, nevertheless he did not abandon his public duty (τὸ κοινὸν), nor was he driven by his affliction (ὑπὸ τοῦ πάθους) to dwell on his private concerns (τὸ οἰκεῖον, 15.6). Despite his regard for Porcia, his ability to put his public duty ahead of his private life reconfirms his self-restraint, a test that Coriolanus, Antony and Pompey all failed.<sup>368</sup> Brutus' political virtue is thus a reflection of the virtuous state of his marriage.

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<sup>365</sup> *De virt. mor.* 448d–f.

<sup>366</sup> Cass. Dio 44.13.1. Plutarch does mention in his biography of the elder Cato that Porcia knew of the conspiracy (*Cat. Min.* 73.4). In an interesting parallel, Caesar delays his arrival to the Senate on the day appointed because of his respect for his wife's premonition of his impending death (*Caes.* 63.5-7).

<sup>367</sup> ἐκπαθῆς, ἐξελύθη καὶ κατεμαραίνεται τῆς ψυχῆς ἀλυούσης διὰ τὴν ἀπορίαν, λιποθυμία καὶ θάμβος ἀμήχανον, τὴν φωνὴν ἐπέσχητο παντάπασι.

<sup>368</sup> Note the parallel again with Caesar; both men acknowledge their wives' distress (*Caes.* 63.7) but put their public duty first, despite the close relationship each appears to have with his wife.

## Porcia as Andromache

Porcia next appears after Caesar's assassination, in the midst of the resulting civic chaos. Cicero notes that Porcia was present at the tyrannicide's conference at Antium, which suggests a degree of political involvement.<sup>369</sup> In Plutarch's narrative, it is only when Brutus decides to leave Italy for Greece that the reader learns that Porcia is also present and due to return to Rome (23.2). Trying to conceal her distress at leaving Brutus, a painting of Andromache bidding farewell to Hektor catches Porcia's eye and betrays her despite her Catonian noble spirit (*γενναίαν*, 23.2).<sup>370</sup> When she examined the painting, she burst into tears and would revisit the painting several times a day in tears. In response, a friend of Brutus, Acilius, recites to him Andromache's words to Hektor when she calls him, her father, mother, brother and husband (23.3), intimating that Porcia's fixation on the painting signifies her total dependence on Brutus.<sup>371</sup> Like Andromache, who had lost her entire natal family, Porcia views Brutus as a surrogate for her late father Cato.<sup>372</sup>

Brutus smiles at Acilius' words and replies that he will not quote Hektor's reply that Andromache should go back to weaving, for 'although her body is not strong enough to perform such heroic tasks as men do, still, in spirit she will act most nobly in defence of her country (*ὑπὲρ τῆς πατρίδος*), just like us' (23.3-4).<sup>373</sup> Rejecting Hektor's differentiation between men and women, Brutus instead claims that Porcia's patriotism on a philosophical level is just as valid as a man's, a reflection of Plutarch's comments in the *Amatorius*.<sup>374</sup> By subverting the Homeric text, Brutus creates a superior Roman version where Porcia's moral courage and civic virtue surpass that of Andromache, whose lament is focused only on her own personal circumstances. In fact, Brutus' affirmation of Porcia's courage is a direct result of her successful rhetoric and self-mutilation, further reinforcing Plutarch's presentation of his civically minded women as both articulate and persuasive.<sup>375</sup>

Plutarch develops the intimate association between Porcia and Brutus in a later anecdote. Before the outbreak of hostilities, Brutus was lauded by his friends in anticipation of their upcoming victory.

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<sup>369</sup> Cic. *Att.* 15.11. He comments in his letter that Brutus asked him in front of Porcia, Tertulla (Cassius' wife and Brutus' half-sister) and Servilia (Brutus' mother) what he should do next (*deinde multis audientibus, Servilia, Tertulla, Porcia, quaerere quid placeret*) Thus Porcia was at least privy to the political talks.

<sup>370</sup> Liddell-Scott: *γενναῖος* can also be interpreted as true to one's birth or descent, as well as high born or noble.

<sup>371</sup> Hom. *Il.* 6.429-30.

<sup>372</sup> Hallett (1984) 58.

<sup>373</sup> Hom. *Il.* 6.490-1.

<sup>374</sup> *Amat.* 769c. See n. 16.

<sup>375</sup> Buszard (2010) 88.

Brutus raised a beaker in a toast and recited the words of Patrokles to Hektor: ‘but I am killed by malevolent Fate and Leto's son’ (24.2).<sup>376</sup> Plutarch then adds that his watchword at Philippi was ‘Apollo,’ a decision Plutarch’s sources concluded was a presage to his defeat (24.5). By anticipating his eventual military defeat, Brutus appears to be in the same frame of mind as Porcia when she saw the painting of Andromache. Furthermore, Plutarch expressly puts husband and wife side by side in the *Mulierum virtutes* when he claims that the only way to compare male and female virtue is to put ‘lives beside lives and actions beside actions, and to consider whether the high spirit of Porcia (τὸ Πορκίας φρόνημα) was the same as that of Brutus.’<sup>377</sup> Brutus and Porcia are indeed mirror images of each other.

### **Death of Porcia**

Brutus is defeated at Philippi and Plutarch, like Appian, relates that Antony sent his ashes home to his mother Servilia (53.3).<sup>378</sup> On hearing the news, Porcia decides that she wants to die. Under strict watch by her friends who anticipated such a response, she resorted to quickly snatching up some live coals and swallowing them, Plutarch claiming Nicolaus of Damascus and Valerius Maximus as his sources (53.4).<sup>379</sup> However he explains that there was an extant letter from Brutus to his friends, in which he laments her death due to their neglect of her while ill that apparently drove her to prefer death to life. He adds; ‘it would seem, then, that Nicolaus was mistaken in the time of her death, since her suffering and love for Brutus (πάθος καὶ τὸν ἔρωτα) and the manner of her death, are also indicated in the letter, if, indeed, it is a genuine one’ (53.5). Plutarch concedes that the letter may not be authentic. However two letters from Cicero to Brutus seem to confirm that Porcia died before Brutus, possibly from an illness, indicating that Plutarch may have been aware of the existence of one or both letters.<sup>380</sup> Nevertheless, the depiction of Porcia as the ideal, loyal Roman wife who personified her father’s fighting spirit was well entrenched by Plutarch’s time. Martial and Valerius Maximus both framed Porcia’s death as that of a worthy daughter of Cato, which perhaps explains why Plutarch included the story of her apparent suicide alongside the more reliable account of her death.<sup>381</sup> Certainly, the suicide account fits his own characterisation of Porcia as courageous and philosophically principled.

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<sup>376</sup> Hom. *Il.* 16.849.

<sup>377</sup> *De mul. vir.* 243c.

<sup>378</sup> App. *B. Civ.* 4:135.

<sup>379</sup> Also App. *B. Civ.* 4.17.136. Cass. Dio 47.49.3.

<sup>380</sup> Cic. *Ad Brut.* 1.9, 1.17.

<sup>381</sup> Mart. 1.42. Val Max. 4.6.5.

By including both versions of Porcia's death, Plutarch is able to reinforce the importance of the conjugal partnership between husband and wife. In the first story, Porcia's earlier self-mutilation and subsequent suicide underscores her Catonian heritage and her characterisation as an exemplary wife. Her desire for death is a direct result of Brutus' change of fortune, for Plutarch considered that 'the concerns of husband and wife should be intertwined like the fibres of a rope.'<sup>382</sup> On the other hand, the second story focuses on Porcia's authentic emotions. Plutarch's sympathetic description of Porcia's πάθος καὶ τὸν ἔρωτα reflects her virtuous love of Brutus' body and soul, rather than a simple physical desire.<sup>383</sup> Like Cornelia, Porcia is a virtuous *exemplum* but also a simultaneous victim of her husband's public actions.

Overall, Plutarch's presentation of Brutus is a positive one. Despite his too-rigid adherence to his philosophical ideals, Plutarch only references two major mistakes or weaknesses in the *Comparison*; the assassination of his 'preserver' Caesar (3.3) and the fact that when defeated, 'he gave up and abandoned his hopes, not even facing adverse fortune with as much resolution as Pompey' (3.2). His hatred of tyranny was sincere (εἰλικρινές, 3.4) and above all, his actions were in defence of common liberty (κοινῆς ἐλευθερίας, 3.4) and the common good (τὸ κοινῆ συμφέρον, 3.5). As Plato claimed that the city whose state is most like that of an individual man is best if well governed, the moral virtues of Brutus and Porcia, honed through philosophical training, embody Rome's best qualities.<sup>384</sup> Thus, the virtues of Porcia, exemplified through the conjugal relationship, mirror and amplify Brutus' own sterling qualities and confirm Plutarch's own views on *paideia* and marriage as the ideal foundations for both personal and political ethics.

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<sup>382</sup> *Con. prae.* 140d.

<sup>383</sup> Beneker (2012) 43.

<sup>384</sup> *Pl. Resp.* 542c-e.

## **The *Life of Gaius Gracchus***

The *Lives of the Gracchi* are the only twin biographies of the *Parallel Lives* (in *synkresis* with the *Agis-Cleomenes*), with the *Gaius* immediately picking up where the *Tiberius* ends. Plutarch obviously viewed the career of each Gracchus as similarly important to the development of the Roman state as he knew it. Unlike many of his other biographies that span childhood to death, the *Lives of the Gracchi* are heavily condensed in order to focus mainly on the years of their tribuneships.<sup>385</sup> We have little to no details regarding their early life, except for extended anecdotes that Plutarch focused on their mother Cornelia. In fact, the imposing presence of Cornelia looms large in both biographies, as the *Tiberius* opens with an extended description of her virtue and exemplary education of her sons, and the *Gaius* ends not with his violent death, but with Plutarch's account of Cornelia's resolute character after the loss of both her sons. The importance of Cornelia in the narrative, despite the fact that she does not speak, reinforces Plutarch's conviction that *paideia* is a crucial component of moral virtue.

Aside from the influence of Cornelia, the only other woman who has a measure of visibility in the *Lives of the Gracchi* is Licinia, the wife of Gaius. However, unlike Cornelia and Porcia, Plutarch gives us no background information about Licinia. She only enters the narrative at a time of crisis to deliver a speech to her husband and then retreats. As such, her role cannot be viewed as an integral part of the ethical framework of the *Life* to the same extent as the previous female speeches. However, her direct discourse still addresses some of the ethical themes of the twin *Lives*. Of particular interest however, in contrast to the previous examples of female speech examined, Licinia's speech scene does not highlight either the ethical strengths or weaknesses of Gaius, but both.

### **Sources**

The source material on the Gracchi brothers is decidedly mixed, owing to both positive and negative traditions of the men's careers. Plutarch cites contemporary sources including their mother Cornelia's letters (*Gaius* 13.2); the *Annals* of Gaius Fannius (who served with Tiberius in Africa, *Tib.* 4.5); Cornelius Nepos (*Tib.* 21.2); Polybius (*Tib.* 4.3) and Cicero (*Gaius* 1.6).<sup>386</sup> He also cites the brothers' own speeches (*Tib.* 15.1, 9.4) and a political pamphlet written by Gaius (*Tib.* 8.7), all of which provide real historical value. The later accounts of Cicero, Livy, Dio and Valerius Maximus present a begrudging account of each brother's virtues with a mostly negative interpretation of their

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<sup>385</sup> Stadter (1999a) 78-80.

<sup>386</sup> Stadter (1999a) 78-80.



motivations and aims, while Appian and Aulus Gellius preserve a more positive tradition.<sup>387</sup> For the *Gaius* in particular, both Plutarch and Appian appear to work from a shared, mostly complete source for the majority of their information regarding Gaius' career and accomplishments.<sup>388</sup> Plutarch's tone is positive on the whole, allowing him to illustrate the Gracchi's overall virtue, only turning to more negative accounts to expand on occasional detail and illustrate their ethical weaknesses.

### **Ethical Framework- Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi and *paideia***

In the opening chapters of the *Tiberius*, Plutarch describes the virtues of the brothers' parents, but with a focus on Cornelia rather than on their father Tiberius. Left as a young widow of twelve children, Plutarch relates that she showed herself to be so restrained, so good a mother and so magnanimous (σώφρονα καὶ φιλότεκνον καὶ μεγαλόψυχον, 1.4), that her husband was thought to have done well in electing to die instead of such a woman.<sup>389</sup> Her education of her two sons was so comprehensive that 'while no other Roman was so well endowed by nature, they were really thought to owe their virtues more to education (πεπαιδεῦσθαι) than to nature' (*Tib.* 1.5). Aside from education, each brother appears to have inherited certain virtues from Cornelia. Both are described as restrained and magnanimous (σωφροσύνην καὶ μεγαλοψυχίαν, *Tib.* 2.1), a magnanimity confirmed by Gaius' actions in sparing Octavius at his mother's request (*Gaius* 4.2-3). However, their additional talents of courage and eloquence (ἀνδρείαν καὶ λογιότητα) must be seen as a direct result of their philosophic education, Plutarch claiming in the *Comparison* that; 'of all Romans they were best equipped by nature for the practice of virtue and enjoyed a rearing and training which were preeminent' (*Comp.* 1.1).<sup>390</sup>

As an *exemplum* of Stoic courage who does not utter a single word in either biography, yet is publicly honoured by the Roman people, Plutarch uses Cornelia in an almost separate ethical function from the framework of Gaius' life. She is a didactic example of virtue for his female readers to follow.

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<sup>387</sup> Dijkstra (2010) 10. Cic. *De or.* 1.9.38, 3.60.225; *Har. resp.* 19.41; *Brut.* 27.103-4, 33.125-6; Livy 38.53.6, 39.5.2-6, 43.16.8-16; *Per.* 58, 60; Cass. Dio 25.85.2-3; Val. Max. 1.6, 3.2, 4.1, 4.6, 4.7, 6.5, 6.8, 8.10; App. *B.C* 1.1.9-1.5.34; Gell. *NA* 10.3, 11.13.1-4;

<sup>388</sup> Dijkstra (2010) 81. There are more disagreements and overt shifts of tone between Plutarch and Appian in the *Life of Tiberius* than the *Life of Gaius*.

<sup>389</sup> Plutarch recounts the tale that Tiberius once caught a pair of serpents on his bed, and soothsayers, after considering the prodigy, forbade him to kill both serpents or to let both go, but to decide the fate of one or the other of them, declaring also that the male serpent, if killed, would bring death to Tiberius, and the female, to Cornelia. Tiberius, who loved his wife (φιλοῦντα τὴν γυναῖκα) killed the male serpent, but let the female go (*Tib.* 1.2-3). Holden (1885) 54; Cornelia demonstrated her *μεγαλοψυχία* by refusing the hand of Ptolemy, her *σωφροσύνη* by remaining a widow.

<sup>390</sup> Plutarch compares the brothers with Agis and Cleomenes who appeared to have had even sturdier natural gifts than theirs, although they did not receive correct training (*παιδείας ὀρθῆς*, *Comp.* 1.2).

Educated, restrained and a faithful *univira*, as Stadter comments, her reaction at her sons' deaths reflects 'the philosophically grounded self-possession that [Plutarch] expected of his wife Timoxena in the *Consolatio*.'<sup>391</sup> Indeed, in the final chapter of the *Gaius*, Plutarch comments that people who believed that Cornelia's calm assurance was due to her old age or an impairment of the mind did not understand that such control arose from 'a good disposition and an honourable birth and rearing (ἐξ εὐφυΐας καὶ τοῦ γεγονέναι καὶ τετράφθαι καλῶς, 19.3). Thus, while Fortune 'often prevails over virtue when it endeavours to ward off evils, she cannot rob virtue (ἀρετή) of the power to endure those evils with circumspection' (εὐλογίστως, 19.3). Her control echoes that of of Volumnia—also a widowed *univira* with a strong influence over her progeny. Cornelia's virtue, shaped by education, provided her with steadfast self-restraint, a quality which as we have seen, is a difficult one to master.

Cornelia's importance thus firmly established in both biographies, Plutarch opens the *Gaius* by noting that the man himself was rather reluctant to follow the political footsteps of his family (1.1-4). However, Gaius had a dream in which Tiberius appeared and asked why he hesitated, for he claimed that Fate had decreed the same death for both of them as champions of the people (1.6). This vision (and its exhortation to work for the *populus*) apparently convinced Gaius of the necessity of a public life.<sup>392</sup> Despite this initial reluctance, Gaius' education and inherited virtues means that he possessed many of the key traits of the ideal statesman. Like Brutus, he is described as virtuous (ἀρετῆς), just in his dealings (πρὸς τοὺς ὑπηκόους δικαίως) and a man who excelled his elders in self-restraint (σωφροσύνη, 2.1, *Comp.* 1.4). His refusal to act violently against the state or even in his own self-defence confirms his statesmanship, as Plutarch also claims that the application of violence by a statesman, except under extreme necessity, is both unjust and cruel (*Comp.* 4.2).<sup>393</sup> His ability to retain his dignity (τὸ σεμνὸν ἐν τῷ φιλανθρώπῳ διαφυλάττων, 6.4) in his interaction with the people is also a characteristic of Plutarch's great statesmen such as Pericles (*Per.* 5.3, 39.3) and Cato the Elder (*Cat. Maj.* 6.4).<sup>394</sup> As Roskam notes, 'if Gaius meets this high ideal, that can only mean that he far surpasses the level of an ordinary demagogue.'<sup>395</sup>

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<sup>391</sup> Stadter (1999a) 81.

<sup>392</sup> Also Cic. *De div.* 1.26, 56.

<sup>393</sup> Plutarch uses ὄχλος four times in *Gaius*: once in noting the common opinion that Gaius wanted to win the favour of the mob, but then adds that this was not the truth (1.5); twice to describe the sheer number of common people who poured into Rome for elections (3.1, 12.1) and once to describe Fulvius' rabble, gathered against the wishes of Gaius.

<sup>394</sup> Roskam (2011) 220. Plutarch indeed believed that such σεμνότης could perfectly be combined with social affability and humanity. This appears in a celebrated passage near the end of his *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae*, where he enthusiastically describes the virtuous politician who enjoys the goodwill of his people (822f–823e).

<sup>395</sup> Roskam (2011) 220.

Nevertheless, Gaius was subject to his passions and he often let his anger affect his oratory (*Tib.* 2.4-5, *Gaius* 3.2). When he is heckled with references to his mother, Gaius replies with the bitterness (πικρία) that was apparently evident in his writings (4.4). And like the partnership of the virtuous Brutus with the intemperate Cassius, Gaius' friendship with the turbulent and unrestrained Fulvius meant that he incurred the wrath of the Senate and the suspicion of the people despite his good intentions (10.3-4, 14-15). By presenting a generally positive account of Gaius' legislation (his construction of roads, founding of cities and a reconstitution of the courts, *Comp.* 1.5), Plutarch makes it clear, as with Romulus and Brutus, that Gaius' intent was for the common good. He asks; 'what could be more just and honourable than their original design?' (*Comp.* 5.5). In fact, he asserts that Gaius was the foremost man of his generation in virtue and reputation (ἀρετῇ καὶ δόξῃ, 18.1).

### ***Doxa* and the common good**

The importance of *doxa* and the danger of the immoderate pursuit of fame (*philotimia*) is a theme of the twin biographies, one that Plutarch introduces in the opening chapters of the *Agis*.<sup>396</sup> He opens the biography with the tale of Ixion, who embraced Hera as a cloud and produced the Centaurs. Plutarch warns that this tale has an application for lovers of glory (τοὺς φιλοδόξους); 'for consorting with glory which is only a mere image of virtue (ἀρετῇ) produces nothing that is genuine and of true lineage, but much that is misshapen or unnatural' (*Agis* 1.1). Plutarch insists that glory itself is not harmful as the virtues of the budding young man need to be confirmed with praise and confidence. Once again with Plutarch, it is excess that is detrimental (*Agis*. 1.3). In the *Comparison*, he claims that the Gracchi brothers were accused by their detractors of being 'immoderately ambitious' by nature (τῇ φύσει φιλοτιμίας ἀμετρίαν, *Comp.* 5.4), but in the *Agis*, he claims that it was not their immoderate desire for glory (ἐπιθυμία δόξης ἄμετρος, 2.4) that ruined them, but their fear of losing it.

Rather than being a fear of losing one's individual reputation, Plutarch frames it as a fear of losing the family's reputation, claiming that they 'were prevented by a sense of shame from abandoning what was like an inheritance of virtue from ancestors near and remote' (*Comp.* 1.3). Furthermore, Cornelia is blamed in the *Tiberius* for pressuring her sons to achieve in the political arena so that she could be known as the mother of the Gracchi rather than the mother-in-law of Scipio (*Tib.* 8.5). Indeed, Cornelia's yearning for public recognition as a mother of famous sons parallels Volumnia's

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<sup>396</sup> The theme of the pursuit of ambition and fame was an important one in the *Lives*; Plutarch alludes to or at least mentions this topic in nearly every biography. The key difference with the biographies of Agis/Cleomenes and the Gracchi is that the *proem* to the *Agis* is entirely devoted to the question of the love of fame (φιλοδοξία) and its negative connotations. See Roskam (2011).

claim that her loss of Coriolanus' glory and excellence (δόξα καὶ ἀρετή) inflicted a greater punishment on her personally than anyone (*Cor.* 33.5).

And like Volumnia, whose maternal authority was detrimental to her son (but eventually beneficial for Rome), the pressure of Gaius' family lineage is a double-edged sword. His mother's training and expectations provides him multiple opportunities but also condemns him to follow the same fateful path as his brother. This perhaps explains why Plutarch is eager to absolve the Gracchi of the flaw of immoderate glory, noting that such accusations are 'not the truth' (*Gaius* 1.5) or are levelled 'by others' (*Tib.* 8.6) or enemies (*Comp.* 5.4). Rather than an immoderate pursuit of glory, Plutarch instead claims that it was 'the fury of the contest with their opponents and by a spiritedness contrary to their own nature (θυμῷ παρὰ τὴν αὐτῶν φύσιν) that created the violent storm that claimed their lives' (*Comp.* 5.4). He explicitly makes the parallel with Agis, only to reject it. The combination of his family reputation and his reliance on the multitude were the real factors behind his downfall, which explains how Plutarch could preserve a pro-Gracchan stance in the Gaius despite his ultimate failure. Indeed, his description of Gaius' virtue and reputation (ἀρετῇ καὶ δόξῃ, 18.1), which Roskam calls unproblematic in itself, reinforces Plutarch's amalgam of diametrically opposed perspectives that are effectively resolved by Gaius' pursuit of the common good.<sup>397</sup> However, the forthcoming speech by Gaius' wife, Licinia, questions whether his pursuit of *doxa* and the good of the state are truly aligned.

### **Theatricality and Tragedy: The Speech of Licinia**

The lack of Plutarch's typical outline of his female speaker's virtues and/or family lineage means the reader has little conception of Licinia's qualities.<sup>398</sup> Moreover, in contrast to Pompey's Cornelia and Brutus' Porcia, there are no allusions or descriptions of the conjugal relationship between husband and wife. This unique presentation of the lamenting wife may be due to the significant influence of Cornelia and her own sterling virtues throughout the narrative. A prominent role for both mother and wife would weaken Gaius' moral autonomy in the narrative, as we have seen with the prominence of women in the *Antony*. Instead the authority of the mother effectively obliterates the role of the wife, as Volumnia does to Coriolanus' wife (whom Plutarch does not even name in the *Coriolanus*). Licinia is almost invisible in the Roman tradition, apart from the publicised decision by the *pontifex maximus* Publius Scaevola regarding the confiscation of her dowry after Gaius' murder (which is preserved in

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<sup>397</sup> Roskam (2011) 221.

<sup>398</sup> Plutarch only briefly mentions that she was the wife of Gaius, noting that Cornelius Nepos instead claimed that Gaius' wife was the daughter of the Brutus who triumphed over the Lusitanians. He plumps instead for the majority of the writers who believed that Licinia was Gaius' wife (*Tib.* 21.1).

the sixth book of Iavolemus' commentaries on the posthumous writings of Labeo).<sup>399</sup> Perhaps, as a relatively unknown wife, Plutarch saw no reason to amplify her qualities or position in the narrative unlike others like Octavia and Pompey's wife Cornelia who were at least referenced in Latin literature.

As a result, Licinia only enters the narrative to deliver a mourning speech to her husband. At this point in the narrative, Gaius has annoyed his colleagues by refraining from actively aiding his guest-friends and allies (a key element of his tribunican role) and by removing seating from a gladiatorial exhibition because his commands had been ignored (12.3-4, 13.1). To the senate and his more intemperate friends like Fulvius, Gaius is behaving recklessly and tension mounts. When the new consul Opimius begins to revoke Gaius' laws, Opimius calls the *equites* to arms and Gaius finds himself nominally in charge of a faction itching to fight. The day before both factions were due to meet, Gaius 'stopped in front of his father's statue, gazed at it for a long time without uttering a word, then burst into tears, and with a groan departed' (14.4). Gaius recognises that the illustrious dignity that belonged to his father is unlikely to prevail in an armed confrontation. Neither does it appear likely that there will be any public benefit to the next day's proceedings. Plutarch seems to suggest therefore that Gaius' decision to go the Forum on the day of his death, despite his misgivings, indicates that he is guilty of chasing an imitation of virtue like Ixion.

Despite the impending public misfortune (συμφορᾶ κοινῇ), Gaius prepares the next morning to go to the Forum, apparently unwilling to arm himself, although Plutarch notes that he carried 'only' a short dagger on his person (15.2). Wiseman, Beness and Hillard have all noted the inherent theatricality of the scenes on the eve of Gaius' death in Plutarch's account that suggests a literal Roman theatrical scenario.<sup>400</sup> Although the theme of betrayed friendship, the variability of *dramatis personae* and the action of flight all contribute to such a theatrical re-construction of the public events, the dramatic role of Licinia's speech has been overlooked. In fact, Plutarch establishes the theatrical section of Gaius' downfall by drawing a tragic/epic parallel between Licinia's speech and Andromache's lament, therefore incorporating a private dimension to the unfolding public crisis. Her speech thus serves to heighten the tension and reflect on Gaius' state of mind and inevitable fate.

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<sup>399</sup> *Dig.* 24.3.66pr: see Radin (1913) 354.

<sup>400</sup> Beness & Hillard (2001) 135.

When Gaius is about to depart, Licinia blocks his way and with one arm around her husband and the other around their little son, she speaks:

‘οὐκ ἐπὶ τὸ βῆμά σε,’ εἶπεν, ‘ὦ Γάιε, προπέμπω δῆμαρχον, ὡς πρότερον, καὶ νομοθέτην, οὐδ’ ἐπὶ πόλεμον ἔνδοξον, ἵνα μοι καὶ παθῶν τι τῶν κοινῶν ἀπολίπης τιμώμενον γοῦν πένθος, ἀλλὰ τοῖς Τιβερίου φονεῦσιν ὑποβάλλεις ἑαυτόν, ἄνοπλον μὲν καλῶς, ἵνα πάθῃς τι μᾶλλον ἢ δράσης, πρὸς οὐδέν δὲ τοῖς κοινοῖς ὄφελος ἀπολεῖ. κεκράτηκεν ἤδη τὰ χεῖρω: βία καὶ σιδήρῳ τὰς δίκας πράττουσιν. εἰ περὶ Νομαντίαν ὁ σὸς ἀδελφὸς ἔπεσεν, ὑπόσπονδος ἂν ἡμῖν ἀπεδόθη νεκρός: νῦν δὲ ἴσως κάγῳ ποταμοῦ τινος ἢ θαλάττης ἰκέτις ἔσομαι φῆναί ποτε τὸ σὸν σῶμα φρουρούμενον. τί γὰρ ἢ νόμοις ἔτι πιστὸν ἢ θεοῖς μετὰ τὸν Τιβερίου φόνον;’ (15.2-3)

*‘Not to the rostra, O Gaius, do I now send you forth as tribune and lawgiver, as on previous occasion, nor yet to a glorious war, where the common fate of all such men would at least leave me an honoured sorrow; but you are throwing yourself under the feet of Tiberius’ murderers and you do well to go unarmed, that you may suffer rather than inflict wrong; on the other hand, your death will do the state no good. The worst has at last prevailed; by violence and the sword men’s controversies are now decided. If your brother had only fallen at Numantia, his dead body would have been given back to us by terms of truce; but as it is, perhaps I too shall have to supplicate some river or sea to reveal to me at last your body in its keeping. For why, should men put faith in laws or gods, after the murder of Tiberius?’*

Like Andromache who carried Astyanax and spoke of her dead family, Licinia also approaches her husband with her child in her arms, speaking of Tiberius. Her use of προπέμπω echoes Plutarch’s use in the Brutus in describing the meeting of Andromache and Hector at the Scaean gate (προπεμπόμενος, Brut. 23.3).<sup>401</sup> Likewise, she mentions Tiberius as a warning of a similar fate, just as Andromache warns Hektor that the Achaeans will kill him.<sup>402</sup> However, in a subversion of Andromache’s words, Licinia makes it clear that she is not sending her husband off in his official capacity as tribune, nor to war. Instead, she understands that Gaius is choosing to put himself in the way of his murderers (ὑποβάλλεις ἑαυτόν) and so the forthcoming day will bring forth violence rather than honour. Gaius is thus making an individualistic decision to go to the Forum, in contrast to his mandated roles as politician and warrior.

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<sup>401</sup> Buszard (2010) 88.

<sup>402</sup> Hom. *Il.* 6.410.

Furthermore, although Licinia describes her impending distress in a similar manner to Andromache, she makes no attempt to dissuade her husband from leaving like the Trojan princess.<sup>403</sup> Although she carries her son in her arms, she does not use him as emotional blackmail as Andromache does with Astyanax.<sup>404</sup> Certainly, the Roman wife appears to be more profoundly affected by the expected loss of her husband; Andromache sheds a tear but Licinia physically collapses and must be carried away (15.4). Indeed, as Buszard notes, the constructed parallel between the two women only serves to highlight the fundamental differences between them, for although Licinia is grief-stricken, she nevertheless places honour and the state before her private feelings.<sup>405</sup>

Employing another contrasting statement, Licinia claims that on one hand (μὲν), it is good that Gaius will go unarmed to the Forum, but on the other hand (δὲ), it will do the state no good. As with Cornelia, Volumnia, Hersilia and Octavia, the primary concern for Licinia is for the welfare of Rome over her own personal grief. However, unlike the other women, Licinia's use of contrast implies a subtle criticism of Gaius' self-sacrifice, for such an act is pointless if it can bring no benefit for the state. Andromache understands that Hektor pursues the common good by going forth into battle, yet laments her own private circumstances. Licinia in contrast is willing for her husband to do his civic duty, yet because his actions will not benefit the state, she cannot send him away to glory—an honour that she ought to share as his widow. Her gentle reproach echoes the harsher criticism of his mother Cornelia, who lamented her lack of public repute as the mother of famous sons.

Likewise, in a parallel with Pompey's wife Cornelia, Licinia also speaks of an alternate scenario if only Fate had been kinder. She muses aloud that if Tiberius had only met a honourable soldier's death, the inexorable chain of events unfolding before her could have been avoided. Her 'if only' lament reflects the passive nature of her role as a private wife and mother, for like Cornelia and Porcia, Licinia does not attempt to influence political events in any way. Tiberius' murder has upset the sacrosanctity of the tribuneship, a moral confusion which she intimates will become even greater with Gaius' death. In fact, not only will his death be futile, it also has the potential to further damage the state, for as she asks, 'why, should men put faith in laws or gods, after the murder of Tiberius?' This is a warning to Gaius that he should not expect his opponents to respect the law if violence breaks out. In fact, if he (as she expects) is killed in a similar manner to his brother, the sanctity of

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<sup>403</sup> Hom. *Il.* 6.430.

<sup>404</sup> Hom. *Il.* 6.405: 'neither do you have any pity for your infant child nor for hapless me that soon shall be your widow.'

<sup>405</sup> Buszard (2010) 88-89.

law and custom is even less likely to be upheld. While Gaius' virtue and reputation theoretically remain intact due to his honourable intentions (and his decision to go 'unarmed'), Licinia's speech actually questions the extent to which his virtue is linked to the common good.

In addition, Licinia's question regarding laws and the gods has personal repercussions. Her claim that she will have to supplicate 'some river or sea to reveal to me at last your body' strikes a plaintive note, for she has already made it clear that the gods do not appear to be listening after the death of Tiberius.<sup>406</sup> Not only that, Licinia envisages plucking her husband's corpse out of the Tiber, a far cry from the honourable death she would prefer to send him off to. The rhetorical twist is powerful and serves to remind Gaius of the dishonour awaiting both of them. Licinia, like Andromache, will suffer but her emphasis is mainly on the public reverberations of his act. However, she is clearly not averse to incorporating an element of *pathos* at the close of her address in order to dissuade her husband from leaving. Certainly Licinia's distress and graphic description of having to retrieve her husband's body demonstrates her own deep personal feelings, despite putting the state first.

Licinia's words have one more element in common with Andromache, Porcia and Cornelia. All four women are certain of the outcome of future events and mourn in advance for their husbands. Her reference to the manner of Tiberius' death matches Gaius' dream where Tiberius tells his brother that one life and one death is fated for them (1.6). Indeed, the prophecy is fulfilled, for Plutarch tells us that after that fateful day in the Forum, Gaius' body was thrown into the Tiber in the same manner as his brother. Furthermore, her claim that his death would not help the state is confirmed by the vindictiveness of Gaius' opponents in taking her dowry and forbidding her to mourn (17.5). Despite his death and the anger of the multitude, there is no political change, no revolution.

Therefore, whilst not as integral to the ethical framework of the *Life* as the other female speeches, Licinia's words nonetheless references Plutarch's warning in the *Agis* that the immoderate pursuit of glory made one a servant of the multitude rather than its ruler (*Agis* 1.2). Despite Gaius' concerns and anti-violence stance, he leaves Licinia as Hektor does Andromache but without a word of comfort or defence despite her prostration. Like Porcia, Licinia is rendered speechless and faints, yet Gaius (like Brutus) adheres to what he considers his public responsibilities, demonstrating his self-restraint despite an awaiting death. In fact, despite the overwhelmingly positive slant that permeates the

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<sup>406</sup> Holden (1885) 134 notes that the use of  $\nu\upsilon\nu\ \delta\epsilon$  ( $\nu\upsilon\nu\ \delta\epsilon\ \acute{\iota}\sigma\omega\varsigma\ \kappa\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omega\ \pi\omicron\tau\alpha\mu\omicron\upsilon\ \tau\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \eta\ \theta\alpha\lambda\acute{\alpha}\tau\tau\eta\varsigma$ ...) was commonly used to contradict the *protasis* of a hypothetical proposition, *i.e.* Tiberius' body was not given back after his murder but flung away, and so Licinia shall have 'to supplicate some rivergod' in order to retrieve his body.



narrative of both Gracchi, which in the first instance is bolstered by Cornelia's exemplary identity, Licia's speech introduces a slightly subversive reading of Gaius' motives. In spite of his undoubted virtues, his decision to go to the Forum concerned his own interpretation of virtue and excellence than it did the good of the state.

## Conclusion

Plutarch's characterisation of Cornelia, Porcia and Licia in private contexts poses an interesting comparison with the earlier female speeches. The resignation and even docility in the face of crisis contrasts Volumnia, Hersilia, Julia and Octavia's intercessions which suggests that Plutarch has purposely presented Licia, Porcia and Cornelia as his ideal Roman wives; women who have a measure of influence with their husbands but no political or public role of any significance. That an emphasis on wifely virtue was Plutarch's aim can be seen in how Cornelia, despite her pervasive authority, is accorded no direct discourse.<sup>407</sup> In a similar manner, Plutarch omits all references to the political machinations of Servilia in the *Brutus* that were commented on by his sources.<sup>408</sup> Thus Plutarch prioritises the private, conjugal role of the wives and the dramatic tension of their interaction with their husbands.

Plutarch's use of the Andromache parallel is also significant. He presents all three wives, who face a future of uncertainty, loss and even dishonour as superior women to Hektor's wife, for they are concerned for their husbands and the state over their own grief and future. This is no surprise, for the civic values inherent in the speeches of his other Roman women indicate that he wished to emphasise these very virtues in the dramatic and often tragic context of their action and direct discourse. Like the climactic speeches of Volumnia and Cleopatra, those of Cornelia and Licia highlight the tragic deaths of their husbands. As Papadi notes, at the point of Cornelia's speech in the *Pompey*, tragedy no longer contrasts with Pompey's reality but instead specifies it and takes it over, a situation that is just as applicable to the penultimate chapters of the *Brutus* and *Gaius*.<sup>409</sup>

Each woman's speech highlights differing aspects of their husband's ethical makeup. Cornelia's speech reinforces the effects of Pompey's ethical weakness, while the speech of Porcia reflects

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<sup>407</sup> We know that Plutarch was willing to create direct discourse where there had been none in the tradition (Octavia for example).

<sup>408</sup> For example, Cicero details her active participation with the other conspirators (Cic. *Att.* 15.24, 15.11, 12.1). The only reminder of her action is Plutarch's comment that Brutus's restraint contrasted his mother who burned with passion for Caesar (ὁ ἔρωσ ἐπέφλεγε, 5.2).

<sup>409</sup> Papadi (2007) 111.

Brutus' admirable qualities. As mirror images of each other, the virtues of husband and wife combine to produce a more positive image of Brutus than that of Pompey, whose fundamental lack of self-awareness drags both himself and his wife to ruin. While Pompey was no slave to *eros* as Antony was, Plutarch's criticism, as Beneker observes, is not on the nature of Pompey's conjugal relationships, but rather the degree to which he allowed his private life influence his public actions.<sup>410</sup> Licia's direct discourse is the most complex of the three wifely speeches since she both acknowledges the impending sacrifice of her husband but simultaneously questions the utility of his actions. Her words acknowledge the gap between Gaius' idealism and the reality of Late Republican political violence, providing an authentic Roman context to what is essentially, a traditional female lament.

The characterisation of Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi is also an important facet of the *Lives of the Gracchi*, despite her lack of direct speech or overt action within the narrative. Tiberius and Gaius are presented as positive ethical *exempla* despite their overall failure and much of this can be attributed to Plutarch's emphasis on the maternal behaviour of Cornelia. Her visibility serves to remind the reader of the authority of Plutarch's ideal Roman mother. Cornelia's role in expounding the ethical framework of the *Gracchi* and as a 'mirror' for the reader to emulate is significant, as her maternal authority and virtue cross-references and reinforces the ethical importance of Plutarch's other *matronae* within the Roman *Lives*. As with Volumnia (and to a lesser extent, Julia), Cornelia's maternal authority is also slightly problematic. While Plutarch celebrates her personal attributes, her role both as an authoritative and demanding mother leaves her fatherless sons (as with Coriolanus and Antony) somewhat lacking in emotional control and philosophical clarity. Her role as a model of Roman female virtue is therefore complex and contradictory, a reflection of Graeco-Roman anxieties regarding masculinity, gender and power constructs.

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<sup>410</sup> Beneker (2012) 219.

## Conclusion

This study set out to determine how and in what ways the speech of women and their interaction with men reflects and explores the ethical concerns of the Roman *Lives* in which they feature. As the ethical framework of each *Life* is constructed around the deeds and sayings not only of the protagonist, but also of those intimately connected with him, the mode and effects of their interaction reveals much about each person's character. The clear correlation between the ethical focus of a *Life* and the corresponding moral themes of each woman's speech demonstrates that each act of female direct discourse serves to dramatically reinforce Plutarch's moral and philosophical themes at watershed moments of the narrative.<sup>411</sup>

Hence, the *Coriolanus* opens with Plutarch's observation that a lack of discipline (παιδεία) produces bad fruit (1.2), likewise Antony's rejection of the arts of reason (τέχναι μετὰ λόγου) for irrational pleasure results in his inability to avoid vice (*Dem.* 1.2) and Pompey ultimately fails because he could not put his country before his intimate relationships (*Comp.* 1.3, 3.4). In response, Volumnia defends Rome from the 'bad fruits' of her son, Octavia and Cleopatra represent Antony's battle between *logos* and *eros* and Cornelia's lament essentially echoes Plutarch's own disappointment regarding the latter part of Pompey's career.

However, female speech is not always used to reinforce a negative characterisation. In the *Romulus*, the important role of women and in particular, the intercession of Hersilia, validates the ethical strengths of Romulus and by association, the collective identity and contemporary greatness of Rome itself. The speeches of Porcia and Licinia to a certain extent affirm the civic-minded stance of their husbands despite their own private tribulations and frailties. There is therefore, no one clear model; although all the women speak at a point of crisis, they do not all reinforce male weakness. Indeed, the fundamental element that binds all the women together is their supportive stance and their sincere desire to help their men and the wider community. While Volumnia and Julia's intercessions may appear obstructive, their words still seek to instruct and clearly define the appropriate behaviour required for their men in their role as Roman statesmen.

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<sup>411</sup> For example, the prophetic dream of Calpurnia in the *Caesar* (63.6-7) and her subsequent entreaties to her husband could have served as an excellent reinforcement of the ethical framework of the *Life* if Plutarch rendered her words and action in direct discourse. However, as Beneker (2003) argues, Plutarch deliberately minimised the role of women and the hero's sexual appetite in the *Caesar*, making him more like Alexander and focusing on his single-minded quest for political and military power. Thus, her speech, if she had delivered one, would not have contributed in any significant way to the ethical focus of the *Caesar*. We can suppose that this may be a reason why this incident passes with only indirect discourse.

One of the most obvious findings is that Plutarch's portrayal of female direct discourse and action corresponds with his earlier depiction of female virtue in the *Moralia*. The intervention of Volumnia and Hersilia for example, parallel instances of individual female bravery in the *Mulierum virtutes*. This type of female virtue where women speak publicly, take civic affairs into their own hands and act with autonomy is potentially dangerous and unsettling in a Graeco-Roman context. However, as both *Lives* are set back in the mythological past, this exceptional version of female action is distant enough from the reality of Plutarch's audience that they present as didactic, rather than threatening *exempla*.

Moreover, it would be reasonable to assume that Plutarch, as a fellow Greek, would present Hersilia and Volumnia in a similar way to his main source, Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Dionysius has his women act in a stereotypically Greek way by fainting, lamenting their weakness and only acting with the express sanction and direction of men. In Plutarch, the emotional control of both women, particularly Volumnia's commanding maternal authority, mirrors the Roman ideal of the strong and stoic mother, a model that Plutarch again repeats with his characterisation of Julia in the *Antony* and Gaius' mother Cornelia in the *Lives of the Gracchi*. Perhaps what is most significant is that all of the Roman women who speak are portrayed in positive terms, a presentation that was not necessary in order to explore ethical themes as the negative depiction of Cleopatra indicates. That Plutarch chose to portray each woman as virtuous, civically minded, selfless and articulate demonstrates his admiration of their culturally coded character traits. Castellani's assertion that Plutarch did not understand the distinct Roman nature of his *matronae* simply does not address the fact that Plutarch consciously represents the behaviour of Roman women as quintessentially Roman, despite his extensive use of Greek source material.

The Roman context of the female speech in the *Lives* therefore reconfigures and re-creates an acceptable and authentically Roman social space in which Plutarch deploys the speech of his female characters in a way that is neither dangerous nor subversive. As with the acts of bravery in the *Mulierum virtutes*, the Roman women of the *Lives* who spoke in search of an explicit outcome were also successful, effectively legitimising their interaction with their male audience. Connolly lists five assumptions on behalf of the listener which are crucial for a successful act of communication:

1. The statement is true.
2. The speaker is sincere.
3. The statement functions within an appropriate and mutually understandable framework of values.
4. It suits the relation between speaker and listener.

5. Conceptually speaking, it is understandable.<sup>412</sup>

Accordingly, the speeches of Hersilia, Volumnia, Valeria and Octavia were successful in their pursuit and defence of civic harmony, while Porcia's impassioned speech convinced her husband of her innate virtues. Although the laments of Cleopatra, Licinia and Cornelia, all delivered at a point of no return in each narrative, do not specifically seek a specific outcome, nevertheless all reconfirm the importance of the marital relationship within a context that is once again familiar and relevant.

Thus, we the reader, as with each woman's intended audience, are simultaneously persuaded thanks to the recognisable and appropriate context of each speech act, the sincere character of each woman, the genuine relationship between speaker and addressee and each speech's focus on mutually comprehensible values. The first three speech acts of Cleopatra are unusual, for Plutarch's emphasis on her artifice and flattery negates the very idea that her speech could in any way be truthful or sincere. However, her success in each instance serves to confirm the underlying premise of the *Life*, that is, Antony's capitulation to flattery and *eros*.

Of course Plutarch did not need to accord direct discourse to women in order for their participation to be ethically significant. While the intercession of the Sabine women and Volumnia were already well-established in the Roman tradition, Plutarch constructed scenes of direct discourse for Julia, Octavia, Licinia and Porcia that are not found in other versions. Considering his obvious preference for utilising anecdotes, snippets of conversation and indirect speech as ways of illustrating character, the fact that he not only let the women speak for themselves but in almost every instance, accorded them the longest section of direct discourse in each corresponding *Life*, indicates that he consciously intended to shine the spotlight on each woman's speech scene. And while female characters in a text that primarily concerns the activities of men need a dramatic stage—a crisis—on which they can stand and speak without transgressing acceptable female boundaries, the length and complexity of many of their speeches makes it clear that Plutarch wanted to draw attention to their own character and virtue as much as they also functioned as an exploration or reinforcement of a man's character.

If Chapter One concerned exceptional female virtue, then the constructed dichotomy between Antony's Roman and Egyptian wives in Chapter Two references Plutarch's practical ethics in the *Coniugalia praecepta*. Octavia is the quintessential perfect wife and mother, who only intercedes in private on behalf of Rome. Cleopatra as a stark contrast speaks and acts publicly for her own benefit,

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<sup>412</sup> Connolly (2007) 143.

but even she finally understands her appropriate conjugal role at the end of the narrative by recognising the leadership of her husband. Plutarch's optimism and belief in the unifying harmony of a true marriage partnership finds a mouthpiece in his most negative biography. The importance of marriage, initiated by Hersilia in the *Romulus* is thus firmly emphasised in the *Antony* and this theme is further explored by the speeches of Cornelia, Porcia and Licinia in the *Lives of Pompey, Brutus* and *Gaius Gracchus*.

In fact, such emphasis on marriage and female speech reinforces the delineation between public and private, for if a statesman is unrestrained in his private life, like Antony and Pompey, he cannot apply discipline and therefore virtue to his public roles. Plutarch explicitly refers to the importance of the statesman's private life in the *Comparison of Aristides and Cato Major* where he claims that; 'man has no higher virtue than political virtue (τῆς πολιτικῆς ἀνθρώπος ἀρετῆς οὐ κτᾶται τελειότεραν), as is generally admitted. But the ability to conduct a household enters in no small degree into this higher political capacity, as most believe. For the city is but an organised sum total of households, and has public vigour only as its citizens prosper in their private lives' (3.1). It is surely no accident that in the 'deterrent' *Lives* (the *Coriolanus*, *Antony* and the latter half of the *Pompey*), Plutarch focuses on the deficiencies of each man's private life, whilst his more exemplary protagonists (Brutus, Romulus and Gaius Gracchus), at least at crucial junctures, epitomise Plutarch's own precepts regarding appropriate conjugal relations and private relationships.

This relationship between the public man, his personal life and the community does not necessarily predicate virtue as Romulus' abduction of the Sabine women perhaps illustrates. Nevertheless, for women without an official public role, such relationships are essentially voluntary and therefore must be virtuous in order to be acceptable.<sup>413</sup> Since women are so emblematic of the private arena, their speech highlights private ethical issues by contextualising these traits as a community issue, whilst simultaneously blurring and defining gendered boundaries between public and private, itself a key function of the Greek female tragic *persona*. The overt tragic modelling in many of the speech scenes contributes to the ethical significance of the women's speech. As Dué astutely comments:

*'In the end tragedy arrives at closures that generally reassert male, often paternal (or civic) structures of authority, but before that, the work of the drama is to open up the masculine view of the universe. It typically does so, as we have seen, through energizing the theatrical*

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<sup>413</sup> Lichterman (2008) 84.

*resources of the female and concomitantly enervating the male as the price of the initiating actor and spectator into new and unsettling modes of feeling, seeing and knowing.*<sup>414</sup>

Certainly, Plutarch exploits his reader's familiarity with Greek tragic conventions and themes, from the Euripidean older mother construct (Volumnia, Julia, Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi) and the use of supplication in Chapter One, to the formal lament by Cleopatra in Chapter Two and the Andromache parallels in Chapter Three; all female archetypes with expected social roles, responsibilities and outcomes. And in a similar manner to tragedy, it is no accident that the female speech scenes take place not merely at critical points of the protagonist's life, but at critical moments for Rome.

Such a dramatic setting exemplifies this 'unsettling mode' of instruction within the narrative by questioning the statesman's roles and responsibilities within Rome's societal structures and subsequently reasserting the social and ethical foundations on which the protagonist (and Plutarch's ideal reader) should rely. Volumnia confronts the clash between her son's private emotions and his responsibility to his state, while Licinia's emotive speech questions whether a public action is indeed virtuous if it provides no common benefit. The insertion of the private female voice, then, is more than a mere exclamation of male conscience. Their role directly reflects the will of Roman society over the individual at specific points in the narrative when the community was being actively disregarded or misrepresented. By actively choosing to participate and express virtue for the common good, Plutarch's women establish their own arena for active citizenship and in essence represent Plutarch's own (positive) views on what comprised Roman collective identity. To a great extent, then, Plutarch engages with and tacitly accepts Roman concepts of civic duty and gender roles, an acceptance that confirms that his social and political assimilation was more than skin deep.

His approval of civically minded women in a Roman context perhaps explains his uniformly positive representation of the women who speak in 'appropriate' situations, that is, when men have failed to address or solve a political or ethical crisis. And although each woman has something dear to lose at the time of her direct discourse, each leaves the ultimate decision in every case to the man she addresses. Despite his willingness to utilise 'bad' male examples as an instrument for his reader's self-reflection, Plutarch chose to highlight only virtuous Roman women as didactic examples of female speech. So, despite his confidence that the moral mirroring of male virtue can be accomplished

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<sup>414</sup> Dué (2006) 23.

via positive or negative examples, his Roman women only provide the correct moral mirror for his female readers.

Considering Plutarch's assertion of the importance of the wife's role in conjugal relationships and its subsequent virtuous effects on society, his representation of women as defenders and articulators of Roman social ideals ties neatly in with his precept that the virtue of men and women can indeed be viewed as one and the same. The Roman women of his *Lives*, like his ideal women in the *Moralia*, demonstrated old fashioned virtuous ideals, in the same way that Livy and Vergil constructed an idyllic Roman past as a way of addressing what they saw as a decline in contemporary morals and in particular, the breakdown of the appropriate gender hierarchy within the confines of marriage.<sup>415</sup>

The results of this study indicate that while Plutarch had a definite opinion on the qualities of his ideal woman, the women of the Roman *Lives* were no mere stereotypical representations. On one hand, his use of tragic modelling suggests that his depiction of Roman female speech was first and foremost a literary device employed to focus the reader on significant events within the narrative, thus shedding light on the male protagonist's moral character. Indeed, as each *Life* is based around Plutarch's impressions on the essential moral nature of famous statesmen, the role of women is necessarily that of a supporting act, designed and articulated in a way that explores and reinforces the ethical framework of each biography. On the other hand, despite the obvious categorisation of each woman (with the exception of Cleopatra) as either the strong and stoic mother or supportive and selfless wife, every one of the Roman women who speak demonstrates her own unique personality. For example, while the context and basic characterisation of the wives Cornelia, Porcia and Licinia is remarkably similar, each reacts to their husband's predicament in different ways. Cornelia laments and blames herself, Porcia physically tests her own bravery and conjugal virtue, while Licinia implicitly questions her husband's motives whilst simultaneously fulfilling the role of the supportive and acquiescent partner. Volumnia does not shrink from opposing her son publicly, Julia chooses not to confront her son but his representatives instead. Each woman reacts differently to the crisis before her and as a consequence, each speech act is a distinct representation of the woman who delivers it.

Plutarch's coverage of many different aspects of female virtue confirms his interest in the female psyche and accordingly, there is no one formulaic type of mother, wife, daughter or sister in his assorted works. At the same time, the multifaceted ethical characterisation of female speech in the *Lives* opens up a wider area of research. For if we accept that Plutarch deliberately incorporated the

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<sup>415</sup> McNamara (1999) 153.



speech of women within his ethical framework in a way that reflected his ideas on social and political identity, then further research on how he differentiates between Roman, Greek and barbarian female speech in the *Lives* offers a far more complex view of how he viewed gender, culture and identity under the rule of the Roman Empire.

## Appendix 1: Instances of Female Direct Discourse in the *Parallel Lives*

Character	Life	Ethnicity	Chapter	Context	Length (lines)*
Volumnia	<i>Coriolanus</i>	Roman	35.1-36.4	Speech to Coriolanus	44
Hersilia	<i>Romulus</i>	Sabine	19.3-5	Speech to Sabine men	17
Chilonis	<i>Agis</i>	Greek	17.2-4	Lament	17
Cleopatra	<i>Antony</i>	Egyptian	84.2-4	Lament	14
Valeria	<i>Coriolanus</i>	Roman	33.3-5	Speech to Volumnia	12
Porcia	<i>Brutus</i>	Roman	13.4-5	Speech to Brutus	11
Licina	<i>G. Gracchus</i>	Roman	15.2-3	Speech to Gaius	10.5
Volumnia	<i>Coriolanus</i>	Roman	33.5-7	Speech to Valeria/women	10
Cornelia	<i>Pompey</i>	Roman	74.3	Speech to Pompey	8
Cleopatra	<i>Antony</i>	Egyptian	83.4	Speech to Octavian	5
Aristomache	<i>Dion</i>	Greek	51.2	Speech to Dion	5
Theste	<i>Dion</i>	Greek	21.5	Speech to Dionysius	4.5
Cratesicleia	<i>Cleomenes</i>	Greek	22.4	Response to Cleomenes	4
Cratesicleia	<i>Cleomenes</i>	Greek	22.6	Speech to Cleomenes	3.5
Elpinice	<i>Pericles</i>	Greek	28.4	Speech to Pericles	3.5
Cleopatra	<i>Antony</i>	Egyptian	29.4	Speech to Antony	2.5
Agesistrata	<i>Agis</i>	Greek	20.4-5	Speech to son/Amphares	2.5
Phocion's Wife	<i>Phocion</i>	Greek	37.3	Hearth speech	2.5
Octavia	<i>Antony</i>	Roman	35.3	Speech to Octavian	2
Parysatis	<i>Artaxerxes</i>	Persian	17.5	Private speech to Artax.	2
Statira	<i>Artaxerxes</i>	Persian	6.5	Emotive questions to Pary.	2
Argileonis	<i>Lycurgus</i>	Greek	25.5	Speech to Amphipolitans	2
Julia	<i>Antony</i>	Roman	20.3	Speech to Antony's assassins	1.5
Cleopatra	<i>Antony</i>	Egyptian	59.3	Reply to Geminus	1.5
Charmion	<i>Antony</i>	Egyptian	85.4	Reply to Octavian's guards	1.5
Parysatis	<i>Artaxerxes</i>	Persian	14.5	Public request to Artax.	1.5
Valeria Messala	<i>Sulla</i>	Roman	35.4	Statement to Sulla	1.5
Phocion's Wife	<i>Phocion</i>	Greek	19.3	Statement to Ionian woman	1.5

\* Lines of Greek text

Character	Life	Ethnicity	Chapter	Context	Length (lines)*
Cleopatra	<i>Antony</i>	Egyptian	62.3	Jesting reply to Antony	1
Tertia	<i>Aemilius Paulus</i>	Roman	10.4	Conversation with her father	1
Olympias	<i>Alexander</i>	Greek	3.2	Statement about Alexander	1
Aspasia	<i>Artaxerxes</i>	Greek	26.4	Public retort to Cyrus	1
Monimé	<i>Lucullus</i>	Greek	18.4	Curses herself while attempting suicide	1
Foreign women	<i>Lycurgus</i>	Unclear	14.4	Question to Gorgo	1
Gorgo	<i>Lycurgus</i>	Greek	14.4	Reply to the foreign woman	0.5
Cleopatra's woman	<i>Antony</i>	Egyptian	79.2	Exclamation to Cleopatra	0.5
Cleopatra	<i>Antony</i>	Egyptian	86.1	Exclamation on death-bed	0.5
Cratesicleia	<i>Cleomenes</i>	Greek	38.5	Lamenting question	0.5
Old Woman	<i>Demetrius</i>	Unclear- prob. Greek	42.3	Command to Demetrius	0.5
Thebe	<i>Pelopidas</i>	Greek	28.4	Statement to Pelopidas	0.5

## Appendix 2: Types and Length of Direct Discourse in the *Romulus*, *Antony*, *Pompey*, *Brutus* and the *Gracchi*

Character	Life	Chapter	M/F	Context	Length (lines)*
Volumnia	<i>Coriolanus</i>	35.1-36.4	F	Speech to Coriolanus	44
Marcus Coriolanus	<i>Coriolanus</i>	16.3-4	M	Speech to the Senate	11.5
Brutus	<i>Brutus</i>	40.4-5	M	Reply to Cassius	11.5
Porcia	<i>Brutus</i>	13.4-5	F	Speech to Brutus	11
Licinia	<i>G. Gracchus</i>	15.2-3	F	Speech to Gaius	10.5
Volumnia	<i>Coriolanus</i>	33.5-7	F	Reply to Valeria and assembled women	10
Cornelia	<i>Pompey</i>	74.3	F	Lamenting speech to Pompey	8
Gaius Gracchus	<i>G. Gracchus</i>	3.3-4	M	Speech to people regarding the murder of Tiberius	8
Cominius	<i>Coriolanus</i>	11.1	M	Speech to the people	7
Cassius	<i>Brutus</i>	10.3-4	M	Speech to Brutus	7
Romulus	<i>Romulus</i>		M	Reply to Proculus	5.5
Mark Antony	<i>Brutus</i>	50.4	M	Antony to assembled men	5.5
Antyllus	<i>Brutus</i>	28.6-7	M	Addresses the concerns of Philotus	5.5
Sulla	<i>Pompey</i>	15.2	M	Advice/warning to Pompey	5.5
Lucilius	<i>Brutus</i>	50.3-4	M	Speech to Antony	5
Antony	<i>Antony</i>	76.3	M	Speaks aloud at point of suicide	5
Cleopatra	<i>Antony</i>	83.4	F	Speech to Octavian	5
Brutus	<i>Brutus</i>	23.4	M	Reply to Acilius (concerning Porcia)	4.5
Pompey	<i>Pompey</i>	75.1	M	Response to Cornelia's speech	4.5
Gaius Gracchus	<i>G. Gracchus</i>	4.3-4	M	Riposte to those who insulted his mother	4.5
Menenius Agrippa	<i>Coriolanus</i>	6.4	M	Speech to the people	4
Marcus Coriolanus	<i>Coriolanus</i>	10.3	M	Speech to the people	4
Sicinius	<i>Coriolanus</i>	18.8	M	Reply to assembled patricians	4
Tullus Aufidius	<i>Coriolanus</i>	23.5	M	Reply to Coriolanus	4
Brutus	<i>Brutus</i>	40.2	M	Speech to Messala	4

Character	Life	Chapter	M/F	Context	Length (lines)*
Casca	<i>Brutus</i>	45.5	M	Speech to Brutus and bystanders	3.5
Centurion	<i>Antony</i>	64.2	M	Speech to Antony	3.5
Patricians	<i>Coriolanus</i>	18.7	M	Question to the tribune Sicinius	3
Marcus Coriolanus	<i>Coriolanus</i>	36.4	M	Reply to Volumnia	3
Cassius	<i>Brutus</i>	40.3	M	Question to Brutus before battle	3
Procleius	<i>Antony</i>	79.2	M	Speech to Cleopatra	3
Crassus	<i>Pompey</i>	23.2	M	Speech in support of Pompey	3
Cleopatra	<i>Antony</i>	29.4	F	Speech to Antony	2.5
Egyptian seer	<i>Antony</i>	33.2	M	Advice to Antony	2.5
Antony	<i>Antony</i>	73.2	M	Written riposte to Octavian	2.5
Pompey	<i>Pompey</i>	30.6	M	Exclamation to friends	2.5
Marcus Coriolanus	<i>Coriolanus</i>	9.4	M	Request to consul Cominius	2
Julius Proculus	<i>Romulus</i>	28.2	M	Question to Romulus	2
Cassius	<i>Brutus</i>	9.2	M	Threat to Faustus	2
Brutus	<i>Brutus</i>	10.2	M	Conversation with Cassius	2
Unnamed conspirator	<i>Brutus</i>	15.2	M	Declaration to Cassius	2
Popilius Laenas	<i>Brutus</i>	15.3	M	Aside to Brutus and Cassius	2
Cassius	<i>Brutus</i>	35.3	M	Justification to Cassius for condemning Lucius Pella	2
Brutus	<i>Brutus</i>	36.4	M	Question to a phantom	2
Phantom	<i>Brutus</i>	36.4	M	Response to Brutus	2
Philotas	<i>Antony</i>	28.5	M	Utters a sophism during feast	2
Sextus Pompey	<i>Antony</i>	32.3	M	Remark to Antony	2
Menas the pirate	<i>Antony</i>	32.4	M	Question to Sextus Pompey	2
Sextus Pompey	<i>Antony</i>	32.5	M	Reply to Menas	2
Octavia	<i>Antony</i>	35.3	F	Speech to Octavian	2
Centurion	<i>Pompey</i>	5.2	M	Centurion to Cinna before he killed him	2
Pompey	<i>Pompey</i>	10.2	M	Pompey's orders to the Mamertines	2
Caesar	<i>Pompey</i>	47.4	M	Question to people regarding Pompey	2

Character	Life	Chapter	M/F	Context	Length (lines)*
Clodius Pulcher	<i>Pompey</i>	48.7	M	Chants to people regarding Pompey	2
Marcellus	<i>Pompey</i>	59.1	M	Public speech to Pompey	2
Lucius Lentulus	<i>Pompey</i>	80.4	M	Question to Pompey's freedman Phillip	2
Gaius Gracchus	<i>G. Gracchus</i>	1.6	M	Tiberius to Gaius to his dream	2
Caesar	<i>Brutus</i>	6.4	M	Statement to friends regarding Brutus	1.5
Cassius	<i>Brutus</i>	43.5	M	Statement after defeat	1.5
Brutus	<i>Brutus</i>	45.5	M	Reply to Casca	1.5
Brutus	<i>Brutus</i>	52.2	M	Response to the concerns of his friends	1.5
Messala	<i>Brutus</i>	53.1	M	Statement to Octavian regarding Brutus	1.5
Messala	<i>Brutus</i>	53.2	M	Second statement to Octavian regarding Brutus	1.5
Antony	<i>Antony</i>	4.4	M	Reply to steward	1.5
Julia	<i>Antony</i>	20.3	F	Speech to Antony's assassins	1.5
Hybreas	<i>Antony</i>	24.5	M	Speech to Antony	1.5
Cleopatra	<i>Antony</i>	59.3	F	Reply to Geminius	1.5
Charmion	<i>Antony</i>	85.4	F	Reply to Octavian's guards	1.5
Censor	<i>Pompey</i>	22.6	M	Official question to Pompey	1.5
Favonius	<i>Pompey</i>	67.3	M	Question to his troops	1.5
Centurion	<i>Pompey</i>	71.2	M	Pledges life/victory to Caesar	1.5
Cratippus	<i>Pompey</i>	75.4	M	Theoretical speech to Pompey	1.5
Marcus Coriolanus	<i>Coriolanus</i>	20.1	M	Reply in his defence to the tribunes	1
Caesar	<i>Brutus</i>	7.3	M	Pronouncement to his council of intimates	1
Brutus	<i>Brutus</i>	11.1	M	Conversation with Ligarius	1
Ligarius	<i>Brutus</i>	11.1	M	Conversaton with Brutus	1
Brutus	<i>Brutus</i>	14.5	M	Statement to bystanders regarding Caesar	1
Brutus	<i>Brutus</i>	22.3	M	Rebuke to Cicero	1
Atilius	<i>Brutus</i>	39.6	M	Reply to Brutus	1
Brutus	<i>Brutus</i>	51.3	M	Reply to Volumnius	1

Character	Life	Chapter	M/F	Context	Length (lines)*
Antyllus	<i>Antony</i>	28.5	M	Response to Philotas' quip	1
Mithridates	<i>Antony</i>	46.3	M	Reply to Alexander of Antioch, a close friend of Antony	1
Cleopatra	<i>Antony</i>	62.3	F	Jesting reply to Antony	1
Antony	<i>Antony</i>	76.4	M	Response to his freedman Eros' suicide	1
Pompey	<i>Pompey</i>	2.6	M	Anecdote regarding his disregard for his doctor's advice	1
Pompey	<i>Pompey</i>	22.6	M	Reply to censor	1
Catulus	<i>Pompey</i>	25.5	M	Speech to the people in support of Pompey	1
Cato the Younger	<i>Pompey</i>	44.4	M	Speech to his female family members	1
Pompey	<i>Pompey</i>	79.1	M	On recognising an old comrade	1
Old Roman man	<i>Pompey</i>	80.3	M	Question to Pompey's freedman Phillip	1
Cato the Younger	<i>Brutus</i>	5.3	M	Reply to Caesar	0.5
Cassius	<i>Brutus</i>	10.2	M	Conversation with Brutus	0.5
Caesar	<i>Brutus</i>	17.3	M	Exclamation to Casca	0.5
Antony	<i>Antony</i>	23.3	M	Quip to Megarians	0.5
Antony	<i>Antony</i>	45.6	M	Exclamation concerning the Parthian army	0.5
Prosper	<i>Antony</i>	65.3	M	Reply to Octavian	0.5
One of Cleopatra's women	<i>Antony</i>	79.2	F	Exclamation to Cleopatra	0.5
Cleopatra	<i>Antony</i>	86.1	F	Exclamation on death-bed	0.5
Philippus	<i>Pompey</i>	17.4	M	Reply to a senator's question regarding Pompey	0.5
Father of Stratonice	<i>Pompey</i>	36.5	M	Exclamation regarding his change of fortune	0.5
Cato the Younger	<i>Pompey</i>	40.3	M	Exclamation to his friends	0.5
Pompey	<i>Pompey</i>	50.1	M	Exhortation to his sea-captains	0.5
Caesar	<i>Pompey</i>	58.2	M	Remark regarding his use of violence in the forum	0.5

<b>Character</b>	<b>Life</b>	<b>Chapter</b>	<b>M/F</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Length (lines)*</b>
Caesar	<i>Pompey</i>	60.2	M	Remark on crossing the Rubicon	0.5
Tullus	<i>Pompey</i>	60.4	M	Exclamation regarding Pompey	0.5
Pompey	<i>Pompey</i>	72.2	M	Exclamation on receiving news	0.5
Quintus Antyllus	<i>G Gracchus</i>	13.3	M	An order to the partisans of Fulvius	0.5
Sulla	<i>Pompey</i>	14.3	M	Exclamation	1 word
The people	<i>Pompey</i>	25.5	M	Reply to Catulus concerning Pompey	1 word
The people	<i>Pompey</i>	48.7	M	Reply to Clodius concerning Pompey	1 word



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