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## **Captivating the Captors: Re-defining Masculinity, Identity and Post-Colonialism in Plutarch's Parallel Lives**

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Captivating the Captors:  
Re-defining Masculinity, Identity and Post-Colonialism in Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Introduction.....	1
Gender and Sexuality.....	9
Being “Greek”.....	18
Post-Colonial Theory.....	21
Chapter One: Coriolanus and Alcibiades.....	29
Chapter Two: Pelopidas and Marcellus.....	51
Chapter Three: Phocion.....	66
Conclusion.....	74
References.....	85

## **Abstract**

This thesis investigates 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century CE biographer and philosopher, Plutarch's, manipulation and construction of gender ideals in three sets of his *Parallel Lives*, *Coriolanus* and *Alcibiades*, *Pelopidas* and *Marcellus*, and *Phocion* and *Cato the Younger* in which he presented his particular version of the ideal man and route to manhood. Plutarch discouraged traditional paths to gaining masculine status and simultaneously promoted a type of masculinity that benefited other aspects of his identity, particularly promoting his social and economic position and ethnicity. He asserted throughout that martial men were not in control of their emotions and therefore were incomplete men. Plutarch then promoted the study of Hellenic education, or *paideia*, and philosophy as the route to ideal manhood. This sub-discourse served as a reaction to Roman rule and the position of Greek men in the Roman Empire. Although Plutarch wrote centuries after the Roman annexation of Greece, he and his contemporaries continued to negotiate and redefine the complex power relations that existed between Greece and Rome. Living and writing at the beginning of the Second Sophistic (60-230 CE), Plutarch's work reflects a wider phenomenon that was occurring within Greece between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries CE. This study is therefore multi-layered, investigating not only how gender ideology is constructed and redefined but also how it can be manipulated to suit social and political circumstances in order to participate in discourses about identity, authority and power.

## Introduction

You who rule are subject, ruling a city controlled by proconsuls, the guardians of the emperor...you should arrange your cloak more carefully and look away from the general's tent towards the orator's platform and do not have great pride or confidence in your crown, since you see the boot (of Roman soldiers) just above your head. (Plut. *Prae. ger. reip.* 813e)

ἀρχόμενος ἄρχεις, ὑποτεταγμένης πόλεως ἀνθυπάτοις, ἐπιτρόποις Καίσαρος...  
εὐσταλεστέραν δεῖ τὴν χλαμύδα ποιεῖν, καὶ βλέπειν ἀπὸ τοῦ στρατηγίου πρὸς  
τὸ βῆμα, καὶ τῷ στεφάνῳ μὴ πολὺ φρονεῖν μηδὲ πιστεύειν, ὁρῶντα τοὺς καλτίους  
ἐπάνω τῆς κεφαλῆς.

This well-known excerpt was written by the first century Greek biographer and philosopher, Lucius Mestrius Plutarchus or Plutarch, in a work titled *Precepts of Statecraft* (ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΑ ΠΑΡΑΓΓΕΛΜΑΤΑ; *Praecepta gerendae reipublica* in Latin), in which Plutarch addressed his advice to one Menemachus of Sardis, counseling the young man on how to conduct himself in a public service career.<sup>1</sup> Both men were elite Greeks living under Roman rule, attempting to navigate the complex relationship between Rome and Greece. Wealthy Greek men, such as these two, could expect to participate in their local bureaucracy and exercise a limited amount of authority in their individual cities. As Plutarch suggested in his exhortations to Menemachus, however, ultimate command rested with their Roman conquerors and the days the Greeks ruled Hellas with autonomy, celebrated and recorded in so many Classical texts, had passed.<sup>2</sup> This transformation

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<sup>1</sup> Beyond Plutarch's mention that Pardalas of Sardis was a fellow citizen of Menemachus (813F, 825D), nothing further is known about the man.

<sup>2</sup> Achaëa became a Roman province in 146 BCE, after the Roman victory in the Achaean War.

produced a sort of “identity crisis” in Greece, particularly among the wealthy members of society, who had to rethink and reestablish their position within Greece itself and the Roman Empire that they had become a part of. Initially, this shock and blow to Greek identity resulted in silence, as if the change literally shocked the elite Greek community, who would have left any literary record. With the exception of Polybius and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, there was a drastic reduction in (surviving) Greek literary production from the second century BCE until the end of the first and beginning of the second centuries CE. It was at this point that Greek intellectuals began to redefine and reassert their identity and position within the Roman Empire during the Second Sophistic (c. 60-250 CE). Originally named by a Greek writer and biographer, Philostratus, in his *Lives of the Sophists*, this period witnessed an explosion of Greek literature and oratory, a “renaissance of Greek letters” and an emphasis on the superiority and exclusivity of Hellenic culture.<sup>3</sup> Although there were many motivations for this movement, one of the most important, and for this study central, impetuses was the desire of these Greek writers to profess their own cultural superiority over the politically and militarily superior Romans “as loudly as possible.”<sup>4</sup>

Plutarch lived and wrote (46- approx. 120 CE) as this phenomenon commenced and while he never claimed to be a sophist, his work reflects the desire to negotiate, define and understand the complicated relationship between the Romans and the Greeks. He wrote a series of philosophical treatises collectively called the *Moralia*, from which

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<sup>3</sup> Philostr. *VS*, 481. The term “second” distinguished the movement from the “first” Sophistic of the fifth century BCE.

<sup>4</sup> Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World AD 50-250* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 2, 89.

the opening passage is excerpted, but his most famous work is a collection of biographies, the *Parallel Lives*, in which he generally paired one Greek and one Roman man based on shared characteristics or accomplishments, and in the process of providing their life stories, he compared and contrasted the two.<sup>5</sup> In this paper I will investigate one theme Plutarch utilized in these biographies: the manipulation and construction of gender ideology in order to advocate his interpretation of ideal manhood and declare Greek cultural superiority over Rome. The passage quoted above, although taken from his philosophical treatises, illustrates two central aspects of this message that Plutarch emphasized throughout his works. First, he advised Menemachus against gaining distinction through military achievements, stating that he should “look away from the general’s tent” and rather seek fame through “the orator’s platform,” or civic, academic and intellectual pursuits.<sup>6</sup> In doing so, he excluded a traditional source of gaining authority for Greek men: displaying excellence through martial exploits.<sup>7</sup> Because a male was typically expected to prove his manhood in warfare and battle, this outlet for fame also provided a method for attaining masculinity. An individual could demonstrate many

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<sup>5</sup> Both *Moralia* and *Parallel Lives* are modern titles for Plutarch’s works. Because these are common titles that the reader will more easily identify, I will use them through out. Although I have seen various acceptable methods for referencing individual biographies and philosophical treatises, I will use the original titles (in English translation). For example, I will refer to the biography of Alcibiades simply as *Alcibiades*.

<sup>6</sup> The study and perfection of oratory was a complex and demanding endeavor. Training required a vast knowledge of literary and linguistic expertise, which certainly demanded an immense amount of study. See Michael Edwards and Christopher Reid, eds., *Oratory in Action* (Manchester University Press, 2004); for an ancient perception of the difficulty of (correctly) studying oratory see Lucian, *Praeceptor rhetorum*.

<sup>7</sup> For the importance of the military achievement and warfare for masculinity, see David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990), 9-29; Hans Van Wees, *Greek Warfare: Myths and Realities* (London: Duckworth, 2004), 150; Victor Davis Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece* (New York: Knof, 1989), 224; Myles McDonnell, *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Kirk Ormand, *Controlling Desires: Sexuality in Ancient Greece and Rome* (West Port, Conn.: Praeger, 2009), 24.



of the traits that were traditionally involved with being a “man” in this arena, such as strength, courage, prowess and leadership. In Plutarch’s advice, however, he denied the importance of such a display and at times argued that relying solely on these exploits would produce the opposite result: effeminacy.

Plutarch manipulated gender ideology in order to renegotiate manhood, and the power and superiority that accompanied this key facet of identity, between Greeks and Romans. Secondly, as his observation regarding the “boot” of Roman authority implies, Plutarch was well aware of the authority the Roman government and military had over the Greek community and in his effort to renegotiate Greece’s relationship with its rulers, Plutarch provided a “post-colonial voice” from which we may ascertain how at least one Greek reacted to Roman rule.

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Plutarch was a Greek man of wealthy or elite status from Chaeronea in Boeotia. He was a prominent member of his community, a priest at Delphi and well acquainted with Rome, having lived there, held offices and received honors, including citizenship, from the Roman government. His outlook, therefore, as with the majority of written records from antiquity, reflects the opinions and experiences of the upper male echelons of Greece.

Plutarchean scholarship has had a fluctuating history. Immensely popular in the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, interest in the philosopher and biographer waned at beginning of the twentieth century. Recently, studies of Plutarch’s corpus have resurged as modern scholarship has moved away from investigations of Plutarch’s historical accuracy toward examining Plutarch’s messages as a “cultural

database.”<sup>8</sup> In addition, historians and classicists have begun to acknowledge the creative role Plutarch took in his construction of historical figures and events, no longer believing that he summarized single sources as he wrote his biographies.<sup>9</sup> Many have recently explored why Plutarch constructed his men as he did, such as Christopher Pelling, Simon Swain, Tim Duff and Tim Whitmarsh.<sup>10</sup> These scholars have particularly noted the centrality of themes such as education, self-control, reason and the *Lives*’ status as “documents of Greek reaction to Roman power and a Greek attempt to absorb Roman history into the orbit of Greek values.”<sup>11</sup> As far as I have found, however, there have been no attempts to investigate how Plutarch utilized gender themes in his constructions and how these concepts connect with other aspects of identity that he was simultaneously asserting.<sup>12</sup>

In examinations of Plutarch’s purpose for writing the *Lives*, many have noted his “programmatic statements” with which he asserted his motive: He wished to provide his readers with examples of character and virtue to model themselves upon, or vice that they might steer away from.<sup>13</sup> Due to this motivation, Plutarch was more concerned with

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<sup>8</sup> Karen Bassi, *Acting Like Men: Gender, Drama, and Nostalgia in Ancient Greece* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 8.

<sup>9</sup> Tim Duff, *Plutarch’s Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 8.

<sup>10</sup> Christopher Pelling, “Plutarch’s method of work in the Roman Lives” *JHS* 99 (1979): 74-96; “Plutarch and Roman Politics” in Barbara Scardigli, ed., *Essays on Plutarch’s Lives* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 319-356; Duff, *Plutarch’s Lives*; Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*; Tim Whitmarsh, “Alexander’s Hellenism and Plutarch’s textualism,” *CQ* 52 (2002): 174-192.

<sup>11</sup> Duff, *Plutarch’s Lives*, 10.

<sup>12</sup> Swain has nicely illustrated how Hellenic education, *paideia*, links with assertions of ethnic and cultural superiority, see Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*.

<sup>13</sup> For examples of Plutarch’s “programmatic statements, see *Tim.* 1.1-2; *Alex.* 1.2-3; *Demetr.* 1.5-6; *Per.* 1-3.

morality than historicity.<sup>14</sup> This does not mean that he disregarded historical accuracy; however, to emphasize a point he would construct his subjects in a certain way in order to illuminate a character trait or promote a message. I will investigate one method Plutarch employed to provide individuals or character traits his readers could model themselves after by examining his constructions of several pairs of men - Coriolanus and Alcibiades, Pelopidas and Marcellus, and Phocion and Cato the Younger - in which he redefined what it meant to be a good “man” and advocated a certain type of and route to masculinity that promoted other aspects of his and his community’s identity.

I emphasize that this represents one of many motivations and themes in Plutarch’s writings. I am not implying that the ideal representation of masculinity was Plutarch’s sole or even main purpose for writing these biographies. Plutarch did not seek out examples of ideal manhood nor revolve his narratives around the idea; these instances in particular provided an opportunity to pursue the topic of manhood in addition to his other preoccupations. The biographies studied here and the messages extrapolated from them simply provide a different interpretation on one of many sub-themes present in Plutarch’s works.

In these biographies Plutarch did not promote martial or even political success as the sole route to become an ideal “man.” Instead, he asserted that Hellenic education, or *paideia*, and philosophy would teach a male how to be a “man.” He utilized two pairs of biographies, *Coriolanus - Alcibiades* and *Pelopidas - Marcellus*, to demonstrate that individuals who disregarded intellectual training for physical and military exploits were

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<sup>14</sup> C. P. Jones, *Plutarch and Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 54.

deficient men, out of control and under the influence of their own emotions and desires.<sup>15</sup> Although he portrayed Greek as well as Roman men in this manner, throughout the *Parallel Lives* he emphasized Roman proclivity to martial excellence and thus their susceptibility to these flaws.<sup>16</sup> In addition, because of their focus on military achievement, he consistently pointed out that the Romans were unwilling to fully attain Hellenic education. Therefore, the Romans had to embrace Greek culture to access his ideal route to masculinity. He simultaneously asserted that the Greeks were the superior “men” and thus more equipped for the exercise of authority.<sup>17</sup> This allowed him to combat the Roman perception of the Greeks as *graeculi*, effeminate, luxury-prone and incapable of ruling themselves.<sup>18</sup> In addition, Plutarch’s presentation of ideal manhood provided the Greeks with a new important role within the Roman Empire, as they were able to teach the Romans a preferable form of masculinity. This reaction to Roman rule and assertion of masculine superiority also promoted other aspects of his ethnic and socio-economic identity. This study is therefore multi-layered, investigating not only how gender ideology is constructed and redefined but also how it can be manipulated to suit

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<sup>15</sup> This is a theme he promoted throughout the *Parallel Lives*, although this paper will evaluate just two examples. See *Lyc.* 31.2; *Num.* 3.4-5; *Comp. Lyc. et Num.* 4.6-8; *Tim.* 6.1; *Cat. Mai.* 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; and *Brut.* 52.5 for Plutarch’s general views about the benefits of education and philosophy to one’s virtue and ability to lead.

<sup>16</sup> See *Rom.* 1.1, 14.1, 29.2; *Num.* 5.2, 8.3; *Publ.* 17.2; *Fab.* 1.4; *Cat. Mai.* 1.5; *Mar.* 2.1; and *Comp. Lys. et Sull.* 2.1, 5.4 for examples of Romans concern for and natural tendency towards martial/physical excellence. See *Pyrrh.* 26.1; *Demetr.* 42.5; *Dion* 48.6; and *Brut.* 52.5 for Plutarch’s explanation of the deficiency of purely martial virtue.

<sup>17</sup> Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 143.

<sup>18</sup> For the Roman portrayal of contemporary Greeks and *graeculi* see Craig A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1999), 40, 68 and Benjamin H. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), 382-4.

social and political circumstances in order to reformulate discourses about identity, authority and power.

## Gender and Sexuality in Ancient Greece and Rome

Before I continue, I should provide a few definitions, clarifications and explanations for words and concepts I have just mentioned, which I will be utilizing throughout this study.

As J. Henderson has defined it, the discussion of gender involves “what a group at a given time thinks males and females are like in nature and behavior.”<sup>19</sup> Following this, in this paper I am making the distinction between “male” and “man” when I discuss men, manhood, masculinity, etc. I am not referring to the biological distinction “male” but the status achieved through the proper display of a set of community-approved characteristics. This status often translated into a higher position in the community with elevated privilege, respect and power. The ideal man, then, is an individual who is able to exemplify those traits that his community has defined and sufficiently display his proficiency in these characteristics to his “audience.” Gender ideology represents the results of the complex discussion of what behaviors and characteristics are acceptable for either a male or a female, as well as what the innate “nature” of what being a man and woman encompasses. This is usually the product of a vast matrix of conversations and input from various arenas. Affected by propaganda and consensus, ideology is the culmination and combination of ideas and concepts that forms an accepted and approved guideline and belief system. By no means homogenous, these ideas are often in conflict with one another and several approved concepts, or those seeking approval, may be simultaneously held and practiced.

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<sup>19</sup> J. Henderson, “Greek Attitudes toward Sex,” in M. Grant and R. Kitzinger, *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece and Rome* (New York: Scribner’s, 1988), 1250.

These definitions owe much to previous scholarship and the proliferation of sex and gender studies in the last half-century. Gender studies have gained prominence in ancient scholarship in the past forty years, largely beginning with K.J. Dover's studies. Michel Foucault, influenced by Dover's work, then "opened a new era" for investigations into ancient sex, sexuality and gender ideology.<sup>20</sup> Prior to Dover and Foucault, scholarship in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries assumed a "separate spheres" outlook on sex and gender relationships in antiquity. They portrayed Greek and Roman gender roles as operating in separate, albeit supporting, realms. Perhaps based upon the ideal of gender roles and relations at the time, "public versus private" became the basis for understanding divisions between men and women in the ancient world.<sup>21</sup> This idea also had its roots in ancient ideology reflected in texts and other mediums, as well as modern and ancient assumptions that men and women were naturally opposites.<sup>22</sup> Recent scholarship has questioned the reality of this ideal; women in Greece and Rome were possibly quite visible and active in social and economic settings. Of course, political and military activities were traditionally male-dominated realms; however this does not mean that women did not participate or exert influence in them.<sup>23</sup> In addition, sex was not

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<sup>20</sup> Mark Golden and Peter Toohey, *Sex and Difference in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003). This outline of gender and sexuality historiography is based largely on the introduction of this work (1-20).

<sup>21</sup> Golden and Toohey, *Sex and Difference in Ancient Greece and Rome*, 4.

<sup>22</sup> Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 24-26.

<sup>23</sup> Women, particularly in the lower economic strata, were active in the economic realms. Many women, out of necessity, provided an equal amount of labor in businesses, making their presence quite visible. In addition, there were many examples of elite women actively participating in politics, the military and economic spheres. For ancient accounts, although some instances should be taken with a grain of salt as comments regarding powerful women were at times really insults toward the men they were connected with, see Laudatio Turia (ILS 8393, trans. E. Wistrand), Tacitus's *Annales* and Suetonius's *Lives of the Caesars* for the influence of imperial women (Livia, Agrippina), Plutarch's *Life of Marc Antony* 53.2 for Octavia and Cassius Dio for Julia Domna. For modern analyses of imperial women's influence, see Nikos

considered an informing aspect of gender constructions; the two were therefore treated separately as well.

Dover's *Greek Homosexuality*, among other works, initiated a new outlook on gender and sex in antiquity. He recognized that the ancient Greeks and Romans viewed sex and sexuality in a different manner than the modern world (indeed even the concept of "sexuality" would have been foreign). He postulated that sexual tastes and desires did not define who a person was, as today.<sup>24</sup> A label such as homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual based on a person's sex partner preferences that indicates a person's identity and his or her psychological state (or health), did not exist; therefore, looking at ancient constructions and ideas about sex and gender and sexual practices under a modern lens resulted in misunderstandings of the material.<sup>25</sup> Dover discovered that sexual partner tastes in antiquity were regarded as no different from other preferences. Even displaying an exclusive preference was regarded as odd.<sup>26</sup> Rather, what role one preferred and what activities one enjoyed and how one reacted to whatever desire they had provided information regarding that person's character and informed their identity.<sup>27</sup> In addition, he connected sexual activity and roles to gender ideology. He saw the male active, penetrating role in the sex act as informing a male regarding his correct behavior as a

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Kokkinos, *Antonia Augusta: Portrait of a Great Roman Lady* (London: Routledge, 1992); Mary Boatwright, "The Imperial Women of the Second Century," *AJPhil* 112, no. 4 (1991), 513-540; and Julie Langford, *Maternal Megalomania: Julia Domna and the Imperial Politics of Motherhood* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012).

<sup>24</sup> K.J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 60-68.

<sup>25</sup> Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 3-14.

<sup>26</sup> Kirk Ormand. *Controlling Desires: Sexuality in Ancient Greece and Rome* (West Port, Con.: Praeger, 2009), 17-20.

<sup>27</sup> K.J. Dover, "Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behavior," *Arethusa* 6 (1973): 65-67; Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 100-109.



man. This led to the conceptualization of the “power-penetration model” that has provided an important framework for understanding how gender ideology developed in the manner it did in the west.<sup>28</sup> As the active participant in the sex act, a male should maintain that activity and penetrative role in all interactions in order to attain the status of “man.” To be penetrated, passive or under the control of another in any way was deemed feminine and thus inappropriate behavior for a man.<sup>29</sup>

Foucault, following Dover’s earlier works (*Greek Homosexuality* was published two years after the English translation of *A History of Sexuality*), saw sexuality as an invention of the eighteenth century, rather than an ahistorical truth that had remained constant. He introduced the idea that gender and sexual ideology was constructed and became part of the discourse in western society that negotiated and distributed power, while manufacturing knowledge about sexuality and gender roles.<sup>30</sup> This discovery, the connection between knowledge and power, allowed Foucault to visualize the utility of sex and gender for the establishment and maintenance of authority for one group, to the detriment of another.

Feminist scholarship exploded during (and prior to) this period, utilizing and criticizing Foucauldian framework to explore the oppressive quality of these gender constructions.<sup>31</sup> They questioned the “knowledge” that had been produced regarding

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<sup>28</sup> Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 18-19; Marilyn Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture* (Malden, MA.: Blackwell, 2005), 7-9.

<sup>29</sup> Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 100-109.

<sup>30</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, An Introduction: Volume I* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990 (1976)), 17-35.

<sup>31</sup> Sarah Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975); A. Cameron and A. Kurht, eds., *Images of Women in Antiquity* (Detroit: Wayne

women's "nature" and their innate and subordinate role to men. Their research on the artificiality of constructions concerning what it meant, or should mean, to be a "woman" opened similar studies into masculinity and men. Recognizing that the category of "man" is just as artificial, many have explored how and why ideas of what it meant to be a man came about and affected the societies that constructed them.<sup>32</sup> These investigations are gaining prominence in ancient scholarship and are beginning to rival studies on women and femininity, although studies regarding sex and sexuality still far outnumber those regarding gender.

In the wake of Dover and Foucault many subsequent scholars took up and explored these concepts, particularly John Winkler, David Halperin and Marilyn Skinner.<sup>33</sup> Foucault's model has been questioned and critiqued as well. The dichotomy has been demonstrated as too simplistic. Multiple, competing masculinities have been found at any one time and place, indicating that this idea is neither static nor universal. They are always changing to reflect and react to social, economic and political

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State University Press, 1983); Richard Hawley and Barbara Levick, eds., *Women in Antiquity: New Assessments* (London: Routledge, 1995). For feminist complaints with Foucauldian thought, see Lin Foxhall, "Pandora Unbound: A Feminist Critique of Foucault's History of Sexuality" in Golden and Toohey, *Sex and Difference in Ancient Rome and Greece*, 167-182.

<sup>32</sup>For examples of studies of ancient masculinity see Ralph Mark Rosen and I. Sluiter, eds., *Andreia: Studies in Manliness and Courage in Classical Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Maud Gleason, *Making Men: Sophist and Self-presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995); Lin Foxhall and John Salmon, eds. *Thinking Men: Masculinity and Self-Representation in the Classical Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1998); Lin Foxhall and J. B. Salmon, eds., *When Men Were Men: Masculinity, Power and Identity in Classical Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1998); Myles McDonnell, *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Erik Gunderson, *Staging Masculinity: The Rhetoric of Performance in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); see Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, for an investigation of modern masculinity.

<sup>33</sup> John Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 1990); David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality: And Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Judith P. Hallet and Marilyn B. Skinner, eds., *Roman Sexualities* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997).

circumstances.<sup>34</sup> Many have also noted the differences between prescriptive texts and reality.<sup>35</sup> Various sources that historians have mined for information and depictions of how men and women interacted and what expectations were placed on them reveal what the ancient writer or the group the writer was affiliated with *wanted* to take place. For this reason, impartial depictions of relations and practice are nonexistent.

Nonetheless, authors often reveal the conscious (or unconscious) presentation of norms. These norms inform us about the dominant ideologies at any given time or place. Although gender and sex have been debated subjects, one generally agreed upon aspect of accepted gender roles in ancient Greece and Rome is that of control. As mentioned above, this concept was derived from Dover and Foucault's works and indicates that a male could only achieve "man" status if he maintained dominance and control. This vital characteristic of manliness stemmed from sexual practices. A "man's" correct role during sex was as the active or penetrating partner, while the woman or effeminate man was passive or penetrated. This concept of physical penetration translated into control or dominance and served as a metaphor for relationships outside sexual activity. A "man" thus had to maintain the upper hand in all situations. Possibly beginning in the Archaic Period in Greece, this idea expanded to include retaining control not only over those around, but also over oneself.<sup>36</sup> With the development of hoplite warfare, which required soldiers to maintain their positions in the phalanx regardless of fear or zeal for battle, this

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<sup>34</sup> Van Wees, "A Brief History of Tears: Gender and Differentiation in Archaic Greece" in Foxhall and Salmon, *When Men Were Men: Masculinity, Power and Identity in Classical Antiquity*, 10-53; Dominic Monserrat, "Reading Gender in the Roman World" in Janet Huskinson, ed., *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity and Power in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 2000), 153-214, especially 200.

<sup>35</sup> Matthew Fox, "The constrained man," in Foxhall and Salmon, *Thinking Men: Masculinity and Self-Representation in the Classical Tradition*, 6-22.

<sup>36</sup> Hans VanWees, "A Brief History of Tears: Gender and Differentiation in Archaic Greece," 43.

ideal became crucial for group safety.<sup>37</sup> Submission to emotions or desires was categorized as a feminine trait, just as submission to physical or sexual control. “Men” were expected to suppress these emotions or desires (for riches, luxury, comfort, etc.) with reason and superior will and not be affected by intense situations or environments. As Emma Dench has shown, this standard was equally applicable in Greece and in Rome.<sup>38</sup> This criterion of control had become an informing aspect of Greek and Roman gender and sexuality and will be central to the present study. Indeed, Plutarch’s loudest criticism of martial men was their lack of restraint and moderation, which would have resonated with both his Greek and Roman readers.

Equally important to this investigation are two further trends in modern gender studies. The first also originated with Foucault’s *History of Sexuality*. Since the publication of this series, many have recognized gender ideology’s key role in power relationships and the negotiation and jockeying for dominance. David Gilmore asks in his study of modern masculinities throughout the world: “Why do so many places regard the state of being a ‘real or true man’ as uncertain or precarious, a prize to be won or wrested?”<sup>39</sup> I believe that this is because “being a man” entails possessing a certain amount of power and superiority. People have consistently justified men’s power over either women or other groups of men by their superior status as “men,” while asserting that the other group is unfit to rule either themselves or others because they do not have

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<sup>37</sup> As Van Wees points out, the need for discipline also resulted from a lack of officers. The tendency to punish cowardice in Greek armies, rather than insubordination may have influenced the important status of courage as well (*Greek Warfare*, 100-2, 192-5).

<sup>38</sup> Emma Dench, “Austerity, Excess, Success, and Failure in Hellenistic and Early Imperial Italy,” in Maria Wyke, ed., *Parchments of Gender: Deciphering the Bodies of Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 136-141.

<sup>39</sup> Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 1.

and cannot have these traits. Those who have already obtained that status and the power and authority that accompany it closely guard it and construct strict and often unattainable guidelines for others to aspire to in order to share in the privileged rank.<sup>40</sup> As Maud Gleason succinctly stated, “Gender is the primary source of the metaphorical language with which power relationships are articulated.”<sup>41</sup>

Due to the link between gender concepts and power and influence, other aspects of identity are bound to gender-based status. The superiority of one concept of masculinity over another implicitly transfers superiority to other identities such as ethnicity and social/economic status. For example, Aeschylus was able to assert the Greeks’ inherent ethnic superiority over the Persians by demonstrating the superior manhood of the Greeks over the effeminacy of the Persians in his *Persiae*, particularly in his portrayal of Atossa’s dream.<sup>42</sup> Gender and sexual superiority is rarely asserted for its own sake, rather “Gender...exists only and always in relation to other social categories. And power can only be understood as it is generated through these complexes of categories.”<sup>43</sup> This study will utilize the concepts that have been discussed here and,

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<sup>40</sup> It should be pointed out that, as with any complex concept of identity, this is not the only aspect that creates masculinity. Gilmore postulates that manhood is formed as a utilitarian response to a community’s needs, specifically protection, procreation and provisions. As these requirements lead an individual into conflict situations (fighting for resources, mates or in wars), societies must teach boys to become “men” and resist their natural urge to back away from these confrontations. Therefore, “being a man” is not just about dominating, although it is a key aspect.

<sup>41</sup> Gleason, *Making Men*, 160.

<sup>42</sup> Aes. *Pers.* 180-199. In this excerpt, the Persian queen, Atossa describes a dream about two sisters. One woman represents “Asia” and the other “Hellas.” When the women begin fighting, her son, Xerxes, attempts to restrain and yoke the sisters. The Asian representative submits to Xerxes, while the Greek does not. The Greek woman fights and defeats Xerxes. Although the two lands are represented by female figures (a common practice), this commentary reveals the superior status Aeschylus conferred on Greek men, who defeated Persian soldiers. He continued the appeal to superior masculinity, especially when Atossa blames Xerxes defective manhood for Persia’s defeat (754-756).

hopefully, add to the discussion of how individuals and groups can manipulate gender ideology to advocate competing masculinities as well as to discuss and promote other aspects of identity.

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<sup>43</sup> N.B. Kampen, "Gender theory in Roman art," in D.E. Kleiner and S.B. Matheson, eds., *I Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome* (New Haven, C.N.: Yale University Press, 1996), 14.

## Being “Greek”

Identities in general and ethnic identity in particular have similarly received growing attention among ancient historians and classicists and remain a contested topic. Ethnicity is a complicated term and can certainly not be applied to antiquity in the same manner that it is used today. We cannot connect the nationalistic ideas and criteria to being “Greek” that we would today. Being “Greek” did not mean the same thing to all Greek speakers living in what they called Hellas, nor did it mean the same thing at all times and places. For modern scholars, geographical questions are raised when discussing what and who a “Greek” was: Do we mean Hellas proper, mainland Greece with its immediately surrounding islands? Or would the Greek speaking communities in Asia Minor, Magna Graecia, and so on have identified themselves as “Greek” and would those living in Greece in antiquity have done so as well? In addition, Greek culture was comprised of many subgroups and subcultures; it was not internally coherent and was constantly under negotiation and competition among ancient Greeks.<sup>44</sup> As Mark Grahame defined it, culture, identity and ethnicity are conceptualized a “being part of a subjective process by which individuals come to recognize themselves as belonging to one group as opposed to another.”<sup>45</sup> This definition points out a significant problem in modern studies of ethnicity and identity; because this is a “subjective process,” modern attempts to look objectively at these groups and categorize ethnic identification from the outside are already on slippery ground. For this reason, scholars have recently begun to look for what

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<sup>44</sup> Carol Dougherty and Leslie Kurke, eds., *The Cultures within Ancient Greek Culture: Contact, Conflict, Collaboration* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.

<sup>45</sup> Mark Grahame, “Material Culture and Roman Identity: The Spatial Layout of Pompeian Houses and the Problems of Ethnicity,” in Joanne Berry and Ray Lawrence, eds., *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 158.

Jonathan Hall called “emic” or internal notions of group affiliation rather than “enic” or those imposed by outside analysts.<sup>46</sup> Adding to this problem is the tendency for many aspects of identity to clash; social, political and cultural affiliations can contradict what we in the modern world would classify as identities. For example, Plutarch was a Roman citizen who was in some part invested in and participated in the government. This has led some to the conclusion that Plutarch identified with the Romans; however, some scholars have recently realized that Plutarch would have been perfectly comfortable with his political affiliation with Rome while maintaining a cultural separation.<sup>47</sup> Plutarch was certainly not hostile to the Romans and appreciated many of the benefits Roman rule brought to Greece but he may have held some apprehensions about being under the control of another group and definitely believed that Greece was culturally superior to Rome.

Given these problems, I must clarify what I am discussing when I mention the terms “ethnicity” and “Greek.” When I speak of Plutarch’s “Greek” ethnic identity, I am referring to the elite, wealthy men who participated in the political sphere of the Roman Empire, yet would have similarly held a conceptual cultural affiliation among themselves and separation from the Romans of Italian origin and other non-Greek speaking groups.<sup>48</sup> These men would have had connections, real or imagined, to the elite groups in mainland Greece who held political and military authority prior to Rome’s annexation of Greece.

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<sup>46</sup> Jonathan Hall, “‘Culture’ or ‘Cultures’? Hellenism in the Late Sixth Century” in Dougherty and Kurke, *The Cultures within Ancient Greek Culture: Contact, Conflict, Collaboration*, 23-25.

<sup>47</sup> Jones, *Plutarch and Rome*, 38; Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Antiquity*, 401; see Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 70 for a refutation of this idea.

<sup>48</sup> Likewise, when I speak of the “Romans” I am not referring to all peoples living in the Roman Empire or even all who held Roman citizenship as this is a civic/political distinction rather than a cultural one. Instead, I am referring to (broadly speaking) the Latin speaking people living in Italy.



Plutarch may have conceptualized a more encompassing idea of Greeks based on lineage, language and cultural traditions.<sup>49</sup> However, as his definition seems to have had *paideia* and philosophy at its core, only the elite members of his social and cultural group would have been able to attain and practice his ideal. Just as *kaloi kagathoi* represented a small, wealthy group of Greeks during the Classical Period, the new identification that Plutarch appeared to promote and support, *pepaideumenoi*, were educated men with the means and leisure to pursue such endeavors.<sup>50</sup> As Swain has pointed out, “it would certainly be odd to construe their (Greek elites’) consciousness as a matter of ethnicity (based solely on geography and lineage) rather than cultural-political identity.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Greg Woolfe, “Becoming Roman, Staying Greek: Culture, Identity and the Civilizing Process in the Roman East,” *PCPS* 40 (1994), 121.

<sup>50</sup> Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 33.

<sup>51</sup> Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 11.

## Post-Colonial Theory

Like the topics addressed above, studies of post-colonialism (or the hegemonic process by which colonial rule was maintained) and imperialism (the conscious, systematic exploitation and dominance of a state(s) by another state for economic motivations) have their roots in the modern world.<sup>52</sup> This does not mean that they cannot provide a useful lens through which we might better perceive the ancient world. One must acknowledge this though and the limitations of post-colonial theory prior to employing it in ancient studies and recognize that many scholars do not believe that it can be applied to antiquity, as one runs the risk of anachronism if not careful.

Post-colonial theory arose out of the post-colonization movement after 1947 and as Jane Webster explains, entails three main aspects. First, it seeks to decenter Western (conquerors') categories of knowledge projected about colonized peoples. This information has often been used to explain and justify a colonizer's relationship with the colonized, turning a group into "savages," the "other" or creating a fetishized image.<sup>53</sup> Second, it involves the articulation of the active history of a colonized people, promoting the (re)birth of knowledge produced by these colonized groups regarding themselves.<sup>54</sup> Finally it includes, as Edward Saïd formulated, post-colonial discourse theory or the investigation of the textual forms that "produced and codified" knowledge about the

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<sup>52</sup> Jane Webster, "Roman Imperialism and the 'Post-Imperial' Age" in Jane Webster and Nicholas Cooper, *Roman Imperialism: Post-Colonial Perspectives* (Leicester, U.K.: University of Leicester, 1996), 2-5.

<sup>53</sup> As Edward Saïd has explained, this information is utilized, rather than produced, for legitimization. The ideas are usually produced prior to any subjugation in order to differentiate "us" and "them." See *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 54.

<sup>54</sup> Webster, "Roman Imperialism and the 'Post-imperial' Age" in Webster and Cooper, *Roman Imperialism: Post-Colonial Perspectives*, 5-7.

colonized and their reaction and response to it.<sup>55</sup> This final aspect of post-colonial theory is particularly useful in the present study as Plutarch was reacting in the biographies studied here to the knowledge Romans produced about the Greeks.

Many early scholars who investigated post-colonialism in the Roman Empire have tended to work with comparisons, attempting to find similarities between Rome and its provinces and modern, western empires.<sup>56</sup> This has led many to question whether Rome can be called a colonialist or imperialist power in contrast with the modern west. This is a valid concern; as discussed above, working solely with a modern framework and contemporary concerns when investigating the ancient world will inevitably lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretations. I do not focus on comparisons; whether or not Rome treated its provinces in the same manner Britain did their colonies will not provide a better understanding of Rome or Greece. Rather, I investigate Plutarch's "voice" in its own right using the theories and framework of post-colonial studies outlined above, not the specific results of the investigations of other post-colonial studies. In addition, most Roman colonial studies have focused on the western provinces, operating under the assumption that the eastern provinces and Greece in particular were impervious to Roman influence. Some have even postulated that a type of "reverse cultural imperialism" took place.<sup>57</sup> Admittedly, Greece did influence Rome a great deal, which led the first century poet Horace to remark famously that conquered Greece had taken her conqueror captive;

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<sup>55</sup> Saïd, *Orientalism*, 1978, 3.

<sup>56</sup> F. Haverfield, *The Romanization of Roman Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912); Richard Alston, "Conquest by text: Juvenal and Plutarch on Egypt" in Webster and Cooper, *Roman Imperialism: Post-Colonial Perspectives*, 99-100.

<sup>57</sup> A.H.M. Jones, "The Greeks under the Roman Empire," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 171 (1963), 3; for a refutation see Susan E. Alcock, *Graecia Capta: The Landscapes of Roman Greece* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 2.

however, influence certainly does not travel down a one-way street and Greece was deeply affected by Roman rule as well.<sup>58</sup>

Scholars are correct in recognizing a difference between Greece under Roman rule and other colonized people, however. Greeks, in general terms, had a distinct advantage over other groups dealing with colonialist powers. R. Young's question, which is meant to represent the general situation of "the colonized," points out this difference. He asks "But how are we to write a new history? When, as Cesaire observed, the only history is white?"<sup>59</sup> In contrast, the history, literature, art and at times language were Greek not only for the Romans living and ruling in Greece, but in Rome as well. Greeks were therefore able to counter the knowledge produced by the Romans in terms that the Romans themselves would be familiar with. The Greek writers of the Second Sophistic could utilize the history and traditions of this privileged background and past to reshape the present.

The Romans reconciled their appreciation of Classical Greece with their domination of contemporary Greeks by asserting that their contemporary subjects had gone into decline and were no longer comparable to their predecessors.<sup>60</sup> Distinguishing between Classical and contemporary Greeks allowed the Romans to continue to used Greek models and traditions and maintain their superiority over their subjects and their

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<sup>58</sup> Hor., *Epist.* 2.1.157. *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit*; Alcock, *Graecia Capta*, 2-4.

<sup>59</sup> Young makes this comment in reference to the problems that arose from Western, white countries colonizing peoples of varying races and ethnicities. During the periods of de-colonization, these colonized groups had to reestablish their histories, traditions and independence after years of the colonizer groups manufacturing and propagating their "white" version of colonized history, customs, nature, etc. For further explanation see R. Young, *White Mythologies, Writing History and the West* (London: Routledge, 1990), 119 and Saïd, *Orientalism*.

<sup>60</sup> Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Antiquity*, 382.

justification for rule. It was this knowledge about the Greeks that the writers of the Second Sophistic, such as Plutarch, reacted to and attempted to change. Two examples of the Roman attitude illustrate this point. The first, Cicero, certainly studied and appreciated Greek language and literature; however, he was quick to alert his brother, Quintus, to the differences between contemporary and ancient Greeks. In a letter he wrote to his brother, advising him how to behave during his third year as *propraetor* in Asia, he remarked that there were few, if any, Greeks worthy of their ancestors (*Q Fr.* 1.1.16). Juvenal similarly presented a derogatory picture of Greeks in his *Satire III*, stating “I cannot, citizens, stomach a Greek Rome.”<sup>61</sup> Throughout this satire, he demeaned the Greeks, associating them with effeminacy and at one point, directing his attention to insult Greek philosophers.<sup>62</sup> Plutarch countered these insults by downplaying the martial superiority of the Romans, claiming that exclusive focus on military endeavors led to deficiencies in *their* masculinity, and elevating Hellenic education and philosophy as a preferable route to becoming an ideal man and thus insinuating that the Greeks were more capable of rule and deserving of authority. As Gleason recognized, *paideia* became “cultural capital” in the Greek Second Sophistic community, as well as the “calisthenics of manhood.”<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Juv. 3.60. non possum ferre, Quirites, Graecam Urbem.

<sup>62</sup> These insults run throughout but most particularly at 93-4 and 114-25 in *Satire III*. As this work is a satire, it need not be assumed that these were Juvenal’s personal opinions; however, they may represent his own thoughts or those that were prevalent in Rome at the time. See W.S. Anderson, *Essays on Roman Satire* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982).

<sup>63</sup> Gleason, *Making Men*, xxi-ii.

In the following chapters, I combine the theories, studies and methodologies discussed above to investigate how Plutarch asserted his post-colonial voice in order to negotiate the power relationship of elite Greeks with Rome, using gender ideology to re-shape the ideal man and assert his personal and community's identity.<sup>64</sup> As this study deals with a literary source, my obvious focus is on Plutarch's language, word choice and literary method. My main concern is how Plutarch described correct behavior of the men he wrote about, what traits he chose to emphasize and especially what characteristics and actions he associated with effeminacy and lack of control.

Two words, *arete* and *andreia*, are particularly informative about what criteria Plutarch deemed crucial for becoming a man. As words and concepts, both nouns have changed and have been changed by various individuals and societies throughout their existence. *Arete* is commonly translated as "excellence" and *andreia* "manliness" or "courage." The words represent abstract concepts, rather than finite objects, and due to the constant manipulation of these terms, they possess a more "sustained history of definition."<sup>65</sup> These problems in definition indicate that the concepts present a "significant and contested feature of cultural identity."<sup>66</sup> I examine one instance of this sort of contest where concepts of manliness were utilized in order to redefine and reestablish a personal and cultural identity. I first investigate Plutarch's description of two sets of martial men, *Coriolanus - Alcibiades* and *Pelopidas - Marcellus*. In these

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<sup>64</sup> I should note that although I am using the phrase "post-colonial voice" for Plutarch interpretations, he was not post-colonial as defined by modern post-colonial studies because he was living under Roman rule, rather than after Rome had relinquished political control of Greece. This phrase points out the theories I am using when considering Plutarch's portrayal of Greek and Roman men and customs and his resistance to the knowledge Rome produced about Greece, as explained above as an integral part of post-colonial theory.

<sup>65</sup> Karen Bassi, "The Semantics of Manliness in Ancient Greece" in Rosen and Sluiter, *Andreia: Studies in Manliness and Courage in Classical Antiquity*, 26.

<sup>66</sup> Bassi, "The Semantics of Manliness in Ancient Greece," in Rosen and Sluiter, *Andreia*, 27.

biographies, he constructed individuals who focused purely on martial training and achievements and then portrayed them as prey to their emotions and desires, unable to control themselves and, at times, those around them. This represents a serious deficiency in their status as “men.” Although each of these Greek and Roman men were similarly incomplete in their manhood, Plutarch tended to allow Greek men privileged access to his ideal source of masculinity, as well as excuse them for the majority of their faults. I will then turn to an example of Plutarch’s ideal man, Phocion, who utilized *paideia* and philosophy alongside military ability to achieve moderation and self-control. Having attained this ideal, he also had the superior claim to authority and power. I will also look briefly at Phocion’s parallel, Cato the Younger, to point out why this Roman subject also fell short of Plutarch’s ideal. Finally, I address the more complex and difficult question of why Plutarch promoted this message and how it intertwined with other aspects of identity and power negotiations.

My purpose is to illuminate Plutarch’s statements, rather than to investigate the historical Coriolanus, Alcibiades, Pelopidas, Marcellus or Phocion. Whether or not Plutarch’s portraits are correct is not at issue, except of course when he purposefully deviated from a source to construct his subject in the manner he wished. What is of interest here is what the author was trying to convey, what audience he was presenting his ideas to and why he would be compelled to create such images. As Karen Bassi notes, “the unreliability of Plutarch as a source is of less concern than the fact that the stories he tells contribute to what might be called a cultural database.”<sup>67</sup>

Before continuing to Plutarch’s *Coriolanus* and *Alcibiades*, it is necessary to address briefly the Greek words *arete* and *andreia* mentioned above and the Latin

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<sup>67</sup> Bassi, *Acting Like Men*, 8.

counterpart *virtus* and establish their initial meanings and etymologies in order to analyze how Plutarch used the words and attempted to manipulate the ideas they represented. *Arete* was an important concept in ancient Greece that represented the ideal virtues that a man, and at times though extremely rarely a woman, could aspire to and display in order to achieve a noble character. The word, commonly translated as “excellence,” initially indicated ideal qualities of men in war either spiritually or physically. *Arete* would maintain its connection to masculine qualities throughout antiquity, seldom being ascribed to women’s achievements or behavior. With the development of the polis, its usages changed to include a broader meaning of admirable traits or behaviors and expanded to incorporate abstract and ethical concepts although remaining an indicator of masculine characteristics. Although the close connection with martial excellence endured, battle was no longer the only way to gain or display this all-encompassing concept of “excellence.” Plato in particular was responsible for either providing or, more likely, reflecting the new meaning of *arete* when he linked the idea with his philosophical concepts.<sup>68</sup> Perhaps Plutarch obtained his conceptions of philosophically-derived manliness from Plato’s works.<sup>69</sup>

*Andreia*, obtaining its meaning from the Greek word ἀνὴρ, or “man,” was also closely linked with manliness and generally indicated martial courage or bravery but could also mean “manhood” or the “act of becoming a man.” In the earliest surviving Greek literature, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Homer connected *andreia* with specific and finite

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<sup>68</sup> Pierre Chantraine ed., *Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue Grecque: Histoire des Mots* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1968), 54.

<sup>69</sup> See Duff, *Plutarch’s Lives*, 72-98 for Plato’s effect on Plutarch.



militaristic actions performed by his heroes.<sup>70</sup> The connection remained and Plutarch used the word mostly in this manner, indicating bravery or excellence in general in martial settings. The Latin word *virtus* proceeded from a similar etymological path, also coming from the word for man, or *vir*. Similarly, it originally denoted martial courage and achievement and gradually expanded to take on a more comprehensive meaning encompassing good (masculine) qualities in general. Myles McDonnell asserts that this was due to Roman contact with the Greeks, who affixed their broad meaning of *arete* to the Latin word.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Bassi, “The Semantics of Manliness in Ancient Greece,” in Rosen and Sluiter, *Andreia*, 34.

<sup>71</sup> McDonnell, *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic*, 107-126.

## **Chapter One**

### **Coriolanus and Alcibiades**

The paired biographies of Coriolanus and Alcibiades provide one of Plutarch's most poignant attempts to demonstrate the importance of education in the development of a good man and the detriment of relying solely on military and physical training. This could have been a reaction to the availability of military positions to Greek men at the time that Plutarch lived. Prior to the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161-180 CE), there were no regular army levies raised in the Greek province of Achaia under Roman administration.<sup>72</sup> This avenue of manhood was then literally closed to Greek men, who had to explore other methods of attaining and displaying their masculinity.

Coriolanus and Alcibiades were both traitors to their respective homelands, after having been ousted from their countries. Both men, as Plutarch portrayed them, fell victim to their emotions and desires, which eventually led to their respective downfalls, illustrating that great natures can produce both good and bad if not properly trained and controlled (*Cor.* 1.3). More importantly, perhaps, these character flaws and excesses led each man to act against the interests of their homelands and put their countries' welfare in jeopardy. This solidifies the link between ideal manhood and leadership and authority. Without the character strength that masculinity provided, both men proved to be poor leaders and ill-equipped for power.

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<sup>72</sup> Alcock, *Graecia Capta*, 8.

Plutarch also used these biographies to illuminate what he felt was a fundamental difference between Greek and Roman perceptions of manly virtue. Plutarch pointed out the early limited meaning of *virtus*, discussed above, to introduce a sub-theme in his *Coriolanus* and *Alcibiades*.<sup>73</sup> Plutarch reversed the order of his biographies in this instance, deviating from his usual practice of beginning with the Greek man.<sup>74</sup> Perhaps he began this pair of lives with the Roman subject in order to introduce one theme of the biographies, the differences between Greek and Roman conceptions of masculine virtue, exemplified by the deficiencies between the Greek and Latin languages. He began Coriolanus' life by establishing and explaining his faults, which is a telling sign of what aspects of Coriolanus' character Plutarch would chose to focus on. He stated that Coriolanus confirmed the belief that a great nature, if it lacked education (*paideia*), could produce many useless or poor qualities along with beneficial attributes. He then listed his admirable characteristics and their results; his great intellect and powerful drive led him to great things. However, his intemperate emotions and determined love of honor made it difficult and unharmonious for him to be with others. He then associated Coriolanus' deficiencies with his lack of education and incomplete training, indicating that one must submit to reason and logic in order to avoid excesses (*Cor.* 1.5). Plutarch described his ideal that Coriolanus did not live up to, stating that "there is no greater gift of the Muses than the softening of one's nature by reason and education, receiving moderation and

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<sup>73</sup> Plutarch titled this biography *Gaius Marcius* and referred to Coriolanus by his nomen, Marcius, throughout the work. I will use his honorary title and more familiar name, Coriolanus, in this discussion.

<sup>74</sup> Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, 205.

casting off excess because of this reason.”<sup>75</sup> In this opening of Coriolanus’ biography, Plutarch established the importance of education in the creation of an ideal man.

Plutarch continued to explain why Coriolanus was not able to uphold this standard based upon educated excellence. He believed that the Romans, in the days Coriolanus lived, prized military valor above all else. He drew support for this statement by citing that the Latin word for excellence, *virtus*, only meant martial courage:

It is perfectly true, however, that in those days Rome held in highest honor that phase of virtue (*arete*) which concerns itself with warlike and military achievements, and evidence of this may be found in the only Latin word for virtue (*virtus*), which signifies really martial courage (*andreia*); they made courage, a specific form of virtue (*arete*), stand for virtue in general.<sup>76</sup>

Plutarch adduced that the Romans did not conceive of virtue or excellence as anything but military success, which focused on brute, martial strength, and were unwilling to attempt to attain the higher levels of *arete* that the Greeks did. This statement points out a significant difference between the Greeks and the Romans. At the time Plutarch wrote the Greek word, *arete*, denoted excellence in either action or spirit. The ancient Greek language possessed another word, *andreia*, to represent military excellence and courage. Latin did not designate two words for this purpose and used *virtus*, which initially meant martial courage and excellence, exclusively. The differences in language reflect the broader differences in masculine ideals that Plutarch brought to light. The early Romans

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<sup>75</sup>Plut. *Cor.* 1.5: οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλο Μουσῶν εὐμενείας ἀπολαύουσιν ἄνθρωποι τοσοῦτον, ὅσον ἐξημερῶσαι τὴν φύσιν ὑπὸ λόγου καὶ παιδείας, τῷ λόγῳ δεξαμένην τὸ μέτριον καὶ τὸ ἄγαν ἀποβαλοῦσαν. All translations of Plutarch are based upon Bernadotte Perin, ed. *Plutarch's Lives*, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1950).

<sup>76</sup>Plut. *Cor.* 1.6: ὅλως μὲν οὖν ἐν τοῖς τότε χρόνοις ἡ Πρώμη μάλιστα τῆς ἀρετῆς τὸ περὶ τὰς πολεμικὰς καὶ στρατιωτικὰς ἐκύδαινε πράξεις, καὶ μαρτυρεῖ τὸ τὴν ἀρετὴν ὑπ’ αὐτῶν ἐνὶ τῷ τῆς ἀνδρείας ὀνόματι προσαγορεύεσθαι, καὶ τοῦτο τοῦ γένους ὄνομα κοινὸν ὑπάρχειν ὧς τὴν ἀνδρείαν ἰδίᾳ καλοῦσιν.

conceived of ideal manliness as procured through military exploits, while Plutarch asserted that the Greeks judged one's success in or attainment of masculinity on other endeavors such as leadership, education and so forth. They considered *arete* ideal masculine behavior, rather than *andreia*.<sup>77</sup>

Plutarch used Coriolanus to represent his presentation of Roman character and tradition and set him up as the stereotypical Roman man who was primarily concerned with martial excellence and focused his education on physical and military training. Plutarch went into detail concerning Coriolanus' education, recounting the intense preparations he endured to strengthen his body for handling weaponry. Plutarch stated that he "was born naturally affected towards warlike education and straightaway from childhood handled weaponry."<sup>78</sup> He did not mention any other type of instruction Coriolanus received and described his education exclusively based on physical training in order to illuminate Coriolanus' principle flaw. In other words, Coriolanus did not receive a proper, Greek education that would have supplied him with reason, logic and self-control. Coriolanus focused on baser, tangible strengths that left his masculinity incomplete. Plutarch's source for this information is unknown and it is likely that he invented this view of Coriolanus to construct his subject as an individual lacking cultured, classical Hellenic education. Dionysius of Halicarnassus served as Plutarch's, possibly sole, source for *Coriolanus*; however, he did not mention Coriolanus' education

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<sup>77</sup> Myles McDonnell, "Roman Men and Greek Virtue in *Andreia* and *Paideia* in Greek Culture Under Rome" in Rosen and Sluiter, *Andreia*, 236.

<sup>78</sup> Plut. *Cor.* 2.1: ὁ δὲ Μάρκιος ἐτέρων μᾶλλον ἐμπαθῆς γεγονώς πρὸς τοὺς πολεμικοὺς ἀγῶνας, εὐθὺς ἐκ παιδὸς τὰ ὅπλα διὰ χειρὸς εἶχε. Plutarch's word choice here is revealing towards his intentions. The word translated here "affected" carries emotional connotations. Plutarch is presenting Coriolanus as one allowing his emotions to affect him from the start of his life.

in his lengthy account of his life.<sup>79</sup> Plutarch presented Coriolanus as a purely physical character who did not concern himself with intellectual or ethical betterment. In characterizing him thus, Plutarch revealed what he felt was deficient in Coriolanus' person and, by extension, in Roman ideals of masculinity as well.

In contrast Alcibiades, the fifth-century Athenian military leader, with whom Plutarch paired Coriolanus, experienced a very different upbringing and education. Coriolanus' mother, Volumnia, was his sole guardian as Coriolanus' father died early in his childhood. He was lacking male supervision and example, which was an important element in Greek education.<sup>80</sup> Greek men made practice of taking young boys in their charge and teaching them how to behave properly as men.<sup>81</sup> Though orphaned at a young age, Alcibiades did not suffer a similar fate. Alcibiades' uncle and prominent political leader, Pericles, adopted the boy and raised him in his home. In addition, the philosopher Socrates was Alcibiades' tutor and protected him "as a plant in full bloom,"<sup>82</sup> in contrast with Coriolanus' "improper tilling."<sup>83</sup> Plutarch has invited a comparison between the men's education in this comment, explicitly elevating the Greek man's training over the Roman's. Plutarch described Alcibiades' character and appearance prior to Socrates'

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<sup>79</sup> D.A. Russell, "Plutarch's *Life of Coriolanus*" in *Essays on Plutarch's Lives* ed. Barbara Scardigli (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 360.

<sup>80</sup> For an interesting contrast, see Tacitus' *Agricola* 4.4. Tacitus praised Agricola's female upbringing, even stating that she was able to pull Agricola away from studying more philosophy than became a Roman and a senator.

<sup>81</sup> Plutarch asserted that those who lost fathers early in life were not to use that as a reason for their faults, indicating that the lack of a father in itself was not necessarily negative for the writer (*Cor.* 1.2). Alcibiades was able to acquire male mentors although his father had died. Coriolanus; however, was not and was supervised solely by his mother, which may be the underlying difference between their orphaned statuses.

<sup>82</sup> Plut. *Alc.* 4.1: ...ὥς φυτὸν ἐν ἄνθει...

<sup>83</sup> Plut. *Cor.* 1.3-4: ...ἐν γεωργίᾳ θεραπείας μὴ τυχοῦσαν.

instruction as susceptible to all the luxury, lovers and flatterers that his rank would imply. However, he then stated that “there is no man whose fortune so encompasses and envelopes with the so-called good things of life that he cannot be reached by the bold and caustic reason of philosophy,” again portraying the beneficial nature of education and reason also mentioned in the opening of Coriolanus’ life (1.5).<sup>84</sup> Socrates, who “sought no unmanly pleasures,”<sup>85</sup> attempted to correct the inadequacies in Alcibiades’ character with education and philosophical teachings, showing him “how wanting and unfinished he was as excellence (*arete*) was concerned.”<sup>86</sup> Philosophy was a means to attaining perfection; it was only Socrates and his instruction that kept Alcibiades from his personality flaws and slipping into excess. If McDonnell is correct and *arete* was the ideal masculine behavior for Greeks, the perfection that philosophy helped to attain included ideal manliness. Plutarch depicted Alcibiades’ education as classical, masculine and indeed the route to true manhood in contrast to Coriolanus’ martial training and thereby illuminates the differences between Roman and Greek values and culture.

Alcibiades did not become a strict adherent to Socrates’ teaching, however. Although Plutarch often described the “love” and “respect” that the pupil had for his teacher, he also frequently allowed his desires to overcome him, literally and figuratively leading him away from philosophical studies and the route to manhood. Alcibiades, although he was of “good natural parts,” would give in to his flatterers and be drawn

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<sup>84</sup> Plut. *Alc.* 4.2: οὐδένα γὰρ ἡ τύχη περιέσχεν ἔξωθεν οὐδὲ περιέφραξε τοῖς λεγομένοις ἀγαθοῖς τοσοῦτον ὥστ’ ἄτρωτον ὑπὸ φιλοσοφίας γενέσθαι, καὶ λόγοις ἀπρόσιτον παρρησίαν καὶ δηγμὸν ἔχουσιν. In this passage, Plutarch commented on the uses of philosophy, rather than education and reason, as he did in *Coriolanus*. However, he seemed to link similar benefits to education (παιδεία), reason (λόγος) and philosophy (φιλοσοφία) throughout his biographies (see footnote 15 for examples).

<sup>85</sup> Plut. *Alc.* 4.3: ...οὐχ ἡδονὴν ἄνανδρον ἐραστοῦ θηρεύοντος...

<sup>86</sup> Plut. *Alc.* 6.5: ...ἡλικῶν ἐνδείης ἐστι καὶ ἀτελής πρὸς ἀρετὴν μανθάνοντα.

away to pleasures. Socrates then had to “hunt him down.”<sup>87</sup> This again reiterates Plutarch’s belief that a great nature can produce both good and bad if not properly directed to the good by education. It also demonstrates a central fault in Alcibiades’ character: He slipped away from philosophy toward his own desires and pleasures, and away from masculinity toward effeminacy, which was associated with luxury and emotion. Simon Swain points out that although Plutarch indicated Alcibiades’ character flaws through Socrates’ words, he did not blame his education for these defects.<sup>88</sup> He was indeed educated, but his flaws appear to have originated from the nature of his character. This was not the fault of the education itself, as it was with Coriolanus, but rather reflected a weakness in Alcibiades, who allowed himself to slip away from Socrates’ teachings because he could not exercise self-control and moderation. Although Alcibiades received a proper, classical and Hellenic instruction under Pericles and Socrates, he never seems to have fully adopted the philosophical virtues that would have steered him from excess. Plutarch certainly did not put emphasis on Alcibiades’ martial skills or nature, as he did with Coriolanus, but he did refer to him as the Athenian “most devoted to wars” (πολεμικώτατον) of his time (*Alc.* 38.2). This may have indicated a principle flaw in Alcibiades and explained why he was unable to fully control himself. Therefore, although he and his masculinity were preferable to Coriolanus’, he was not Plutarch’s ideal man either because a central aspect of masculinity was self-control. Plutarch explored this deficit in both his biographies, showing that both Alcibiades and

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<sup>87</sup> Plut. *Alc.* 6.1: ὁ δὲ Σωκράτους ἔρωσ πολλοὺς ἔχων καὶ μεγάλους ἀνταγωνιστὰς πῇ μὲν ἐκράτει τοῦ Ἀλκιβιάδου, δι’ εὐφυΐαν ἀπτομένων τῶν λόγων αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν καρδίαν στρεφόντων καὶ δάκρυα ἐκχεόντων, ἔστι δ’ ὅτε καὶ τοῖς κόλαξι πολλὰς ἡδονὰς ὑποβάλλουσιν ἐνδιδοὺς ἑαυτόν, ἀπωλίσθαινε τοῦ Σωκράτους καὶ δραπετεύων ἀτεχνῶς ἐκυνηγεῖτο.

<sup>88</sup> Swain, “Hellenic Culture and the Roman Heroes of Plutarch,” *JHS*, 110 (1990): 248-9.



Coriolanus were unable (or unwilling) to avoid their own particular excesses. Acting in this manner, both men displayed the flawed masculinities of their respective societies and martial men in general. He then provided a method of self-control that supported his proposed ideal masculinity, that is, education and philosophy.

Although Alcibiades was unable to sufficiently control his own desires, he was able to display proper education and intellect and exercised authority over other people, unlike Coriolanus. The Roman man was unable to persuade the population to elect him consul even though he had recently triumphed over the Corioli, from which battle he earned the honorific title “Coriolanus.” Instead, without the “virtue (*arete*)” of persuasion, he “made his great deeds and virtues obnoxious to the very men whom they benefited” through his disdainful speeches to the people.<sup>89</sup> His narrow focus on martial excellence had made him graceless, too harsh and lacking moderation and civility. Alcibiades, on the other hand, was able to control and influence the Athenians, since even “his errors had charm and felicity.”<sup>90</sup> Plutarch clearly preferred the flawed Greek to the brutish Roman. Let us now turn to the results of these flaws: how these men lost control.

Plutarch depicted Coriolanus, the less desirable example of masculinity, as completely lacking control over his emotions stating, “He had always given free rein to the impulses of pride and aggression in his nature, as if there were some inherent grandeur in these qualities and had never allowed himself to be ruled by reason and education.”<sup>91</sup> That Coriolanus did not see this as a flaw gave Plutarch further cause to

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<sup>89</sup> Plut. *Comp. Alc. et Cor.* 3.3: τὰς δὲ Μαρκίου πράξεις καὶ ἀρετὰς τοῦτο μὴ προσὸν ἐπαχθεὶς ἐποίησεν αὐτοῖς τοῖς εὖ παθοῦσι.

<sup>90</sup> Plut. *Comp. Cor. et Alc.* 3.4: ὅπου καὶ τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων ἔνια πολλάκις χάριν εἶχε καὶ ὥραν.

underscore his wanting character. “He thought that conquest and mastery in all things and at all times was the prerogative of bravery (*andreia*) rather than of effeminacy and weakness.”<sup>92</sup> According to Plutarch, Coriolanus’ ideals of masculinity (*andreia*) were not ideal manly behaviors. Because they lacked self-control, they were the marks of a feminine nature and vulnerability. In the passage excerpted above, Plutarch pointed to a key difference between the Greeks and the Romans and the main reason for Coriolanus’s flaws: Coriolanus, and by extension Romans, never *allowed* himself to be educated in the manner Plutarch upheld. This may not have been a personal choice; rather, the society and its traditions placed a greater emphasis and value on physical and martial training. It represented the collective fault of Roman society that translated into a lack of civility, moderation and manhood. Concentrating solely on physical and military excellence, Coriolanus neglected “higher” levels of education that would have taught him reason, logic and philosophical ideals and served to check intense emotions and other excesses. Coriolanus instead gave into his sentiments and they became the master of his thoughts and, more importantly, actions. Allowing his emotions to control and dominate his character was a mark of his effeminacy and weakness.

After a conflict with the tribunes, the Roman population or plebeians expelled Coriolanus from Rome. This event made him extremely angry and rather than suppressing his emotions, Coriolanus gave into his ire and began to plot against his home

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<sup>91</sup> Plut. *Cor.* 15.4: ἅτε δὴ πλεῖστα τῷ θυμοειδεῖ καὶ φιλονίκῳ μέρει τῆς ψυχῆς ὡς ἔχοντι μέγεθος καὶ φρόνημα κεχρημένος, τὸ δ’ ἐμβριθὲς καὶ τὸ πρᾶον, οὗ τὸ πλεῖστον ἀρετῇ πολιτικῇ μέτεστιν, ἐγκεκραμένον οὐκ ἔχων ὑπὸ λόγου καὶ παιδείας.

<sup>92</sup> Plut. *Cor.* 15.5: ...τὸ νικᾶν καὶ κρατεῖν πάντων καὶ πάντως ἔργον ἀνδρείας ἡγούμενος, οὐκ ἀσθενείας καὶ μαλακίας...

country while “...in a state of emotion due to anger and indignation.”<sup>93</sup> Plutarch described his behavior as a disease, “just as a sick man seems to burn with fever, so the angry man seems to be full of energy, because he is suffering from a sort of inflammation, a swelling, and a throbbing of the spirit.”<sup>94</sup> In addition to acquiescence to passions, the Greeks and Romans viewed submitting to illness and failing to endure it in a steadfast manner as an indication of effeminacy; Plutarch was reinforcing the lack of masculinity he saw in Coriolanus.<sup>95</sup> In behaving in this manner, he did not only endanger himself and his status as a “man,” but the well-being of his country.

Plutarch’s next example of Coriolanus’ weakness involved another controlling element in his life. Plutarch emphasized Coriolanus’ vulnerability to the power of women to accentuate his own lack of control. Allowing other men or inner impulses power or influence over yourself was one thing, but to allow a woman, who was born to be passive, active control was unforgivable for Greek and Roman men. His mother had a tremendous effect on him throughout his life. Plutarch stated that his own ambition did not drive Coriolanus, as is typical with most men, but rather an urge to please his mother, Volumnia. He chose his wife based on the wishes of Volumnia and continued to live in the same house with her after he had married Vergilia and had children with her (*Cor.* 4.7). His subservience to women carried on throughout Plutarch’s biography. When Coriolanus left Rome, due to his expulsion, he defected to a nearby people, the Volscians. He plotted to carry out his revenge by helping the Volscians defeat the Romans. After

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<sup>93</sup> Plut. *Cor.* 21.1: ...ἐμπαθὴς ὧν ὑπ’ ὀργῆς καὶ βαρυφροσύνης.

<sup>94</sup> Plut. *Cor.* 21.2: ὅταν γὰρ εἰς θυμὸν μεταβάλῃ, καθάπερ ἐκπυρωθεῖσα τὸ ταπεινὸν ἀποβάλλει καὶ ἀργόν· ἢ καὶ δοκεῖ δραστικὸς ὁ θυμούμενος ὡς θερμὸς ὀπυρέττων, οἷον ἐν σφυγμῷ καὶ διατάσει καὶ ὄγκῳ γενομένης τῆς ψυχῆς.

<sup>95</sup> Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 138, who cites Seneca (*Epist.* 67.4) for this interpretation.

plundering the surrounding countryside in Latium, he and the Volscians prepared to attack the city. The Romans sent two envoys to plead with Coriolanus that he might cease the attack.

First a delegation of former friends and kinsmen went out to him. Returning unsuccessful, they then sent a group of priests and religious men. They were unable to persuade Coriolanus as well. Plutarch then narrated that in desperation a group of elite women went to Coriolanus' former home to entreat his mother and wife to go to Coriolanus. The entourage of women made their way to the Volscian camp and Volumnia gave Coriolanus a lengthy speech, chiding her son for thinking it right "...to give way to anger and resentment."<sup>96</sup> Volumnia was depicted as more masculine and controlled than her son. Although elite friends and religious officials had no effect on Coriolanus, his mother did. Coriolanus could not control his emotions when facing his mother and was defeated by her words (*Cor.* 36.5). In this episode, Plutarch emphasized that Coriolanus was the subject of both his emotions and of women.

This was a severe insult to a Roman's or a Greek's masculinity. As I previously mentioned in my review of Michel Foucault and Kenneth Dover, masculinity in ancient Greek and Roman societies was centered upon active and passive roles, not only in sexual actions but also in all personal interaction. Imposing one's will on another indicated that the active or dominating person was a "man" while the one yielding to this will was not.<sup>97</sup> Plutarch used Volumnia to demonstrate that Coriolanus was not in control. Instead, internal and external (feminine) forces were controlling him. Despite his

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<sup>96</sup> Plut. *Cor.* 36.2: ...ὀργῇ καὶ μνησικακίᾳ πάντα συγχωρεῖν καλόν.

<sup>97</sup> Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love*, 29-38; Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 17-19.

outward physical strength, his intellect and reason were not strong enough to resist such things. His purely martial masculinity was insufficient.

In the end, the Romans and Volscians admired Coriolanus for his military excellence, not for his power or authority that would accompany ideal masculinity, according to Plutarch (*Cor.* 36.5). The Romans allowed his family to mourn his death and granted the women who saved the city a temple to the Fortune of Women (Fortuna Muliebris); however, neither the state nor the Roman or Volscian population celebrated Coriolanus. Plutarch inserted this into his biography; he did not receive the information from his source, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, or from Livy. Instead, Dionysius asserted that both the Volscians and the Romans mourned him and to the day in which he was writing, “he is still praised and celebrated by all as a pious and just man.”<sup>98</sup> It seems likely, therefore, that just as he added some doubtful details regarding Coriolanus’ education, Plutarch also suppressed this in order to stress Coriolanus’ flaws and highlight the results of his defective manliness that led to his downfall.

Still, Alcibiades was not a perfect example of ideal masculine behavior either, although he exhibits traits preferable to Coriolanus. Plutarch similarly pointed out the excesses that threatened Alcibiades’ manliness. These flaws differ from the stereotypical Roman man, a militaristic brute who neglected education and was governed by emotion. Alcibiades engaged in luxurious excesses and was naturally of strong passions and fond of “rivalry and preeminence,” which, as shown above, resulted from his slipping away from Socrates, *paideia* and philosophy.<sup>99</sup> Throughout the biography he associated

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<sup>98</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.62.3: ...ᾗδεται καὶ ὑμνεῖται πρὸς πάντων ὡς εὐσεβὴς καὶ δίκαιος ἀνὴρ. All translations of Dionysius are based upon Earnest Cary, ed. *The Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950).

Alcibiades' behavior with that of a woman. For example, Alcibiades was accused of biting in a wrestling match "as women do."<sup>100</sup> He also indicated that, along with Alcibiades' great successes, he also displayed great luxury and wantonness and wore "womanly clothes."<sup>101</sup> Finally, when Alcibiades fled to Sparta after the Athenians recalled him from the Sicilian Expedition to stand trial, Plutarch examined the way Alcibiades adapted to each environment he entered. He claimed that it appeared as if Alcibiades had undergone a genuine change in character among the more disciplined Spartans and renounced his excessive habits. However, Plutarch closed the conversation stating that if one based their judgment on "what he actually felt and did" he might disagree and apply Euripides' statement regarding Helen that he "is the same old woman."<sup>102</sup> This eluded to the scandal that Alcibiades was involved in during his stay in Lacedaemonia with the Spartan king, Agis', wife. In contrast with Coriolanus, Alcibiades was too civilized and able to adapt his behavior to his surroundings. Inwardly, though, he could not match Spartan self-control. Although he put on the mask of restraint and moderation, he remained the desire-driven man he had been in Athens.

The portrait plays into the conception that Greeks, prone to Eastern luxury, owe their downfall to infighting and constant internal warfare. This was a common insult Romans flung at the Greeks, in order to distinguish contemporary Greeks from Classical Greeks. This also served as a produced "knowledge" that justified Roman rule over the

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<sup>99</sup> Plut. *Alc.* 2.1: φύσει δὲ πολλῶν ὄντων καὶ μεγάλων παθῶν ἐν αὐτῷ, τὸ φιλόνηκον ἰσχυρότατον ἦν καὶ τὸ φιλόπρωτον.

<sup>100</sup> Plut. *Alc.* 2.3: δάκνεις ὡς Ἀλκιβιάδῃ καθάπερ αἱ γυναῖκες.

<sup>101</sup> Plut. *Alc.* 16.1: Ἐν δὲ τοῖς τοιοῦτοις πολιτεύμασι καὶ λόγοις καὶ φρονήματι καὶ δεινότητι πολλὴν αὐτὸν πάλιν τὴν τρυφὴν τῆς διαίτης καὶ περὶ πότους καὶ ἔρωτας ὑβρίσματα, καὶ θηλύτητας ἐσθήτων...

<sup>102</sup> Plut. *Alc.* 23.6: ...τοῖς δ' ἀληθινοῖς ἂν τις ἐπεφώνησεν αὐτοῦ πάθει καὶ πράγμασιν: ἔστιν ἢ πάλαι γυνή.'

weaker and effeminate Greeks. It may seem counterproductive that Plutarch recreated this image; however, as he clearly elevated the Greek image of deficient masculinity over the Roman, he was reacting to and countering the Roman legitimization of their own power. Plutarch therefore set up the Greek man's excess and deficiencies in manhood and compared him to the Roman in order to measure the two against one another.

Unlike Coriolanus, Alcibiades' fellow citizens forgave his excessive behavior because of his generosity, ancestry and prowess in war and even gave "the mildest names to his transgressions."<sup>103</sup> Plutarch presented the Greek flaws as more excusable than Roman flaws; the Romans were unable to look past Coriolanus' deficiencies. Similarly, in one account of Alcibiades' death, the Athenians continued to honor Alcibiades at the end of his life. The Athenian Critias advised the Spartans at the close of the Peloponnesian War that they could not force Athens into submission until Alcibiades was dead. The Athenians would hold on to hope so long as he lived (*Alc.* 38.3-5). The other account also confirms the picture of Alcibiades we have studied thus far, although it does not provide a more favorable image of Alcibiades. In this version, while in Phrygia after his banishment Alcibiades made a young woman of a local prominent family his lover. The woman's brother, affronted by this act, set fire to Alcibiades' house one night and killed him (*Alc.* 39.9). This account also fits the Alcibiades Plutarch described, indulging excess desires until his end.

Plutarch did not explicitly state why Alcibiades was able to enjoy a more successful life than Coriolanus; however, his emphasis on education and philosophy as well as his opening statement concerning Roman tradition and virtue provide clues. The

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<sup>103</sup> Plut. *Alc.* 16.4-5: ἀεὶ τὰ πρότατα τῶν ὀνομάτων τοῖς ἁμαρτήμασι τιθεμένους.

author began Coriolanus' life with an explanation of why, at the time Coriolanus lived, the Roman conception of virtue was incomplete. He asserted that the Romans only relied on martial, physical courage to achieve their status as men. In the course of his biography, he made it clear that this incomplete version of manliness was the cause of Coriolanus' flaws. Plutarch directly correlated education with masculinity. His lack of moderation that came from philosophy allowed his emotions to control him. Controlled by these excesses, passion and women dominated Coriolanus. Plutarch placed Coriolanus in the passive role and therefore, demonstrated that Roman masculinity suffered from effeminacy.

Although Alcibiades was also subject to excess and effeminate behavior, he indulged in a different type of effeminacy. Plutarch again pointed to education and more importantly philosophy as a method of correcting these flaws. Although Socrates attempted to show Alcibiades "how incomplete his virtue (*arete*) was" and teach him moderation and reason, which philosophy provided, in order to control and correct his deficiencies, Alcibiades did not fully adopt these lessons and became subject to his own excessive tendencies.<sup>104</sup> In both these biographies, Plutarch presented philosophy, logic and education as the correct means to developing ideal masculine behavior. This differed from Plutarch's presentation of the prevailing Roman notions of masculinity and indicates that the author was attempting to develop and endorse an alternate ideal manhood that appealed to his personal and group interests, and by extension made Plutarch look very manly.

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<sup>104</sup> Plut. *Alc.* 6.5: ἡλικῶν ἐνδεής ἐστι καὶ ἀτελής πρὸς ἀρετὴν μανθάνοντα.



Greek and Roman concepts of masculinity, *arete*, *andreia* and *virtus*, all began as representations of physical and martial attributes. They gradually expanded their meanings to encompass other behaviors, but the military strength they originally denoted remained and masculinity continued to be associated with martial activities. Plutarch maintained this connection, as well, certainly not impervious to traditional connotations and associations of the concepts. A lack of martial courage likewise denoted defective masculinity.<sup>105</sup> However, he de-centralized the importance of this arena for gaining and displaying manhood, again perhaps as a reaction that military careers were largely closed to Greeks. In contrast, men who focused on solely military exploits, like Coriolanus, and neglected intellectual pursuits were incomplete men.

As Roman men could utilize the military arena to acquire masculinity, Plutarch was implying that this route, which he routinely associated with the “warlike” Romans, was not an acceptable one. Rather, it instilled effeminacy because it did not allow one to control emotions or desires. Although Roman men could attempt to traverse Plutarch’s ideal road to manhood through the rigors of *paideia* and philosophy, they did not chose to. As Plutarch demonstrated, he believed that Roman tradition placed tremendous importance on military achievement, disregarding other outlets for manhood. This may not have been the personal or conscious choice of every individual Roman man, but as a group the Romans did not want to pursue education and philosophical studies as a route to masculinity. This tradition, perhaps, developed out of necessity. For the first several centuries of Rome’s history, the city was engaged in countless conflicts for its survival.

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<sup>105</sup> See Plutarch’s paired lives of *Demosthenes* and *Cicero* for his attitudes toward a lack of martial courage, esp. *Dem.* 18.1, 20.2; *Cic.* 19.5, 42.1, 43.5.

Could the Romans have fully attained *paideia* in Plutarch's constructions? Swain does not believe so, he found that Plutarch did not promote just any education, it was a classical, Hellenic education only truly available to Greeks.<sup>106</sup> He believes that Plutarch had a "lurking suspicion" that the Romans lacked proper education and culture and had a "potential for barbarism."<sup>107</sup> Even if Romans were able to study Hellenic philosophy, few were able to reach the level of the Greeks. However, Plutarch did present instances of educated Romans, well versed in Greek learning and philosophy. Most notably, the ancient king Numa and Marcus Brutus were presented in a positive light and Plutarch drew attention to these men's superior intellect and grasp of philosophical tenants. The majority, though, disregarded these fields of study or failed even when they attempted to attain Hellenic education. Plutarch clearly believed that it was possible for Romans to be educated, although perhaps unlikely that many would try without encouragement. In addition, he continued to emphasize the Greek origin of this ideal route to manhood further associating his version of manhood with the Greeks although anyone might have been able to attain it.

If Plutarch believed that *Hellenic* education was the only path towards ideal manliness, he made himself and his fellow Greeks the distributors of masculinity and the power that accompanied it. Gleason, in her study of masculinity during the Second Sophistic, states that *paideia* represented a form of "cultural capital" for the Greeks, which served as a sign of domination.<sup>108</sup> Their education provided them with a superior

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<sup>106</sup> Swain, "Hellenic Culture and the Roman Heroes of Plutarch," 141.

<sup>107</sup> Swain, "Hellenic Culture and the Roman Heroes of Plutarch," 185-6.

<sup>108</sup> Gleason, *Making Men*, xxi.

culture, which they alone enjoyed. Plutarch extended this idea to encompass not only culture, language and artistic endeavors but to include power and gender ideals as well by insinuating that the route to ideal masculinity was Greek.

Living in the second century CE, centuries after the Romans had conquered Greece and brought it into their empire, Plutarch appears to be asserting and reclaiming lost power and importance for his Greek community while simultaneously countering the “knowledge” the Romans had created regarding Greece. As Vespasian stated when he reversed Nero’s offer of liberation to Greece (67 CE), “the Greeks had forgotten how to be free,” implying that the Greeks now living in Achaia had succumbed to luxury and effeminacy and no longer could rule themselves.<sup>109</sup> Plutarch instead asserted that the Greeks possessed the only route to manhood and hence authority and right to rule. This message represents one type of post-colonial discourse that Saïd identifies, a response of the colonized to the discourses of the colonizer that “produced and codified” knowledge about their subjects.<sup>110</sup> By averring that Greek culture and traditions could create ideal men who not only behave correctly in individual interactions, but also for the betterment of their respective states, he claimed that Greek studies could produce superior men *and* leaders. Therefore, the Greeks were not unfit to rule and those who chose to devote themselves to Greek education were the best suited for power and authority.

Plutarch’s message spoke to his personal and socio-economic identity as well as his ethnic affiliations. As a Greek philosopher and intellectual, he could not claim a martial or physical excellence to prove his manhood and, therefore, sought other venues

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<sup>109</sup> As reported by Pausanias 7.17.4.

<sup>110</sup> Saïd, *Orientalism*, 3.

to display ideal masculinity. He advocated philosophy and the display of reason and logic as proof of manhood. Joy Connolly asserts that at the time Plutarch wrote, imperial orators and teachers had to redefine masculinity in the face of stereotypes of effeminacy and passivity.<sup>111</sup> In this way, Plutarch negotiated a new manhood by promoting an “educated” masculinity to oppose and triumph over “ignorant” *andreia*.<sup>112</sup> This education and masculinity Plutarch could claim for himself. Gleason claims that rhetoric was the “calisthenics of manhood,” orators developed and proved their masculinity with their linguistic skills and correct performance during the delivery of a speech.<sup>113</sup> Plutarch, although not a sophist, lived at the beginning of this movement and, as an intellectual, would have been aware that the displays of intellect also showcased one’s manhood. He has taken this idea that education was connected to masculinity and presented it in his *Coriolanus* and *Alcibiades*.

Both Coriolanus and Alcibiades failed due to their excesses. The Romans expelled Coriolanus from Rome because of his brutish behavior and quick-tempered reactions to the population. His reaction to his banishment led him to harm his homeland. His emotions ultimately defeated him, which the control a woman had over the leader brought on. Alcibiades could not control his passion for rivalry, preeminence or luxury, either, and these excesses similarly caused him to endanger his city-state. The Athenians condemned him for his drunken behavior, during which he allegedly defaced statues and

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<sup>111</sup> Connolly, “*Andreia* and *Paideia* in Greek Culture Under Rome,” in Rosen and Sluiter, *Andreia*, 290.

<sup>112</sup> Connolly, “*Andreia* and *Paideia* in Greek Culture Under Rome,” in Rosen and Sluiter, *Andreia*, 294-6.

<sup>113</sup> Gleason, *Making Men*, xxii.

mocked religious rites. Philosophy and reason, according to Plutarch, would have checked these excesses in both men's characters.

Scholars such as Swain have claimed that Plutarch only indicated that a lack of education caused the flaws in Romans; however, in this case proper instruction would have aided both Coriolanus and Alcibiades.<sup>114</sup> Education created the ideal Greek *and* Roman man. Plutarch, although he wrote in Greek, did not direct his biographies or other writings exclusively to a Greek audience. He dedicated the *Parallel Lives* to a Roman, Q. Sossius Senecio, and certainly knew that many other Romans would read them. His choice of pairing one Greek and one Roman biography implies that he endeavored to reach both groups. Therefore, he had to be cautious in his writing so that he would not anger the ruling powers. This could have provided the motivation for his choice of Coriolanus for asserting this message and detracting from Roman manhood. Coriolanus was a semi-mythical character, who supposedly lived in the distant past, the early fifth century BCE. This afforded him a flexible narrative that he could mold into what he needed. He was able to insert details and change information found in his source, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, to present the Coriolanus that was necessary in order to create a model of deficient Roman masculinity. Cast in the past, Coriolanus was sufficiently separated from the Roman memory and therefore Plutarch was able to attack his masculinity without insulting the living Romans directly. In addition, Coriolanus and Alcibiades were both men who lived in democratic and republican governments; they had different rules of behavior and modes of masculinity. Commenting on their manhood did not present the dangers that criticizing more contemporary men would have and openly preferring the

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<sup>114</sup> Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 136-7.

Greek masculinity of such distant figures would not have angered Romans in the same manner.

Plutarch's preferential treatment of Greece and Alcibiades is apparent in his comparison of the two men as he reinforced the differences in their flaws. Coriolanus frequently gave way to his emotions and allowed his anger and the "pitiful intercessions of a single woman" to control him.<sup>115</sup> Alcibiades, on the other hand, flattered the masses in order to gain fame at great danger to the state and enjoyed a luxurious life that allowed his rivals to attack him. Although he acknowledged the faults of both men, Plutarch stated that Alcibiades tipped the balance in his favor in military successes, as well as diplomacy, oratory and relations with the people. In the contest between the two flawed masculinities, Plutarch was asserting that the Greeks possessed a more successful, desirable and civilized character and manliness. Again, this is due to the superior *paideia* and culture of the Greeks.

Plutarch was also challenging the commonly held conception of the relationship between Greece and Rome. During the time Plutarch wrote, many believed that Greece provided culture to the world while Rome provided power.<sup>116</sup> The Romans had obtained their power largely through their military and physical strength as they conquered more and more territory, including Greece. By first assigning preferable masculinity to the Greek, Alcibiades, then ideal manhood to the Greeks as a whole by means of Hellenic education and philosophy, Plutarch gave power back to the Greeks and diminished the Roman claim to superiority. If masculinity was equivalent to domination and subjugation, then Plutarch put the Greeks into the dominating position giving them culture as well as

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<sup>115</sup> Plut. *Comp. Alc. et Cor.* 4.5: οἴκῳ καὶ παραιτήσῃ διὰ μίαν γυναῖκα σωζομένης.

<sup>116</sup> Tim Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 14.

power. As Williams states, “control and dominion, both of others and of oneself” was a central imperative of Roman and Greek masculinity.<sup>117</sup> The Romans, according to Plutarch, were dominated by emotions because they did not attain the education to conquer them, and therefore possessed a lesser masculinity and claim to power.

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<sup>117</sup> Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 127.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Pelopidas and Marcellus**

This pair of biographies is interesting for its similarities to *Coriolanus* and *Alcibiades*, but also for its differences. Again, Plutarch had various reasons for comparing these two men but the most striking similarity between Pelopidas and Marcellus was the fault that led each to his death. Both men achieved military success along with a colleague (Epaminondas and Fabius Maximus). Eventually both met their ends on the battlefield. Plutarch, again, depicted the two as military men who owed their respective downfalls to their martial tendencies: Neither man was able to control his emotions or anger and their rashness in battle claimed both their lives. He similarly positioned the Greek Pelopidas above the Roman Marcellus, particularly in the comparison of the two; however, throughout the individual biographies, he did not paint such a negative picture of either man as he did in *Coriolanus* and *Alcibiades*. This is perhaps because the memories of Coriolanus and Alcibiades, as traitors to their *patriae*, were not as guarded. He could present both in an unfavorable light without offending either Greek or Roman audiences. Pelopidas, the war hero of the battle of Leuctra (371 BCE), among other achievements, and Marcellus, the successful general of the Second Punic War (218-201 BCE) and sacker of Syracuse (213-211 BCE), both claimed more cherished legacies.

Plutarch may have had personal reasons to present each of these men in a more positive light, as well. Pelopidas as a Theban leader would have appealed to Plutarch's



Boeotian allegiance. Plutarch, a prominent citizen of neighboring Chaeronea, was proud of his native region. Marcellus also may have garnered Plutarch's respect, if not admiration, as a famous philhellene. As we will see below, Plutarch made a point to illuminate Marcellus' association with Greek art and culture, although he quickly asserted that his Roman subject could not fully appreciate Greek education and philosophy. Because of this link Marcellus had with Greece, however, Plutarch may have felt compelled to play down Marcellus' negative points and create a "noble" figure.<sup>118</sup> His assessment of their martial natures was therefore less patent, yet it reinforced the image of out-of-control martial men and the benefits of *paideia* and philosophy to masculinity. In *Pelopidas* and *Marcellus* he focused particularly on the detrimental effects devotion to military *andreia* had on the other, more important, aspects of manhood.

The prologue to *Pelopidas* and *Marcellus* (*Pel.* 1-2) provides a guide to this theme the biographies would take, similar to that of *Coriolanus* and *Alcibiades*.<sup>119</sup> Plutarch opened the prologue (*Pel.* 1.1) by recommending Cato the Elder's judgment of a man who was praised for his rashness in war. He stated, "There is a difference between a man's setting a high value on virtue (*arete*) and his setting a low value on life." Plutarch then commented, "His remark was just."<sup>120</sup> This man, who was "illogically rash and daring in war," not setting high value on life or virtue, was the kind of man Plutarch associated with Pelopidas and Marcellus.<sup>121</sup> As his agreement with Cato implies, this was

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<sup>118</sup> Swain, "Hellenic Culture and the Roman Heroes of Plutarch," 140-141.

<sup>119</sup> Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, 53.

<sup>120</sup> Plut. *Pel.* 1.1: ...διαφέρειν ἔφη τὸ πολλοῦ τινα τὴν ἀρετὴν ἀξίαν [καὶ] τὸ μὴ πολλοῦ ἄξιον τὸ ζῆν ἄξιον νομίζειν, ὁρθῶς ἀποφαινόμενος.

<sup>121</sup> Plut. *Pel.* 1.1: ...ἀλογίστως παράβολον καὶ τολμηρὸν ἐν τοῖς πολεμικοῖς...

not the ideal man and thus fell prey to the same deficiencies of Coriolanus and Alcibiades. He continued the narrative praising the Greek lawgivers for punishing those who abandoned their shield, rather than their swords because "...his own defense from harm, rather than the infliction of harm upon the enemy, should be every man's first care."<sup>122</sup> This practice was introduced due to the nature of the phalanx, the standard fighting formation developed during the Archaic Period in Greece. In the closely packed formation, abandoning your shield endangered not only your life but also the lives of the hoplites around you. Plutarch was imposing his singular interpretation on this well-known Greek practice. Plutarch did not condone aggressive, bellicose stances, only defensive violence. This may be an oblique critique of the Roman method of rule and general character, which he continuously portrayed as warlike.

Plutarch continued to establish what kind of men he would examine in *Pelopidas* and *Marcellus* stating that although the two were great men, they each fell recklessly in battle (*Pel.* 2.9). He carried this theme throughout the two biographies, concluding his comparison of the two with his judgment of such behavior: he propounded, "This, however, must not be thought a denunciation of the men, but rather an indignant and outspoken protest in their own behalf against themselves and their courage (*andreia*), to which they uselessly sacrificed their other virtues (*arete*), in that they were unsparing of their lives and souls."<sup>123</sup> He emphasized throughout the biographies that these men threw away their other manly virtues, encompassed by the concept of *arete*, which were

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<sup>122</sup> Plut. *Pel.* 1.10: ... τοῦ μὴ παθεῖν κακῶς πρότερον ἢ τοῦ ποιῆσαι τοὺς πολεμίους ἐκάστῳ μέλειν προσήκει, μάλιστα δὲ ἄρχοντι πόλεως ἢ στρατεύματος.

<sup>123</sup> Plut. *Comp. Pel. Marc.* 3.8: χρή δὲ ταῦτα μὴ κατηγορίαν εἶναι τῶν ἀνδρῶν νομίζειν, ἀλλ' ὥς ἀγανάκτησιν τινα καὶ παρρησίαν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἐκείνων πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ τὴν ἀνδρείαν αὐτῶν, εἰς ἣν τὰς ἄλλας κατανάλωσαν ἀρετάς, ἀφειδήσαντες τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς.

necessary for becoming a complete and ideal “man” because of their love of martial valor, *andreia*. This pair again served to criticize those who elevated military ability over other manly characteristics because, devoid of the philosophical training that would have allowed them to control their emotions, both men permitted love of battle to carry them away. Anger was a detriment and eventual downfall for both.

Elsewhere in his corpus, Plutarch explained the effects of anger on a person and directly connected succumbing to passion or anger with effeminacy.<sup>124</sup> Most explicitly, in his *On the control of anger* (ΠΕΡΙ ΑΟΡΓΗΣΙΑΣ; Latin title, *De cohibenda ira*), he advocated submitting the mind to reason and philosophy in order to restrain anger (453b-f).<sup>125</sup> Those who did not or could not were weak and were not well bred or manly (ἀνδρώδης; see 456f). Men, or those who had truly achieved manhood, were not susceptible to rage; rather women, old men, sick individuals and the poor were more vulnerable to anger’s effects (ὀργιλώτεροι; see 457b). He further connected ire with women, stating that some men “...erred by bringing anger from the women’s quarters into the men’s.”<sup>126</sup> Allowing anger to gain control of thoughts and actions was a sign of effeminacy and a lack of masculinity, which Plutarch then associated with courage (*andreia*), asserting that *andreia* agrees with justice in all other respects except anger because it fights for the possession of mildness as if it belongs to itself (457d).

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<sup>124</sup> Anger is a complex concept in Greek and there are many words that denote it. In this case, Plutarch used two words in particular. Although he titled the treatise with a derivative of ὀργή and used this noun sporadically throughout, he mainly employed θυμός which means “anger” as well as “strong feeling and passion” (among other nouns). When Plutarch described Pelopidas’ and Marcellus’ anger, he also used θυμός. For this reason, his comments in *On the control of anger* is particularly enlightening.

<sup>125</sup> The original Greek title literally means “concerning a defect in the passion of anger.”

<sup>126</sup> Plut. *De. Cohib.* 457c: ...ἔνιοι τὸν θυμὸν ἐκ τῆς γυναικωνίτιδος εἰς τὴν ἀνδρωνίτιν οὐκ εὖ μετοικίζουσιν.

All translations of Plutarch’s *Moralia* are based on F.H. Sandbach, *Moralia* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1969).

Due to Plutarch's preference for education, he again focused on the incomplete instruction of both men, as well as their natural warlike dispositions. In a similar manner to the previous pair we have investigated, he depicted the Roman man as far more bellicose than the Greek, unwilling to grasp the intricacies of Hellenic education. Plutarch began Marcellus' life explaining that he was the first of his family to be called "Marcellus," which meant "martial" or "warlike" (*Marc.* 1.1-2). He continued this synopsis, adding that Marcellus was warlike by nature, as were all the leading Romans of his time.<sup>127</sup> This assessment is strikingly similar to his judgment of Coriolanus' character and environment (*Cor.* 1.5-6). Again, Plutarch linked the martial nature of the particular Roman he dealt with to the Romans in general, indicating that the Romans as a whole displayed the same truculent disposition. He then claimed that Marcellus, like Coriolanus, was trained in every aspect of war. Otherwise, however, he was humane and self-controlled, being an admirer of Greek learning (*Marc.* 1.3). Plutarch inserted this addition most likely due to Marcellus' reputation as a philhellene, having brought many Greek artifacts into Rome after the sack of Syracuse. Plutarch stated that although he appreciated Hellenic education and philosophy, "He was never able to achieve knowledge and proficiency in these subjects due to his lack of free time (because of his military exploits)."<sup>128</sup> Marcellus recognized the benefits that *paideia* and philosophy could bring, although he was not able to devote himself to academic studies, as he was

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<sup>127</sup> Again, Plutarch was careful to add "at the time" (ἐν τοῖς τότε χρόνοις) that his subject lived as he did when he made a similar comment in *Coriolanus* (1.6). However, given the plethora of comments of this nature (see note 14), this was an attempt to avoid angering his Roman readers. It certainly appears that he thought all Romans shared this trait, rather than just those living at either Coriolanus' or Marcellus' time.

<sup>128</sup> Plut. *Marc.* 1.3: τῷ δ' ἄλλω τρόπῳ σώφρων, φιλόφρων, ἑλληνικῆς παιδείας καὶ λόγων ἄχρι τοῦ τιμᾶν καὶ θαυμάζειν τοὺς κατορθοῦντας ἐραστής, αὐτὸς δ' ὑπ' ἀσχολιῶν ἐφ' ὅσον ἦν πρόθυμος ἀσκήσαι καὶ μαθεῖν οὐκ ἐξικόμενος.

not at leisure to do so. He, like all of the leading men of his time, was compelled to engage in many wars. This may have excused Marcellus from neglecting education, and Plutarch for pointing out his deficiency, but not Plutarch's contemporary Roman audience. Marcellus' life provided Plutarch with a key example of how a lack of education could harm a man's character, but also how *paideia* and Greek tradition in general could improve an individual and as well as a society.

He then explained the benefits Greek art and culture had on these warlike Romans, for which Marcellus was largely responsible implying that, had they chosen to focus their energies on *paideia*, they and their manhood would have profited. After conquering Syracuse, Marcellus brought much of the Greek artwork he found in the city to Rome. Prior to this, Rome was "stuffed with barbarous arms and spoils stained with blood."<sup>129</sup> He provided a picture of Rome, which he claimed Pindar's statement accurately described: Rome was "the precinct of peace-less Ares."<sup>130</sup> This image elaborates what Plutarch had been emphasizing throughout the biography: The Romans are naturally warlike, with "a potential for barbarism."<sup>131</sup> The import of Greek culture and art improved Rome rather than harmed it. Several Romans, most famously Cato the Elder whom Plutarch quoted at the beginning of this pair of biographies, widely criticized Greece's negative effect on Roman mores. Plutarch disputed this assertion, not only here but also throughout his works, advocating that the Romans stood to benefit from the Greeks, who according to his presentation civilized the Romans and still had valuable

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<sup>129</sup> Plut. *Marc.* 21.2: ...ὅπλων δὲ βαρβαρικῶν καὶ λαφύρων ἐναίμων ἀνάπλεως οὖσα.

<sup>130</sup> Plut. *Marc.* 21.2: ...,βαθυπολέμου τέμενος Ἄρεως' ...

<sup>131</sup> Swain, "Hellenic Culture and the Roman Heroes of Plutarch", 185-6.

lessons to impart.<sup>132</sup> Far from being unable to rule themselves, they could assist the Romans in their own government and society in general. Again, we can see Plutarch reacting to the negative image the Roman conquerors had bestowed on the Greeks. He was rebelling against the reputation that many Romans had applied to Greece for centuries.

Marcellus' Greek counterpart, Pelopidas had a similar educational background. He too was drawn toward physical betterment, rather than intellectual pursuits. Plutarch contrasted Pelopidas' training and preferences with his contemporary and friend, Epaminondas. Pelopidas loved physical exploits in hunting and the palaestra, while Epaminondas enjoyed study and philosophy (*Pel.* 4.1-2). However, he did not imply that physical or martial training was the only experience Pelopidas had and he asserted that he and Epaminondas "were equally by nature fitted for the pursuit of every type of virtue."<sup>133</sup> The pair complemented each other, which Plutarch greatly praised, revealing that the Aristotelian concept of moderation may be at the root of Plutarch's ideal. A blending of the two types of character, one interested in military glory and the other in intellectual excellence, was the perfect combination.<sup>134</sup> By extension, Plutarch may have been advocating the inclusion of Greeks into Roman government and authority. He portrayed the Romans, as we have seen, as warlike and martially oriented. The Greeks,

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<sup>132</sup> His most explicit denial of the negative effects of Greek customs on Rome comes, unsurprisingly, from Cato the Elder's *Life*. He stated that contrary to Cato's beliefs "Rome came to its zenith of power when she made every form of Greek learning and culture her own. (...ἐν ᾧ τοῖς τε πράγμασιν ἡ πόλις ἤρθη μεγίστη καὶ πρὸς Ἑλληνικὰ μαθήματα καὶ παιδείαν ἅπασαν ἔσχεν οἰκείως, *Cat. Maj.* 23.3).

<sup>133</sup> Plut. *Pel.* 4.1: Ἦσαν δὲ καὶ πρὸς πᾶσαν ἀρετὴν πεφυκότες ὁμοίως...

<sup>134</sup> To a lesser extent he did this with the relationship between Fabius Maximus and Marcellus. However, he maintained the military connotation with the Roman pair, calling Fabius the buckler and Marcellus the sword (*Fab.* 19.4).

with their privileged access to education and reason, could provide a valuable complement to the image he presented of the Romans, as well as a route to power for some Greeks.

He reiterated this concept in Pelopidas' life in his discussion of the Theban temple dedicated to Harmony. He approved of this dedication, explaining that:

They did well to give the goddess who was said to have been born of Ares and Aphrodite a home in their city; for they felt that, where the force and courage of the warrior are most closely associated and united with the age which possesses grace and persuasiveness, there all the activities of civil life are brought by Harmony into the most perfect consonance and order.<sup>135</sup>

Plutarch's ideal then involved skill in *andreia* and war as well as *paideia* and philosophy; however, only studying the latter of the two would provide the self-control so necessary to becoming an ideal man. Neither Marcellus nor Pelopidas engaged in these pursuits as fully as they should have. As a result, neither man was able to control his emotions in the arena where manhood was traditionally displayed: battle.

Just as we saw in *Coriolanus* and *Alcibiades*, both Pelopidas and Marcellus share similar character flaws due to their neglect of *paideia* and philosophy; however, Plutarch found the Greek's deficiencies excusable and clearly presented him in a better light than his Roman counterpart. Pelopidas was equally unable to control his emotions, a trait that Plutarch pointed out throughout his biography. He described the Theban as a man with a "naturally fiery temper" who was "egged on by his friends to avenge himself upon his

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<sup>135</sup> Plut. *Pel.* 19.2: ὀρθῶς δὲ πρὸς τοῦτο καὶ τὴν ἐξ Ἄρεως καὶ Ἀφροδίτης γεγονέναι λεγομένην θεὸν τῇ πόλει συνφκείωσαν, ὥς ὅπου τὸ μαχητικὸν καὶ πολεμικὸν μάλιστα τῷ μετέχοντι πειθοῦς καὶ χαρίτων ὁμιλεῖ καὶ σύνεστιν, εἰς τὴν ἐμμελεστάτην καὶ κοσμιωτάτην πολιτείαν δι' Ἀρμονίας καθισταμένων ἀπάντων.

enemies.”<sup>136</sup> Before his final battle, this natural propensity toward anger and his inability to control it led Pelopidas to his death. An assembly of the Thessalian League went to Thebes to request that Pelopidas come to their country as general with an army to assist them, for the second time, in their struggles with the tyrant Alexander of Pherae. When he arrived in Thessaly, Pelopidas allowed his anger caused by the insults Alexander had made influence his judgment and he went out to meet him in battle, against the advice of the seers and religious omens (*Pel.* 31.3-5). During the conflict, the sight of Alexander caused the general to further lose control of his emotions, which Plutarch emphasized as the motivation for Pelopidas’ actions. “He could not subject his anger to his judgment, but, inflamed at the sight, and surrendering himself and his conduct of the enterprise to his passion, he sprang out far in front of the rest and rushed with challenging cries upon the tyrant.”<sup>137</sup>

Plutarch’s believed that anger was the root cause of Pelopidas’ demise and illuminated how he envisioned anger and emotions, as well as those who submitted to them. Like Coriolanus, Pelopidas was subject to anger, “...like a sick man seems to burn with fever.”<sup>138</sup> Anger and other intense emotions had to either be tamed by judgment and the mind, or they would control the individual. Pelopidas, rather than maintaining mastery over himself, allowed himself to surrender to his passions and in turn be ruled by

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<sup>136</sup> Plut. *Pel.* 25.2. Πελοπίδας δὲ καὶ φύσει θυμοειδέστερος ὢν, καὶ παροξυνόμενος ὑπὸ τῶν φίλων ἀμύνεσθαι τοὺς ἐχθρούς, ἐπελάβετο τοιαύτης αἰτίας.

<sup>137</sup> Plut. *Pel.* 32.9: οὐ κατέσχε τῷ λογισμῷ τὴν ὀργήν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὴν βλέψιν ἀναφλεχθεὶς, καὶ τῷ θυμῷ παραδούς τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὴν ἡγεμονίαν τῆς πράξεως, πολὺ πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων ἐξαλλόμενος ἐφέρετο, βοῶν καὶ προκαλούμενος τὸν τύραννον.

<sup>138</sup> Plut. *Cor.* 21.2: ὅταν γὰρ εἰς θυμὸν μεταβάλῃ, καθάπερ ἐκπυρωθεῖσα τὸ ταπεινὸν ἀποβάλλει καὶ ἀργόν: ἥ καὶ δοκεῖ δραστικὸς ὁ θυμούμενος ὡς θερμὸς ὀπυρέττων, οἷον ἐν σφυγμῷ καὶ διατάσει καὶ ὄγκῳ γενομένης τῆς ψυχῆς.



them. These are certainly not the traits of an ideal man, as previously explained. Another surviving account of Pelopidas' life, that of Cornelius Nepos, could have served as one of Plutarch's sources although in Latin, which Plutarch claimed to have studied only late in life.<sup>139</sup> Nepos did mention the anger Pelopidas felt during the battle, but he did not emphasize the control it had over the Theban as Plutarch did.<sup>140</sup> Whether Plutarch was familiar with Nepos' account or not, it does not seem that Plutarch's presentation of the man was standard or that he was simply copying the sentiments of another author. Rather, Plutarch chose to focus on the lack of control that was the general's downfall in order to illustrate the flaws he saw in relying solely on military training and achievement for success.

He took a similar route in Marcellus' life and emphasized the Roman's inability in self-mastery as the cause of his death. As Hannibal, leader of the Carthaginian army, ravaged the Italian countryside, Marcellus burned to go to war although the seers advised against going to battle and kept him in Rome. He was unable to remain in the city for "no man ever had such a passion for anything as he had for fighting a decisive battle with Hannibal."<sup>141</sup> In a rare interjection of explicit personal opinion and first person reference, Plutarch deemed this type of behavior as "...ill-fitting someone of his (Marcellus') age," thinking that action was better suited for a young person (who had yet to outgrow such

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<sup>139</sup> See Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, 290-1 for Plutarch's use of Nepos. See *Dem.* 2.2 for Plutarch's statements about studying Roman literature late in life.

<sup>140</sup> Nep. *Pel.* 5.4. In the encounter, as soon as he perceived Alexander, he spurred on his horse, in a fever of rage, to attack him and, separating too far from his men, was killed by a shower of darts. (in quo proelio Alexandrum ut animadvertit, incensus ira equum in eum concitavit proculque digressus a suis coniectu telorum confossus concidit). All translations of Cornelius Nepos are based on John C. Rolfe, *Cornelius Nepos*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1984).

<sup>141</sup> Plut. *Marc.* 28.4: οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἔρωτα τοσοῦτον ἠράσθη πράγματος οὐδενός, ὅσον οὗτος ὁ ἀνὴρ τοῦ μάχῃ κριθῆναι πρὸς Ἀννίβαν.

tendencies).<sup>142</sup> Plutarch then related that this thought of war consumed Marcellus and he spoke of nothing else to his friends and continuously prayed that he might soon meet Hannibal in battle (*Marc.* 28.5). Marcellus was then “carried by a passion for battle” into conflict with Hannibal, again focusing on the power emotion had over the subject.<sup>143</sup>

Plutarch used these two men as examples of these adverse effects that anger and emotion could have on an individual’s life and, based on his comments in *On the control of anger* discussed in the opening of this chapter, on an individual’s status as a “man.” These two submitted to their passion and anger because of their love for war and military endeavors. Plutarch connected these flaws in masculinity to excellence and preoccupation with war in order to assert that battle was not the preferable or exclusive arena to gain manhood. Although displaying it in such a venue may still have been acceptable, men who attempted this such as Pelopidas, Marcellus, Coriolanus and Alcibiades all ended up sacrificing their masculine status and became prey to their emotions or desires. Again, Plutarch excused the Greek example of these deficiencies: Pelopidas’ actions were understandable due to the admirable circumstances that led him to rush into danger. Interjecting another first person opinion, Plutarch remarked that he was “...grieved and irritated with the unreasonableness of the mischance (of their deaths).”<sup>144</sup> His word choice is interesting here. Plutarch indicated that both men went to their deaths without logical consideration (παραλόγῳ); they died because they embraced emotion, particularly anger. “Pelopidas, however, was somewhat excusable, because, excited as he always was

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<sup>142</sup> Plut. *Marc.* 28.6: ... καὶ εἶπον, ὅτι μειρακιῶδες αὐτῷ προσπεπτῶκει καὶ φιλοτιμότερον πάθος ἢ κατὰ πρεσβύτην τοσοῦτον.

<sup>143</sup> Plut. *Marc.* 29.3: τοῦτο Μάρκελλον ἐξέφερε τῷ θυμῷ πρὸς τὴν μάχην...

<sup>144</sup> Plut. *Comp. Pel. et. Marc.* 3.1: ...ἀλλ’ ἀνιώμαι καὶ ἀγανακτῶ τῷ παραλόγῳ τοῦ συμπτώματος.

by an opportunity for battle, his anger not basely carried him toward defense (against a tyrant).”<sup>145</sup> As he stated in the prologue of these lives, “...his own defense from harm, rather than the infliction of harm upon the enemy, should be every man’s first care.”<sup>146</sup> Therefore, because Plutarch presented Pelopidas’ reasons for allowing his passion to lead him as the defense of others, his flaw deserved exemption. Plutarch offered another explanation for Pelopidas’ rash action; besides the anger he felt, he was presented with a chance to bring down a tyrant, a task with so fair and glorious a promise that he would have been hard pressed to acquire a better goal (*Comp. Pel. et. Marc.* 3.5). He then quoted Euripides and judged that Pelopidas “ended his life with virtue.”<sup>147</sup>

Marcellus, on the other hand, did not warrant such consideration. Plutarch asserted that “Marcellus, when no great need was pressing, and when he felt none of that ardor which in times of peril unseats the judgment, plunged heedlessly into danger, and died the death, not of a general, but of a mere skirmisher or scout.”<sup>148</sup> Plutarch continued throughout the comparison to place the Greek man above the Roman, particularly with respect to military achievement, as this was the main topic in both biographies (*Comp. Pel. et. Marc.* 1.6-8, 2.1-2). Even in martial excellence, for which the Romans had a natural propensity, Plutarch made it clear that the Greek held superiority. Although Pelopidas could be excused for his actions, both men still sacrificed their virtue (*arete*)

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<sup>145</sup> Plut. *Comp. Pel. et. Marc.* 3.3: οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ τὸν Πελοπίδαν ποιεῖ συγγνωστὸν ἅμα τῷ τῆς μάχης καιρῷ περιθέρμον ὄντα καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἄμυναν οὐκ ἀγεννῶς ἐκφέρων ὁ θυμός.

<sup>146</sup> Plut. *Pel.* 1.10: ... τοῦ μὴ παθεῖν κακῶς πρότερον ἢ τοῦ ποιῆσαι τοὺς πολεμίους ἐκάστῳ μέλιν προσήκει, μάλιστα δ’ ἄρχοντι πόλεως ἢ στρατεύματος.

<sup>147</sup> Plut. *Comp. Pel. et. Marc.* 3.4: θανεῖν εἰς ἀρετὴν καταλύσαντα τὸν βίον.

<sup>148</sup> Plut. *Comp. Pel. et. Marc.* 3.6: Μάρκελλος δὲ, μήτε χρείας μεγάλης ἐπικειμένης, μήτε τοῦ παρὰ τὰ δεινὰ πολλάκις ἐξιστάντος τὸν λογισμὸν ἐνθουσιασμοῦ παρεστῶτος, ὥσάμενος ἀπερισκέπτως εἰς κίνδυνον, οὐ στρατηγοῦ πτώμα, προδρόμου δέ τινος ἢ κατασκόπου πέπτωκεν.

for the sake of martial valor (*andreia*). In other words, Pelopidas and Marcellus sacrificed the whole of their manly traits for the sake of one, less important, aspect of masculinity. Due to their preoccupation with war, both neglected other facets of their character and because of this their superiority in battle led to inferiority in their status as “men.” Neither concentrated on education and philosophy, which would have taught them to control their emotions and passions, rather their focus on physical exploits revealed effeminacy.

In these paired biographies, Plutarch created another example of military men’s deficiencies in masculinity, just as he did in *Coriolanus* and *Alcibiades*. Similarly, as he did in the other biographies, in the *Pelopidas* and *Marcellus* he extended the bellicose nature of the Roman subject to all Romans and emphasized that Roman tradition did not place heavy value on academic pursuits. Rather, because of their situation they were constantly engaged in wars and focused on martial and physical achievement. In *Marcellus*, he pointed out that Rome benefitted from the introduction of Greek culture and that one of their more prominent leaders recognized these benefits, even if he was unable to fully engage Hellenic studies. This served as an exhortation to Plutarch’s contemporary Roman audience, which was no longer encumbered with such necessities, to embrace Greek education and thus Plutarch’s route to manhood.

Plutarch’s ideal masculinity involving moderation and self-control was certainly not a new concept, nor one particular to Greece. These ideas had been in circulation since the fifth century BCE, perhaps even the sixth.<sup>149</sup> As previously mentioned, Plato had addressed this criterion of manhood in his philosophical treatises, most notably the *Republic*, and directly correlated education and philosophy with manhood. Plutarch’s unique representation of masculinity is two-fold. He presented men who focused only on

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<sup>149</sup> Van Wees, “A Brief History of Tears,” in Foxhall and Salmon, *When Men Were Men*, 16.

martial excellence as deficient men, exemplified in his concluding statements in the comparison of Pelopidas and Marcellus. Believing that the men had sacrificed all their other masculine traits to their preoccupation with *andreia* (*Comp. Pel. et. Marc.* 3.8), Plutarch established that concentrating exclusively on military valor, to the detriment of other admirable pursuits, created an incomplete, and at times effeminate, man. He also utilized the ideas of self-mastery that had been in place in both Greek and Roman gender ideology and connected this ability to a specifically, and exclusively, Greek institution (*paideia*). Plutarch's construction is distinct because of who he indicated was able or willing to aspire to his ideal, and who was not. He asserted that the men who only concentrated on martial education and achievement possessed an insufficient masculinity. Only men such as himself and his elite Greek community who studied philosophy and Hellenic education, were fully equipped for the rigors of manhood. The Romans, however, whom he continually portrayed as warlike and unwilling to grasp *paideia* or philosophy, would never achieve the superior manhood that Greek men could until they too devoted themselves to *paideia*. Plutarch rooted this unwillingness in Roman tradition and the foundation of their society. He portrayed the Romans as naturally warlike from their beginnings (see *Rom.* 14.1) and therefore they were indisposed to take the correct path toward manhood.

This unique message served particular discursive purposes for the writer, who was attempting to combat the "knowledge" Romans had presented about the Greeks as well as reassert the Greek identity that had been jeopardized by Roman rule. Superiority in masculinity translated into superiority in other spheres of identity. By establishing that Roman men such as Coriolanus and Marcellus were martially oriented and unwilling to

grasp the intricacies of Greek education and philosophy, Plutarch elevated the Greek collective character above the Roman. He portrayed the Romans as naturally more susceptible to their own emotions and desires; if these men were unable to control themselves, then they were certainly unable to effectively assert control over others. The Greeks, in Plutarch's depiction, although similarly flawed when they allowed emotion to gain dominion over themselves, were better able to display these crucial traits because their society promoted *paideia* and philosophy, which supplied reason and moderation.

### Chapter Three

#### Phocion and Cato the Younger

If the men studied above were not Plutarch's complete picture of masculine virtue (*arete*), let us take a brief look at what his ideal was. The biography of Phocion, the Athenian statesman of the fourth century BCE, is one of the most positive representations in Plutarch's biographies. In the lives of men who he obviously admired and held up as models for himself and his readers, Plutarch nevertheless tended to point out negative aspects of their actions or personalities.<sup>150</sup> Phocion is a rare exception. Throughout the biographies Plutarch was able to find little about the man that he could criticize.<sup>151</sup> Instead, he presented Phocion's life as an example of virtue (*arete*), believing that his reputation was obscured by the difficult time in which he lived in (*Phoc.* 1.4). This representation was not standard for Plutarch; in other biographies, he was not as favorable to Phocion. In *Demosthenes*, he admitted that Phocion "took the lead in a policy which is not to be commended, and he had the reputation of favoring Macedonia."<sup>152</sup> In his full biography of the man, however, Plutarch chose not to follow,

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<sup>150</sup> Plutarch's *Pericles* is one of these instances. As Duff states, Plutarch's treatment of Pericles is probably one of the more positive cases in the *Parallel Lives*; however, Plutarch did not hesitate to include either his own or Pericles' contemporaries' critiques (*Plutarch's Lives*, 90).

<sup>151</sup> In only one instance did Plutarch assert a negative judgment on the man. Phocion allowed Nicanor to escape justice, which Plutarch believed was a transgression for a commander meant to look out for the good of the people. However, he later commented that this was more a flaw in Phocion's trust than a conscious misdeed. He judged that Phocion rather had too high a confidence in Nicanor (*Phoc.* 32.1-9).

<sup>152</sup> Plut. *Dem.* 14.1: Τῶν γοῦν κατ' αὐτὸν ὁ Φωκίων, οὐκ ἐπαινουμένης προϊστάμενος πολιτείας, ἀλλὰ δοκῶν μακεδονίζειν...

or even mention, this negative record.<sup>153</sup> Cornelius Nepos' brief account of Phocion's life illustrates the negative tradition that Plutarch avoided. Nepos accused Phocion of betraying his friend Demosthenes and allowing Nicanor to take the Athenian port of Piraeus (*Phoc.* 2.2-4).

Reviewing Phocion's admirable qualities will reveal how Plutarch conceived and constructed his ideal man. The central issue of this biography, as well as its Roman counterpart *Cato the Younger*, was the benefits of philosophy and moderation.<sup>154</sup> Throughout the biography, Plutarch highlighted Phocion's ability to grasp and apply the philosophic teachings to his actions, as well as his capacity to compromise the tenants of his education for the good of the commonwealth. Unsurprisingly, Cato the Younger was not able to moderate his actions, again illustrating the Romans' inability to fully understand philosophical teachings and moderation.

Plutarch stated that Phocion possessed a harmony of abilities, which is how the gods ruled the world. "If the mixture is attained, that is the most concordant and musical blending of all rhythms and all harmonies; and this is the way, we are told, in which God regulates the universe, not using compulsion, but making persuasion and reason introduce that which must be."<sup>155</sup> Plutarch's ideal did not involve force or violence, in addition to advocating moderation. Rather, the consummate leader and man relied upon intellect and persuasive skills to rule his subjects. Martial talent, although not completely useless, was not to be employed in isolation of other means of government. This may have been a

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<sup>153</sup> Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, 133-4.

<sup>154</sup> Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, 131.

<sup>155</sup> Plut. *Phoc.* 2.9: ἐὰν δὲ μιχθῇ, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἡ πάντων μὲν ῥυθμῶν, πασῶν δ' ἁρμονιῶν ἐμμελεστάτη καὶ μουσικωτάτη κρᾶσις, ἣ καὶ τὸν κόσμον ὁ θεὸς λέγεται διοικεῖν, οὐ βιαζόμενος, ἀλλὰ πειθοῖ καὶ λόγῳ παράγωντῃν ἀνάγκην.



latent message to his Roman readers, who had gained their supremacy through war and conquest. The ideal and the divine method of exercising power was through “persuasion and reason,” attributes that *paideia* and philosophy instilled.

If Plutarch continuously asserted the Roman reluctance to engage in these endeavors, why would he have bothered to promote this idea? By providing examples of the harm a lack of education could produce, as well as examples of the virtue it instilled, Plutarch was able to urge his readers to embrace the ideal man and the route to such characteristics, Hellenic education. Perhaps the concept would lead to added respect for and reliance upon Greek individuals in positions of power. Plutarch may have put forth such an idea to urge the Roman elite members of society to embrace and include contemporary Greek elites in the higher levels of government, rather than gauging these individuals as unfit to rule themselves, as *graeculi*. Alternatively this could have merely been a claim to superiority without any anticipation of added tangible benefits such as positions or titles. The assertion of better ability to rule and privileged manhood that power and authority accompanies can simply stand on its own.

Plutarch established Phocion as the embodiment of this mix of characteristics. He displayed “an equal blend, so to speak, of severity and kindness, of caution and courage, of solicitude for others and fearlessness for themselves, of the careful avoidance of baseness and, in like degree, the eager pursuit of justice.”<sup>156</sup> As this passage reveals, Plutarch did not consider *andreia* a negative quality in itself. He criticized individuals who prized this particular aspect of manly virtues above all else, particularly because it

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<sup>156</sup> Plut. *Phoc.* 3.8: ...ἴσῳ μέτρῳ μεμιγμένου πρὸς τὸ αὐστηρὸν τοῦ φιλανθρώπου, καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἀσφαλὲς τοῦ ἀνδρείου, καὶ τῆς ὑπὲρ ἄλλων μὲν κηδεμονίας, ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν δ’ ἀφοβίας, καὶ πρὸς μὲν τὸ αἰσχρὸν εὐλαβείας, πρὸς δὲ τὸ δίκαιον εὐτονίας συνηρμοσμένης ὁμοίως.

violated his notions of moderation and harmony. He reiterated this theme by praising Phocion as a man of “temperance and courage,” connecting this ideal again to the divine. He related that Phocion noticed that the men of his day either assigned themselves to the office of general or orator, applying themselves to one of the two professions and neglecting the characteristics needed for the other. Phocion, just as statesmen of the past, chose to combine the two positions and utilize both sets of traits in his duties, equally “a squire of Enyalios god of war, and versed in the lovely Muses’ gifts.”<sup>157</sup> In contrast to his presentation of the Roman men, Coriolanus and Marcellus, Plutarch connected his protagonist’s correct behavior to his predecessors. As we have seen, the writer indicated that both Coriolanus and Marcellus’ deficiencies were the result of their community’s reliance upon war and martial natures. Phocion, on the other hand, had men such as Pericles, Aristides and Solon as examples, who each had applied equal focus on the military and civic realms of government (*Phoc.* 7.5).

Phocion was able to acquire these skills in moderation during his classical, Hellenic education, which Plutarch highly praised. He was first a student of Plato and then studied under Xenocrates in the Academy, enjoying “a sound education” and cultivating “the best practices worthy of emulation from the beginning.”<sup>158</sup> He connected this superior education to his ability to control his emotions, desires and even physical needs, indicating that he was able to do this due to his philosophical studies. Very few Athenians could report that they had seen Phocion laugh, cry or reveal any intense

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<sup>157</sup> Plut. *Phoc.* 7.6: ἀμφοτέρων, θεράπων μὲν Ἐνυαλίῳ θεοῖο, καὶ Μουσέων ἐρατὰν δῶρον ἐπιστάμενος. Plutarch was quoting Archilocus (T. Bergk, *Poet. Lyr. Graeci*, ii.4, 383).

<sup>158</sup> Plut. *Phoc.* 4.2: ...σώφρονος [καὶ] παιδείας μετέσχεν, ὥστε τῆς Πλάτωνος ἔτι μειράκιον ὢν, ὕστερον δὲ τῆς Ξενοκράτους διατριβῆς ἐν Ἀκαδημείᾳ μετασχεῖν, καὶ τῶν ἀρίστων ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐπιτηδευμάτων ζηλωτῆς γενέσθαι.

emotion. Rather he maintained mastery over himself and did not allow any external or inward force to dominate his actions. It was the true display of a “man.” In addition, he did not fall prey to luxury or desire. Plutarch reported that he was never seen at a bath, indicating that he was not idle but spent all his free time in worthwhile pursuits. He carried himself well, never allowing his hand to come out of his cloak, when he wore a cloak. Also impervious to physical demands, when in the country or on campaign, “...he always walked without shoes or outer garment.” This led those on campaign with him to joke, “...that it was a sign of severe winter when Phocion was all bundled up.”<sup>159</sup>

Phocion did not display any of the character flaws that the previous men Plutarch examined had. He used philosophy, logic and reason instilled by *paideia* to avoid any sort of excess or weakness and to become the model “man” in control of those around him and more importantly of himself.

Phocion met an unpleasant end at the hands of the Athenian people, however, Plutarch did not connect his demise with any fault of his protagonist. His cooperation with Macedon eventually put him out of favor with the Athenians and under Polysperchon he was extradited, tried in the courts and sentenced to death. Plutarch designated this action as “impious,” supported by people who were “wholly savage” and “absolutely debauched by anger and envy.”<sup>160</sup> Unlike men such as Pelopidas and Marcellus, who were killed due to their subservience to emotion, and Coriolanus and Alcibiades, who were disgraced by similar faults, Phocion’s downfall was a result of the

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<sup>159</sup> Plut. *Phoc.* 4.4: ἐπεὶ κατὰ γε τὴν χώραν καὶ τὰς στρατείας ἀνυπόδητος ἀεὶ καὶ γυμνὸς ἐβάδιζεν, εἰ μὴ ψῦχος ὑπερβάλλον εἴη καὶ δυσκατέρητον, ὥστε καὶ παίζοντας ἤδη τοὺς <συ> στρατευομένους σύμβολον μεγάλου ποιεῖσθαι χειμῶνος ἐνδεδυσμένον Φωκίωνα.

<sup>160</sup> Plut. *Phoc.* 37.2: ἐφάνη δὲ τοῖς μὴ παντάπασιν ὥμοις καὶ διεφθαρμένοις ὑπ’ ὀργῆς καὶ φθόνου τὴν ψυχὴν...

chaotic times he lived in. As this statement could be applied to all the men discussed in the previous chapters, that Plutarch chose to use it in this particular case only demonstrates that he strove to elevate Phocion above the others. He could have justified any of his subject's demises or flaws with this logic. Plutarch continued, asserting that Phocion went to his death in the same self-controlled manner that he lived. He looked just the same as he was being led to prison as he had when he returned from a successful campaign, as men were astonished by his calm and magnanimity, maintaining his philosophic principles to the end (*Phoc.* 37.1-2). Plutarch ended this life with a comparison to Socrates' conviction, "...both equally the sin and misfortune of Athens."

<sup>161</sup> The comparison strengthened the theme Plutarch utilized throughout Phocion's biography, the correct use of philosophy and *paideia* throughout one's life.

Cornelius Nepos' account of Phocion's death presents a far different picture of the event, similar to the manner in which he presented his life. He did not mention any fault on the part of the Athenians for his conviction, nor did he claim for Phocion a lack of emotion. Instead, he focused on the Athenians' hatred for the man, stating that due to his sentence he was not buried by the citizens but by slaves (*Nep. Phoc.* 4.4). Plutarch provided an alternate version. He asserted that a man, Conopion, took his body to Eleusis and cremated it. From there, Phocion's wife collected his remains, carried them to their hearth and buried him. Plutarch recorded her entreaty after completing the burial. "Do restore them [Phocion's remains] to the sepulcher of his fathers, when the Athenians shall have come to their senses."<sup>162</sup> He concluded his biography with an affirmation of

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<sup>161</sup> Plut. *Phoc.* 38.5: ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν περὶ Φωκίωνα πραχθέντα τῶν περὶ Σωκράτην πάλιν ἀνέμνησε τοὺς Ἕλληνας, ὡς ὁμοιοτάτης ἐκείνῃ τῆς ἀμαρτίας ταύτης καὶ δυστυχίας τῇ πόλει γενομένης.

Phocion's wife's request. The Athenians were eventually reminded of what a "...patron and guardian of moderation and justice" they had lost and gave Phocion a proper burial, as well as erecting a bronze statue in his honor.<sup>163</sup> His accusers were also tried and executed. Plutarch could not allow his hero to be buried in such an ignoble way, as Cornelius Nepos had recorded. He therefore did not include this version, but chose another from another unknown source.<sup>164</sup>

In contrast to Phocion's ability to apply philosophy to his character and behavior, Cato the Younger, his Roman parallel, failed to grasp fully the uses of philosophical tenants. Similar to Marcellus, he was unable to completely attain the ideals of education that Plutarch promoted. As Duff has shown, Plutarch depicted Cato as unbending and overly harsh, not understanding the intricacies of adhering to a philosophical school.<sup>165</sup> He could not moderate his anger for the good of the state. Plutarch emphasized his responsibility for the alliance between Julius Caesar and Pompey which eventually led to devastating civil wars and the destruction of the Roman Republic (*Cat. Min.* 30-31). At other points in his life, Plutarch also demonstrated Cato's submission to emotion, most poignantly at the death of his brother. In his grief he acted "...with more passion than philosophy."<sup>166</sup> Again, Plutarch presented the Roman not only in a less favorable light

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<sup>162</sup> Plut. *Phoc.* 37.5: σὺ δ' αὐτὰ τοῖς πατρώοις ἀπόδος ἡρίοις, ὅταν Ἀθηναῖοι σωφρονήσωσι.

<sup>163</sup> Plut. *Phoc.* 38.1: ...φύλακα σωφροσύνης καὶ δικαιοσύνης...

<sup>164</sup> Plutarch often recorded multiple versions of events that he had found in his research. For example, he cited two versions of Alcibiades' death (discussed in Chapter Two). He was aware of Nepos' work (see footnote 131); therefore, it is probable that he made a conscious choice not to provide this account or any of its details in his own biography.

<sup>165</sup> Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, 154. Duff also points out that this may be the result of Plutarch's critique of Stoicism as well.

<sup>166</sup> Plut. *Cat. Min.* 11.3: ...ἐμπαθέστερον ἔδοξεν ἢ φιλοσοφώτερον ἐνεγκεῖν τὴν συμφορὰν...

than the Greek, but also excluded him from attaining the ideals of *paideia* and philosophy and thus the ideal route to manhood.

The examination of these three sets of biographies has revealed Plutarch's ideal masculine characteristics and behaviors, as well as the methods he advocated for attaining these traits. His military men focused primarily on martial achievement and neglected philosophical tenants, either because they chose to or where unable to grasp Hellenic teachings. In doing so, their masculinity was incomplete. These individuals were unable to maintain control of their emotions and desires, and were unable at times to control the people they led. This represents a serious deficiency in their masculinity that Plutarch directly connected to their lack of education or their unwillingness to follow what they had been taught. Phocion and other men who were able to acquire and absorb philosophy were far more successful as men. He clearly associated this ideal with not only Greek *paideia* and culture, but more specifically with Greek men, thereby giving them a slight advantage over his Roman neighbors and rulers because they would have to be willing to submit to Greek culture and tradition to attain this ideal. We will now turn to a contextualization of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, an analysis of the latent meanings behind his message and how and why he connected these gender ideals to other facets of identity.

## Conclusion

The six biographies I have examined reflect a sub-discourse that Plutarch inserted throughout the entirety of his *Parallel Lives*, which he perhaps began to cultivate in his earlier philosophical treatises that have supplemented the present investigation.<sup>167</sup> My analysis rests upon two central assertions. I argue first that Plutarch deemed purely martial men as incomplete, falling short of attaining the status of “man.” A focus on military excellence and courage (*andreia*) made his subjects susceptible to emotions and desires. In doing so they assumed traits and behaviors associated with women and deficient men. Becoming a man or maintaining manhood required males to absorb philosophical teachings and apply these tenants to their lives. They must demonstrate control not only of the people around them, but also of themselves. Plutarch further defined this route to masculinity as requiring Hellenic education or *paideia* and Greek philosophy for its ultimate consummation. Second, I argue that Plutarch portrayed his Roman subjects as martial and warlike by nature. He connected their behavior to the Romans in general, continuously asserting that Rome was a nation built by war and that its inhabitants were traditionally bellicose. As a result, he implied that the Romans were unrefined and brutish, to an extent.<sup>168</sup> This propensity towards war and their general lack

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<sup>167</sup> The scope of this project did not allow me to go into depth concerning the presence of this message in either other lives or in his *Moralia*. I hope to expand this study in the future.

<sup>168</sup> Plutarch did not depict the Romans as completely barbaric. (See Jones, *Plutarch and Rome*, 103). Throughout his philosophical treatises and biographies, he strove to display the Romans as closely connected to the Greeks, bearing similar traditions and characteristics. In the dichotomous outlook of Greeks, the world had been split into Hellenes and all non-Greek speakers, barbarians; however, when

of culture and civility rendered them, as a whole, unwilling to devote to Hellenic *paideia* and philosophy. Instead, they placed a much greater value on military training and physical achievement, which left their masculinity deficient. In order to attain the ideal manhood Plutarch promoted, they had to embrace Greek culture. The Greeks, of course, had already realized the importance of *paideia* and philosophy and therefore possessed a superior claim to manhood and the power and authority that commanded.

Plutarch's interpretation and presentation of either masculinity, Greek or Roman, should not be taken in isolation, however. He built his ideas on multiple existing concepts and in doing so was reacting to and reflecting wider social and political phenomena occurring when he wrote. Plato's "philosopher-king" ideal, discussed in its fullest extent in the *Republic*, certainly influenced Plutarch's conception of the ultimate "man." In addition, Plutarch agreed with and worked from the Aristotelian concept that the rational portion of one's intellect was meant to control the passions.<sup>169</sup>

There are several non-philosophical literary antecedents, as well, from which Plutarch seems to have derived his perspective of Rome. Even before there was significant contact between Greece and Rome, the Greek word *ῥώμη* originally meant "bodily strength" or "might." Xenophon used the word to refer to a force or an army (*Anab.* 3.3.14). The Greeks were predisposed to associate the Romans with the military and war. A poet, Melinno, possibly from Lesbos writing in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, called Rome the Amazonian daughter of Ares, clearly upholding the traditional connection of Rome and war that Plutarch echoed throughout the *Parallel Lives* (Melin. 1.9-16). A

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Rome attained control of Greece, a dilemma arose: How could the culturally superior Hellenes have been bested by inferior barbarians? This slippery ground led to reclassifying the Romans into a "grey area" that was not quite barbarian, yet not fully at the enlightened level of the Greeks.

<sup>169</sup> See Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, 52-72 for Plato and Aristotle's influence on Plutarch.



century later, Diodorus Siculus similarly painted the Romans as a band of lawless bandits who were led by arrogant generals.<sup>170</sup> Taking these precedents into account, Plutarch's depiction of Romans was not novel and he probably did not have to convince his Greek audience of the Roman pugnacious and slightly brutish character. He did, however, have to construct his subjects carefully in order to portray military men, of either Greek or Roman backgrounds, as effeminate and lacking the fundamental training for becoming true men. The easy and established link between Rome and this type of martial man only assisted and reinforced Plutarch's underlying message: The Roman natural demeanor was unfit for the brand of manhood that he supported without Greek assistance.

This assertion may have conflicted with prevailing concepts of ideal assertive and aggressive masculinity. As Gilmore found in his study of manhood throughout the globe, one of the central tenants of gaining and displaying traditional manhood was "to display courage, often in organized fighting."<sup>171</sup> Although his study concentrates on modern constructions of what a "man" should be, courage and fighting were just as important to masculinity in antiquity as it is in Gilmore's modern societies. While Plutarch did not advocate a complete absence of physical or martial ability or a lack of courage, he downplayed the centrality of these traits in the ideal man, preferring a Greek academic basis for manhood.

Plutarch's alternative version of the ideal "man" illustrates the plurality of gender ideology. While there may be many kinds of the male self, many male subjects "strive to

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<sup>170</sup> See 9.2-35, 15.2, 23.121, 24.3. Bettie Forte, *Rome and the Romans as the Greeks saw them* (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1972) 7, 11.

<sup>171</sup> Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 21.

be central.”<sup>172</sup> These men present either themselves, or an ideal male subject, as the only valid type. Simultaneously, they deny other acceptable alternatives contending for a prominent position within standards of identity and behavior.<sup>173</sup> Plutarch carefully presented the males who took alternate routes to manhood as incomplete or deficient; his road was the only true way. He possessed the criteria necessary to traverse this path and could therefore claim the ideal manhood he presented. His attempt to do so presents an interesting question: “why?” What benefit could he have obtained, or hoped to obtain, in this endeavor? The answer may shed light on how gender ideology is manipulated and utilized, and why it has been such a central informing concept of identity.

Gender ideology and assertions about manhood, particularly superior manhood, rarely stand on their own. Rather, they operate in tandem with various other aspects of identity in order to establish the prepotency of other characteristics, often the supremacy of one individual or group over another. This could be utilized to establish or justify superiority over another person, a social, economic or ethnic group, country or the opposite sex, as many feminist scholars have pointed out. The correct assumption and display of manhood involves many aspects of an individual’s personality and social and cultural surroundings. Gaining and maintaining manhood is attributed to inward abilities (i.e., intellect, morals, control over emotions), physical make-up and cultural and societal situations. Therefore, because so many facets of identity are tied up with gender ideology, promoting one variety of “man” as superior to another involves the corollary supposition that all factors which created the greater example are preferable as well.

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<sup>172</sup> Foxhall, *Thinking Men*, 1.

<sup>173</sup> Foxhall, *Thinking Men*, 1.

Praising a type of “man” also praises the aspects of his personality and culture that helped to develop his superior status.

Likewise, when someone hurls an insult at a male and attacks his manhood, the insult is not meant simply to strip him of his status as a “man,” it is intended to question his ability to correctly function in an assigned role. It also implies that there are others who have a more legitimate claim to that status.<sup>174</sup> The power of such an insult, either in antiquity or today, is apparent. The response, which is often violent, indicates the complexity of such a concept. Reactions to such challenges reveal how much of one’s identity is tied up with a person or a group’s status as “men.” From ancient battle accounts to modern locker room talk, calling some one a “woman” typically gets the desired reaction.<sup>175</sup> An individual’s inner character and outward surroundings can produce either a good or bad example of a “man.” Therefore, when someone claims that a particular type of man is deficient, they are also able to claim that all the factors that helped to produce that man are similarly deficient. On the other hand, if a version of manhood is preferable, the elements that not only built that man but also acknowledged that type as superior are likewise elevated.

Plutarch was able to bind his assertions regarding the superior status of philosophical manhood to various other aspects of his identity. This allowed him to promote himself and his Greek community at the same time. Plutarch’s personal connections to this route to masculinity are apparent. As a member of the wealthier

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<sup>174</sup> Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 220-31.

<sup>175</sup> Plutarch investigated this phenomenon as well. See *Tim.* 32.3-4 for his discussion of why Euthymus’ insult to the Corinthian soldiers was taken so seriously. He had called the men “Corinthian women coming out of doors.” (Κορίνθιαι γυναῖκες ἐξῆλθον δόμων). Euthymus was executed shortly after.

echelons of Greek society, he would have had extensive training in philosophy and have been able to claim access to, and mastery of, the intricacies of Hellenic education. His writings demonstrate his proficiency in such endeavors and attest to his ability to claim the ideal manhood that he promoted. As we have seen, he was also able to extend that connection to his Greek community. In his remarks concerning Marcellus' lack of time for education, he referred specifically to Greek teachings and philosophy (*Marc.* 1.3). He made this link in various other biographies; for example in *Marius*, he asserted that if Marius had engaged in Greek studies, he would not have brought shame on his achievements (*Marius* 2.4). Furthermore, by continuously denying complete absorption of *paideia* to the Romans, he cemented the exclusive Greek character of such an education. On the other hand in both Roman biographies examined, he explicitly connected martial focus and warlike tradition with the Romans (*Cor.* 1.6, *Marc.* 1.3). With this established, Plutarch could demonstrate what was lacking in such traditions and what elite Romans stood to gain by embracing Greek institutions. He simultaneously contradicted the Roman interpretation of effeminate Greeks by displaying Hellenic culture as a superior method of attaining manhood.

This interlocking system of identity not only illustrates the complexity of gender ideology, it also points to its utility and its importance as a category of definition. Because superior gender status can be translated into superiority in other aspects of individual or group identity, it has been used as a justification for power and authority. As previously explored, "being a man" in ancient Greece and Rome involved mastery and control. Men led; women, children and other non-"men" followed, not because they wanted to but because that was their innate role. They were simply unable to lead.

Although this language developed around the dichotomy between men and women, these standards of behavior and the rhetoric employed concerning them were not really meant for women. Instead these distinctions were created to divide males into legitimate and illegitimate members.<sup>176</sup> As women were rarely in public contention for power, it would have been pointless to expound this rhetoric for their benefit; these categories were meant to distinguish between superior and inferior men as well as to define who deserved access to authority and respect. Thus gender ideology and concepts regarding manhood specifically became a useful tool to employ in the complex discourses that negotiated power relations.

Whether Plutarch actually attained any tangible benefits or additional authority from such a message is unclear, and perhaps not important. What is relevant is that he took the time and effort to construct his subjects in the *Parallel Lives* to reinforce this image of Greece. He certainly was not acting alone and many of the ideas that he presented were not his own. He reflected and reacted to precedents and social and political phenomena that had been established centuries prior. As Rome assumed political and military dominance over Greece, the Greeks were able to utilize their past to assert their cultural dominance over the Romans. Roman absorption of Greek traditions further assisted Greece in this endeavor, which caused multiple concerns in Rome. As early as the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, statesmen such as Cato the Elder railed against the influence that Greece had over Rome, which continued until Plutarch's time as we saw in Juvenal's satire. In order to reconcile this problem, as well as to justify their rule over Greece, many Roman authors made a distinction between Classical Greece that had produced the literature, art, laws, philosophy and so on that they prized, and contemporary Greece that

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<sup>176</sup> Gleason, *Making Men*, 161.

had declined due to infighting, love of luxury and effeminacy. As Vespasian stated when justifying his revocation of Nero's grant of *libertas et immunitas* to Greece, "...[The Greeks] had forgotten how to be free" and could therefore no longer rule themselves.<sup>177</sup> Plutarch reacted to these claims by reasserting Greece's masculinity and autonomous ability. He simultaneously reversed the Roman rhetoric by elevating Greek manhood above the Roman implying that the Roman justification of rule was incorrect and misplaced. Without Greek cultural benefits -- a superiority that had already been recognized -- Rome would not be able to maintain its authority. Greece, as possessor of superior masculine status and dispenser of the true route to manhood, was better qualified for power, authority and respect.

It is in this respect that post-colonialist theory has been useful to the present study. As outlined in the Introduction, one of the central facets of post-colonial discourse theory involves the investigation of textual forms that produced and codified knowledge about the colonized and their reaction to it.<sup>178</sup> The latter example is what I believe we are dealing with in Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. He reacted to and attempted to counter the prevailing Roman knowledge about the Greeks' inferior status as effeminate *graeculi*. He chose to do so with an exploration of the past because it was in the past that Greece's claim to superiority and fame lay. As Greg Woolfe states, "...the past granted Greeks a position of power in the Roman Empire."<sup>179</sup> This also marks out the different situation the Greeks found themselves in, in comparison to the various other colonized groups

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<sup>177</sup> Pausanias 7.17.4.

<sup>178</sup> Saïd, *Orientalism*, 3; Webster, "Roman Imperialism and the 'post-imperial' age," 5-7.

<sup>179</sup> Woolfe, "Becoming Roman, Staying Greek: Culture, Identity and the Civilizing Process in the Roman East," 125.

studied by post-colonialists. The Greeks had a privileged position in the Roman world, even if Roman statements and perceptions of contemporary Greece emphasized the downfall of the society. They were able to use their past achievements to assert present relevance and importance to their rulers and to claim power by inserting Rome into Greece's standards and traditions in order to find them wanting. Plutarch routinely measured Rome and Greece by equal metrics. However, the deck was always stacked against the Romans since the measurements were always Greek.<sup>180</sup> For example, in his praise for the semi-mythical Roman king Numa, he stated that he was "a more Hellenic lawgiver than Lycurgus."<sup>181</sup> By valuing the Hellenic notions over Roman, Plutarch was able to elevate the Greek subjects he examined, who were always innately endowed with the benefits of Greek traditions and culture, while the Romans, or at least the best Romans, were hopelessly trying to attain the perfection of *paideia* that they could never fully grasp without adequate dedication. Romans could only benefit from Greek culture and Greek men, and indeed could learn how to become "men," by allowing their Greek teachers a more prominent position. Gender proved to be the ultimate arena where these ideas could be fleshed out and proven. Intrinsically connected to authority, power and general social status, an assertion of superior manhood encapsulated all facets of identity that Plutarch wished to elevate.

Bettie Forte has observed that Plutarch's promotion of philosophy may have been a reaction to Domitian's harsh treatment of philosophers. I believe that it was a reaction

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<sup>180</sup> Whitmarsh, "Alexander's Hellenism and Plutarch's Textualism," *CQ* 52, 177-178.

<sup>181</sup> Plut. *Comp. Lyc. et Num.* 1.5: ...μακρῶ τινι τὸν Νομᾶν ἑλληνικώτερον γεγονέναι νομοθέτην φήσομεν...

to Roman rule as a whole and should not be attributed to one man's actions.<sup>182</sup> Perhaps his message was not directed to all Romans, or all Greeks, but it was certainly meant to influence elite, powerful members of both groups. Indeed, Plutarch dedicated the *Parallel Lives* to a Roman man, Q. Sosius Senecio as, what Christopher Jones deems, "...a gift of a Greek man of letters to a Roman general."<sup>183</sup> This statement encapsulates the sub-discourse that I have argued is present in the *Parallel Lives* investigated here: Plutarch intended, as one motivation for writing, to demonstrate the benefits that bellicose Romans could receive from recognizing the superiority of Greeks and Hellenic education.<sup>184</sup> Plutarch was not the only Greek individual to promote this idea. Forte recognized a similar trend in Plutarch's contemporaries Dio Chrysostom (c. 40/50-110 CE) and Epictetus (mid-1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. CE). She states that these men "...believed that the Romans needed the moral and philosophical education which philosophers could provide in order to become good men and good rulers."<sup>185</sup> Scholars such as Maud Gleason and Simon Swain have similarly discovered the emergence of Greek attempts to reassert their cultural superiority during the Second Sophistic. Plutarch's interpretations, therefore, represent the widespread attempt to reclaim Greek identity and redefine its place within the Roman Empire, as well as react to and refute the Roman justifications of their own superiority.

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<sup>182</sup> Forte, *Rome and the Romans as the Greeks Saw Them*, 244-248.

<sup>183</sup> Jones, *Plutarch and Rome*, 53.

<sup>184</sup> I certainly do not mean to imply that this sub-discourse was the sole reason for Plutarch's creation of the *Parallel Lives*.

<sup>185</sup> Forte, *Rome and the Romans as the Greeks Saw Them*, 249.



In the biographies we have investigated, Plutarch was able to make a loud assertion of Greek preeminence as well as counter any contrary claims by constructing Roman men such as Coriolanus and Marcellus as out-of-control individuals, naturally drawn towards military endeavors and therefore lacking *paideia*, the crucial element of manhood. Although his Greek parallels to these men admittedly possessed similar flaws, their deficiencies as men were downplayed, present only to advocate the ideal manhood that one could not attain until he devoted time to *paideia* and philosophy. Alcibiades and Pelopidas neglect this road to ideal masculinity, indicating that those who wish to gain the ideal characteristics must completely embrace Hellenic education. Phocion was Plutarch's example of the correct assumption of philosophical ideals and manhood, who constantly observed philosophic ideals of moderation and reason. He was a Greek elite man who had the cultural benefits of *paideia* and philosophy and the social and economic standing to pursue and display them in public arenas, which was an identity that Plutarch could associate with. This demonstration of the utility of gender ideology and the malleability of gender ideals illustrates the changing nature of constructions of masculinity, as well as the importance of such ideas. As we have seen, they are central to various coexisting aspects of identity and as such are vital to the presentation and definition of an individual and group. In addition, as a representation and justification of power and authority, manhood and the discourses involving them play an integral role in negotiations for knowledge and power.

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