

## PLUTARCH'S METHODS IN THE *LIVES*

THE *locus classicus* for Plutarch's own views on his methods is in the *Alexander* (1. 2)—οὔτε γὰρ ἱστορίας γράφομεν, ἀλλὰ βίους, οὔτε ταῖς ἐπιφανεστάταις πράξεσι πάντως ἔνεστι δῆλως ἀρετῆς ἢ κακίας, ἀλλὰ πρᾶγμα βραχὺ πολλάκις καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ παιδιὰ τις ἔμφασιν ἤθους ἐποίησε μᾶλλον ἢ μάχαι μυριόνεκροι καὶ παρατάξεις αἱ μέγιστα καὶ πολιορκίαι πόλεων. He has begun by asking for the indulgence of his readers if they do not find *all* the exploits of Alexander and Caesar recounted by the biographer or if they discover him not reporting some famous incident in detail (ἐξειργασμένως); and he goes on to compare his own search for evidence which will indicate the kind of soul, with the activity of the painter, who, in order to create a likeness, concentrates on the eyes and pays little attention to the other parts.<sup>1</sup> Commentators and critics have been right to take this as a key text for the purpose of understanding Plutarch's attitude towards his biographical work; nevertheless there are other passages in the *Lives* where we can at least glimpse his attitude to his subject, and we can only see the Alexander-remarks in correct perspective if we take these other passages into account. I propose therefore, starting with the *Alexander*, to see how far these critical remarks apply to Plutarch's theory and practice elsewhere in the *Lives*.

In the *Alexander* Plutarch picks on three kinds of evidence as useful for his purposes: minor events, sayings, and jests.<sup>2</sup> Examples of these abound both in the *Alexander* and elsewhere, and it is possible to show that they are all used towards a single end, that of writing a 'brief life' in which the biographer has chosen what he regards as essential. 'Minor events' (as I have somewhat awkwardly translated the phrase πρᾶγμα βραχὺ) are clearly defined in opposition to the detailed accounts of great battles; this is therefore a sort of protest against military history. It is extremely unlikely that Plutarch thought of himself as opening the door to those who might be interested in personal detail of the eccentric kind, like Johnson's habit of collecting orange peel. Nor is he concerned with the kind of material which reflects 'the psychology of the valet',<sup>3</sup> for he would probably have thought that personal details of this kind would lead to trivialization. He wants to find examples of ἀρετή from the lives of men who have been πολιτικοί or ἡγέμονες; and he is far removed from mere fact-grubbing or κακοήθεια of interpretation. The story of Timocleia<sup>4</sup> (*Alexander*, 12) is a useful case in point, for it is told as part of Plutarch's account of the destruction of Thebes (*Alexander*, 11. 6–12 end) and takes up half the space allotted to the whole episode. To most historians of Alexander the incident is without significance; the biographer was attracted to it because it illustrates the ἀρετή of a woman, her courage in killing a Macedonian who had assaulted her, and

<sup>1</sup> On the expression τῶν περὶ τὴν ὄψιν εἶδόν, see J. R. Hamilton, *Plutarch, Alexander* (1969), p. 2. For a discussion of the analogy with painting see D. W. Lucas, *Aristotle, Poetics* (1968), pp. 269 f.

<sup>2</sup> I lay stress on the fact that there are *three* kinds, as some translations obscure this point; thus 'a slight thing like a phrase or jest . . .' (Perrin in LCL).

<sup>3</sup> G. Lukács, *The Historical Novel* (Penguin edn., 1969), p. 50, referring to Hegel's phrase. Johnson, similarly, did not think that such items as Dryden's chair were the heart of the biographer's matter.

<sup>4</sup> Yet the story probably comes from Aristobulus: see *Moralia*, 1093 c and cf. Hamilton, p. li.

her *παρρησία* in telling Alexander that she was the sister of Theagenes who had fought against Philip at Chaeroneia. The tale is brought neatly to a close by the remark that Alexander admired both her answer and her action. Thus the incident illustrates the *ἀρετή* of a woman<sup>1</sup> and Alexander's immediate recognition of that *ἀρετή*, showing that he is sensible to *τὸ καλόν* in human action in accordance with the general point made about the effect of *τὸ καλόν* in *Pericles* 2.<sup>2</sup>

A 'minor event' does not necessarily have to be an incident like the above, minor compared with the military action at Thebes. A slightly different instance can be found in *Cato*, ii. 23, where a debate on the Catilinarian conspirators is interrupted as Cato sees Caesar reading a letter. Cato accuses Caesar of treasonable correspondence, but the document is only a love-letter from Cato's sister; and Cato, unembarrassed by his disappointment, goes on with his original speech. The main event at this stage is the fate of the conspirators; the letter-incident is used by Plutarch as a means of 'sketching the image of the soul'. 'Minor events', that is to say, are to be found in political life as well as on the battlefield. Plutarch makes a similar use of the fact that in Athens the thirty tyrants altered the position of the *βῆμα*, so that it faced the land instead of the sea.<sup>3</sup> This small change illustrates the aversion of the tyrants from the element which had fostered the democracy. At Rome C. Gracchus was the first demagogue to make his speeches looking towards the forum instead of the senate; *μικρὰ παρεγκλίσει καὶ μεταθέσει σχήματος μέγα πρᾶγμα κινήσας καὶ μετενεγκὼν τρόπον τινὰ τὴν πολιτείαν κτλ.*<sup>4</sup> The last two instances show that a 'minor event' can be used to give information about the character of an age as well as a person. It is often therefore a biographical device for attaining brevity; without the Gracchus incident, for instance, what Plutarch calls 'the change from aristocracy to democracy' could have been argued only at considerable length.

As with 'minor events', so with 'sayings': it is useful and right to think of them as the biographer's counterpart to the speeches used by historians to explain motive. Plutarch has very few speeches, and none of the length to be found in Thucydides or Dionysius of Halicarnassus. 'Sayings' are often used as a convenient means of showing that the hero concerned does have the means of persuasion at his disposal; for the Plutarchian 'politician', although he makes his main impression by means of his character, needs to have sufficient powers of oratory to put himself across, without going in for elaborate rhetoric.<sup>5</sup> Phocion, for example, is admired (*Phocion*, 7. 5) for filling the roles of general and orator which had become disjunct in the fourth century; and his *Life*, more than any other, abounds in 'sayings', having more than fifty. The 'saying' not only saves the biographer a speech; it is used also as a way of

<sup>1</sup> For the importance of this topic in Plutarch's work see P. A. Stadter, *Plutarch's Historical Methods; the Mulierum Virtutes* (1965).

<sup>2</sup> The effect of *τὸ καλόν* is to make us want to emulate the doer; the effect of art is to make us admire the artefact but not the artist. Notice, further, that when moderns speak of Plutarch as an 'artist' they should bear in mind that they are using a term which Plutarch would have rejected. See

A. W. Gomme, *Thucydides* i, p. 56 n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Plut. *Them.* 19. 6; on the archaeology of the subject see K. Kourouniotes and H. A. Thompson, *Hesperia* i (1932), pp. 90 f.

<sup>4</sup> Plut. *C. Gracch.* 5; but see Cic. *de amicitia*, 96 (C. Licinius Crassus).

<sup>5</sup> On the function of *ῥῆθος* as a means of persuasion see, e.g., *Pelop.* 30; *Moralia*, 33F and 854E; and R. Jeuckens, *Plutarch und die Rhetorik* (1907).

showing Plutarch's own taste in oratory and rhetoric (as used on political occasions). He favours the pithy and unelaborated, valuing the appearance of ἀφέλεια, of εὐτέλεια even, which conceals an unexpected depth of serious thought. He approves not so much the ἀφέλεια of Lysias<sup>1</sup> as the authentic plainness of Spartan discourse, and dwells with pleasure on the χάρις that attaches to laconic utterance.

To a certain extent 'sayings' and 'jests' overlap, since the element of χάρις in a short saying is enhanced when it is also witty. But Plutarch does not care for all 'jests'; his preference is for what might be called the 'true jest', which makes a moral point wittily without offending gratuitously the person to whom it is addressed. He is an enemy of joking for joking's sake, which is βωμολοχία;<sup>2</sup> and considers that forwardness in joking, as practised by Cicero, is caused by the professional deformation of the law-courts (*Cicero*, 27. 1). Although most jokes travel badly, some of these reported by Plutarch are among the worst travellers in this respect. Hannibal told Giscon (*Fabius*, 15), who was impressed by the numbers of the Roman army, that he was overlooking one thing: there was no one among the enemy called Giscon. This caused widespread laughter among the Carthaginians but I doubt whether a ripple reaches as far as the modern reader.

Yet it is misleading to think of παιδιά only as 'jest' in the verbal sense, though it is a translator's convenience. It is right to think of παιδιά in relation to its opposite, σπουδή, adopting therefore the same procedure as with πᾶγμα βραχύ and ῥῆμα. 'Jest' or 'play' refers to anything that is obviously outside the sphere of τὸ σπουδαῖον, which can be defined broadly as success concerned with τὸ καλόν in war or politics. A good instance occurs in *Aemilius Paullus*, 28. 7–8; the Greeks were amazed that the victor of Pydna paid meticulous care to rules of precedence and good order at banquets and dinner-parties, amazed εἰ μῆδε τὴν παιδιὰν ἄμοιρον ἀπολείπει σπουδῆς, ἀλλὰ τηλικαῦτα πράττων ἀνὴρ πράγματα καὶ τοῖς μικροῖς τὸ πρέπον ἀποδίδωσιν. Plutarch is not expressing an interest in παιδιά for its own sake, but has, I think, derived the notion from Plato, who sees in παιδιά, as exemplified in symposia, a safe and certain way of discovering the φύσεις of those present.<sup>3</sup> By contrast with Aemilius, Antony's παιδιά reveals a mind as disordered in his amusements as in his serious activities.<sup>4</sup>

We can now make the relevant distinction between historical writing and Plutarch's biography. Historical writing provides an account of great events, military and political, interspersed with speeches. Biography, on the other hand, may be content with an outline of events, for some degree of familiarity with historical fact seems to be assumed; it makes use of minor events, sayings, and jests. There is a difference of method, but a common purpose in that both are concerned with the past as a school for statesmen. One gives information about the kind of political circumstances that may recur, the other tells us about the ἥθος which is desirable in the statesman. The methods of biography have the effect of abbreviating the tale which might be told by the historian. But although 'sayings' and 'jests' are, so to say, compendious in their purpose, it is as well to remember that they have their origin elsewhere: in a dislike, that

<sup>1</sup> For Plutarch's view of Lysias see *Cato* i. 7. 1–3; for βραχυλογία see, e.g., *Phocion*, 5 and *Lyc.* 20.

<sup>2</sup> For absence of βωμολοχία see, e.g., *Cleom.* 12. On 'jest' and 'earnest' in Plato

see P. Shorey, *Republic*, LCL (1946), ii, p. 214 and p. 227.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, *Leg.* 650 a–b. For τὰ μικρά cf. too *Plut. Aem. Paull.* 3. 4–5 and 5. 4.

<sup>4</sup> See especially *Plut. Ant.* 10 and 29.

is reminiscent of Plato, of the oratory usually practised in assemblies and courts, in a Platonic conviction that τὰ μικρά and παιδιὰ are important guides to the truth about man in society.

Historians had not, of course, neglected character entirely. Thucydides seems to have found it useful to give more information about character in the later parts of his work.<sup>1</sup> Xenophon gives two sayings of Theramenes shortly before he died; he is aware that they are not ἀξιόλογα but he cannot resist them. They are not historically important, but they show that Theramenes was a remarkable figure, still in possession of τὸ φρόνιμον and τὸ παιγνιώδες even though death was near.<sup>2</sup> To the biographer, however, these stories would be ἀξιόλογα in terms of his subject. A common practice for historians was to give something of a character-sketch at that part of the narrative where the death of an important person was mentioned. One sees the start of this in Thucydides' brief remarks about Nicias.<sup>3</sup> With Xenophon the practice is more fully developed, as we see from the 'biographies' of the Greek generals who died in the battle of Cynaxa.<sup>4</sup> But they are extraneous to the narrative, not a summary of points about character that have already emerged in the course of the story. When we come nearer to Plutarch's own time, we find that Dionysius of Halicarnassus is in earnest about the obligation of the historian to describe βίαι as well as πράξεις; and he gives a sketch of Publicola which is a kind of obituary and encomium in one.<sup>5</sup> In the *Lives*, however, character, whether a quality is explicitly named or merely to be inferred from a story,<sup>6</sup> is appearing throughout.

Plutarch's methods enable him to abbreviate and select, a point which is relevant to the question why he has prefaced the *Alexander* with something in the nature of a programme-statement. The *Alexander* was far from being the first of the *Lives* to be composed; indeed it seems that its position in the relative chronology of the *Lives* was fourteenth or thirteenth, at any rate not later than the eighteenth book.<sup>7</sup> By this stage, therefore, Plutarch was about a third of the way through the extant corpus. The answer, I think, is that the fact of writing about Alexander and Caesar made Plutarch more aware of the potentialities of his methods. What troubled him was the amount of material, the sheer quantity of πράξεις, in both these lives. It may seem strange that a biographer should say that he has too much material on his hands; but it is clear that Plutarch's aim in general was to write briefly. Even though he professes to have done some cutting with the *Alexander* and the *Caesar*, the result is two *Lives* of greater length than most. We can appreciate Plutarch's difficulties here if we consider the *Marcellus*, a *Life* which was probably composed earlier.<sup>8</sup> The career of Marcellus was much less full of incident and allowed the biographer more scope for expansion and digression. The early chapters are filled out with stories about the Roman attitude to τὰ θεία and to δεισιδαιμονία,<sup>9</sup> which are relevant to the biographer's moral interests in general, though, as told, more appropriate to a study of 'the Roman character' than to Marcellus in particular. They win the reader over because he automatically assumes that Marcellus

<sup>1</sup> H. D. Westlake, *Individuals in Thucydides* (1968).

<sup>2</sup> Xen. *Hellenica*, 2. 3. 56.

<sup>3</sup> Thuc. 7. 86. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Xen. *Anab.* 2. 6 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 5. 48.

<sup>6</sup> On various means of portraying character, see P. Kirn, *Das Bild des Menschen in der*

*Geschichtsschreibung von Polybios bis Ranke* (1956).

<sup>7</sup> On the chronology see C. P. Jones, *JRS* lvi (1966), pp. 66 f. Cf. Hamilton, p. xxxvii.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. note 7 above.

<sup>9</sup> For other passages on δεισιδαιμονία see *Nicias*, 4 and 23; *Numa*, 4. 12 and 8. 10; *Pericles*, 6; *Cor.* 24.

can be regarded as an instance of the 'Roman character'. Later on there is a (relatively) lengthy digression<sup>1</sup> on the subject of Archimedes and his war-engines, which are very little 'ad Marcellum' though they are justified by Plutarch's interest in the relationship between geometry and technology. Even with these additions the *Marcellus* is much shorter than the *Alexander*, being rather less than half the length.

It seems, then, that Plutarch's remarks on his methods in the *Alexander* are occasioned above all by the special nature of the pair of *Lives* that he has in hand. In other cases, too, his comments on method are made because the *Life* he is writing raises particular problems for his approach. The *Nicias*<sup>2</sup> would almost inevitably make it seem that Plutarch was in some way setting out to challenge or compete with Thucydides. He is at pains to disclaim any such purpose; Thucydides is expressly admired for the ἐνάργεια of his account of the Sicilian expedition and Timaeus is criticized for attempting to rewrite and surpass a classic, the inimitable Thucydides. Plutarch has no ambition to write artistic prose, a trivial thing at best and even more so when it is done as a kind of competitive exercise. Secondly, we are assured that the biographer has, on this occasion, to make use of the events reported by Thucydides and Philistus. One reason is that he wishes to avoid a charge of negligence and laziness; the other is that these events cannot be omitted, μάλιστα γὰρ τὸν τρόπον καὶ τὴν διάθεσιν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ὑπὸ πολλῶν καὶ μεγάλων παθῶν ἀποκαλυπτομένην περιεχούσας . . . He promises to abbreviate and add character-material from other sources. There is some similarity here with the *Alexander* passage, in that Plutarch is warning his readers against captious criticism on the ground of omissions. But the main point is different; his difficulty is not with the number of πράξεις, but with the fact that he needs for biographical purposes the very facts reported by the historians before him. He is conscious too of being dominated by a Greek masterpiece and it seems therefore to follow that he thinks of his readers as having the same regard for Thucydides as he does. His thoughts on method in the *Nicias* are coloured by his own attitude towards his main sources, and (perhaps without good cause, perhaps unreflectingly) he thinks that his readers will have the same view.

There is some similarity with the *Artaxerxes* (8-11), where again it is asserted that an acknowledged classic dominates the field, at any rate as regards the battle of Cynaxa and the death of Cyrus. Like Thucydides, Xenophon is applauded for his ἐνάργεια; Plutarch says that he will not tell the story again except for those ἀξία λόγου which Xenophon has omitted. He has his eye on the subject of Cyrus' death, which Xenophon mentions 'simply and briefly' (probably because he was not present); this shortcoming is remedied by using the versions of Deinon and Ctesias, though Plutarch is not exactly grateful to Ctesias, of whom he says: 'this is the version given by Ctesias, by which he finally puts Cyrus to death, as though he were using a blunt dagger'. In fact the Ctesias-story, as Plutarch gives it, tells us little about character and more about a certain kind of historiography. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the Ctesias-story is that Plutarch has curtailed it—ὡς ἐπιτεμόντι πολλὰ συντόμως

<sup>1</sup> On digressions see J. R. Hamilton, *Plutarch, Alexander* (1969), p. 95 (note on 35. 16). Plutarch does not always apologize for his scientific digressions; yet he does at times apologize for his moral digressions: cf. *Tim.*

14 and *Dion.* 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Plut. Nic.* 1. 4; and cf. A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* i, pp. 54 f.

ἀπαγγέλλαι—yet even so it is quite a lengthy chapter. The inference is that he thinks of Xenophon as well known to his readers, whereas Deinon and Ctesias are considered to be more obscure. Thus he is once more adapting the material provided by historians to what he regards as the likely tastes and reading of his expected audience.

The *Nicias* and the *Artaxerxes* show that Plutarch's methods have a different emphasis when he expects his readers to share his own respect for the dominant historical source. In the *Pompey*<sup>1</sup> we can see him reflecting on the problems that arise in the composition of a Roman biography, where his approach is not overshadowed by the thought that a classic has defined the field. Plutarch was only in part bilingual as a *reader*; culturally speaking he was monoglot, and his attitude to historians writing in Latin was quite unlike his reverence for Thucydides and Xenophon. The early part of the *Pompey* is concerned with the career of the young Pompey and his rise under Sulla; but just as Plutarch reaches the point where Pompey has been sent to assist Metellus (83 B.C.) he breaks off. 'I was afraid to move (κινεῖν) the achievements which Pompey carried out at that time. In themselves they were remarkable, but they are overwhelmed by the number and magnitude of his later battles and wars. If I spend too long on his early achievements I may fall short of his greatest actions and sufferings (ἔργων καὶ παθημάτων) which above all reveal his character.' Thus Plutarch is again conscious of the need to keep things short, but even so the result is a long *Life*, about the length of the *Alexander*. His method here is to eliminate one set of 'great actions' in favour of another, as he prefers to draw out the character from those events which would attract historians. In fact about three-quarters of this *Life* deals with Pompey's career from 67 B.C. to his death. It seems, therefore, that on this occasion he has preferred the 'major events'; he thinks of himself as telling a story (as well as demonstrating ἦθος) and perhaps one may infer here that his Greek readers will be less familiar with the subject. Later on in the *Pompey* we see that a 'saying' is less of a guide than τὰ ἔργα; when Pompey heard that he had received the command against Mithridates he exclaimed that he would rather have been an ordinary Roman if he was never going to have a respite from fighting and would be unable to live in the country with his wife. Plutarch regards this as εἰρωνεία and points to Pompey's subsequent actions which quickly showed him for what he was. The ἔργα, not the ῥῆμα, disclose the true Pompey, who is consumed by feelings of rivalry with Lucullus rather than anxious for a quiet life.

The biographer's liking for "πρᾶγμα βραχὺ καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ παιδιὰ" is to some extent affected by the fact that he is still telling a story and that he is at times conscious of his readers' familiarity with the subject. He follows the broad chronological sweep of life<sup>2</sup>—early years, maturity, old age, and death—though without ἀκρίβεια about dates. The reader of Plutarch, unlike the reader of Suetonius, has some confidence that he is to be given 'what came next'.<sup>3</sup> Because he is still a story-teller, over-indebted to political and military history, he is at times half-apologetic about introducing items which one would have expected the advocate of 'minor events' to be triumphant about. I have already mentioned Servilia's love-letter to Caesar. Later on, in *Cato* ii. 37, the biographer relates the story of how Cato and Munatius fell out with each other

<sup>1</sup> *Pomp.* 8. 6 and cf. *ibid.* 30. 6–31. 2.

<sup>3</sup> For Suetonius see G. B. Townend, *Latin*

<sup>2</sup> On this topic see D. A. Russell, *Greece Biography* (1967), esp. pp. 84 f.  
 & *Rome* xiii (1966), pp. 139 f.

and were subsequently reconciled. It comes as an interlude in the account of Cato's mission to and return from Cyprus. Plutarch ends with the remark—*ταῦτα μὲν οὖν οὐχ ἥττον οἰόμενοι τῶν ὑπαίθρων καὶ μεγάλων πράξεων πρὸς ἔνδειξιν ἡθῶν καὶ κατανόησιν ἔχειν τινα σαφήνειαν, ἐπὶ πλεόν διήλθομεν*. Formally, therefore, we have a digression developed from the use of a 'minor event'. The biographer apologizes for it rather as the historian apologizes for *his*, 'pragmatic', digressions. Yet one would not expect the biographer to do this if 'minor events' were as much the staple of his work as one might suppose on the basis of *Alexander*, 1. It seems that Plutarch is nervous about wandering off the main outline, or what he regards as the main outline. In the *Pericles* (24) there is in effect a digression on the subject of Aspasia and her relationship with Pericles. A modern would regard this as essential to the *Life*; and even in terms of Plutarch's own interests it seems important, in view of the fact that one theory of Aspasia's attraction for Pericles was that she was σοφή καὶ πολιτική; yet Plutarch ends by saying—*ταῦτα μὲν ἐπελθόντα τῇ μνήμῃ κατὰ τὴν γραφὴν ἀπώσασθαι καὶ παρελθεῖν ἴσως ἀπάνθρωπον ἦν*—a sign that, like a historian, he is returning to the main theme, and he continues with the Samian war which was the starting-point of the digression about Aspasia.

So far I have examined Plutarch's methods from the classical end, arguing that what he has said in the *Alexander*, 1 should not be taken to apply to all the *Lives*, and that it is in practice modified elsewhere. It is helpful, finally, to have a brief look at the history of biography from the modern end of the tradition, since in modern times biographers have used this important passage as part of their theorizing. Boswell refers to Plutarch in the introduction to his *Johnson*, using the remarks about 'minor events', etc., as a justification for his own procedure in biography.<sup>1</sup> It was natural to refer to the 'prince of biographers' in this way. But the subject was totally different from a Plutarchian theme; Johnson was not a 'politicus' and his life could not in any way be illuminated by *ἔργα* in the Plutarchian sense, as there were none. Consequently, the 'minor events', the conversation, and the 'jests' are the only evidence available. To put it another way, Boswell was independent of historical writing in a way that Plutarch was not. He developed biography in a different cultural context from that of Plutarch, whose *Lives* are a sturdy parasitic outgrowth from a historiography in decline. In the age of Boswell some of the important influences on biography were the stage and the novel;<sup>2</sup> the varieties of modern historiography were only just developing and did not flower until the nineteenth century. Besides, Johnson's idea that any man's life can be of interest; his thought that history, as told, is remote from the life of the ordinary man; these are points that imply a different audience from that of Plutarch, who chooses great subjects partly because he is eager to pick out the qualities needed by those who will enter public life.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Johnson* (O.U.P., 1953 edn.), pp. 23 f. For Johnson's own views on biography see esp. the *Rambler* No. 60 and the *Idler* No. 84, e.g. 'Few are engaged in such scenes as give them opportunities of growing wiser by the downfall of statesmen or the defeat of generals.' Plutarch's *Lives*, however, are catering for the 'few'. Another important difference is that in Johnson's view biography should be composed by

contemporaries.

<sup>2</sup> See esp. D. A. Stauffer, *The Art of Biography in Eighteenth Century England* i (1941), chs. 1, 6, and 7; and J. L. Clifford, *Biography as an Art* (1962).

<sup>3</sup> We should think of Sosius Senecio as the dedicatee and of men like Menemachos (*Mor.* 798A) as the readers who will benefit. On the *Præcepta gerendæ reipublicæ* see Th. Renoirte, *Les Conseils politiques de Plutarque*

Thus the classical scholar or ancient historian will, I suggest, remember that the statements made by Plutarch in *Alexander*, 1 do not apply ἀπλῶς to all his biographies; and the student of Boswell will appreciate that Boswell's appeal to Plutarch as a precedent was natural, but that, because his subject was not a public figure, he was bound to apply the method in ways that were not possible for Plutarch.

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(1951); cf. D. A. Russell, *Greece & Rome* xiii (1966), pp. 140-1. It follows that I doubt Gomme's remark (*Thuc.* i, p. 74 n.) that

'Plutarch thought that his readers would all be equally at home with his Greek and his Roman *Lives* . . . '.