

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE IN *THE LIVES OF THE TEN ORATORS**

I. INTRODUCTION

The fifty-fifth item in the corpus of Plutarch's *Moralia* is a compilation of biographical information on the lives of the ten canonical Attic orators. The provenance of this confection is mysterious, although critics unite in denying the ascription to Plutarch himself. Ziegler's description of it as 'sowohl durch die Nichtbeachtung des Hiats wie durch die ganze Darstellungsart sich als nicht plutarchisch erweisend'¹ is representative of the consensus.

This assessment is not unfair. However, in some ways the work's interest for the student of ancient biography is enhanced rather than diminished by its dissimilarity to the genuine productions of its putative author. The *Lives* offers the opportunity to examine the technique and interests of a non-Plutarchan writer of βίοι with a precision that is hard to parallel; one can analyse the author's relationship to his sources, his deployment of those sources, and the attitudes which these operations reveal.

For these purposes it is not crucial for us to know the real identity of our biographer, referred to as [Plutarch] throughout this study for the sake of convenience. One question worth tackling at the outset, however, is the question of whether 'he' was in fact a number of people. Attempts to explain the work's glaring inconsistencies and self-contradictions² have sometimes taken the form of postulating a group of authors. Two considerations are worth bearing in mind, however. The first is the brevity of the work. Its contradictions are in such close proximity to each other that the collaboration theory simply hypothesizes several incompetent authors instead of one, which is not very economical. The other is the observation that collaboration on any form of literary endeavour is very rarely attested in antiquity,³ while single authors of multiple short lives, such as Diogenes Laertius and Philostratus, are of course amply documented.

This does not, of course, rule out the possibility that the *Lives* consist of different strata of data laid down at various times by various different authors, perhaps as accretions to an original text. This hypothesis has appealed to many.⁴ None the less, the *Lives* do, as we shall see, display certain continuing themes and interests that, if

* I am indebted to Christopher Pelling for his numerous comments and constructive criticisms on this piece.

¹ K. Ziegler, 'Plutarchos 2', *RE* 21.1 (1951), 636–962, at 878.

² See pp. 219–220 below.

³ A. D. Momigliano, 'Pagan and Christian historiography in the fourth century A.D.', in A. D. Momigliano (ed.), *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (London, 1963), 79–99, at 96; his assertion there that the *Historia Augusta* itself claims to be a collaborative enterprise is refuted by R. Syme, *The Historia Augusta: A Call of Clarity* (Bonn, 1971), 23–4.

⁴ A. Schaefer, *Commentatio de Libro Vitarum Decem Oratorum* (Dresden, 1844), 37: 'censeo autem vitas decem oratorum non multo post Dionysii Halicarnassensis aetatem ab aliquo grammatico breviter esse descriptas in usum eorum, qui ad lectionem oratorum antiquorum accederent: post, quum in scholis rhetorum lectitari non desinerent, a compluribus hominibus doctis indoctisque temporibus diversis interpolatas et amplificatas esse.'

not evidence of a single author, are at least evidence of a single mind-set. These considerations do not have the force of proof, but do perhaps justify us in treating the *Lives* as the work of an individual, albeit one drawing extensively upon his predecessors.

In any event, the study proposed requires a preliminary examination of the work and its sources. Only thus is it possible to illuminate the traditions within which the author works and to note the ways in which the arrangement of data which Fowler decries as showing 'little variety' and 'little or no distinction between mere anecdotes and matters of real importance'⁵ can in fact prove to be very suggestive. After this excursion into *Quellenforschung*, [Plutarch]'s own contribution to the shaping of his narratives will be considered. Finally, this generalized treatment will be tested through a detailed investigation of the *Demosthenes*, where the existence of a biography by the real Plutarch and an abundance of other data for comparison make so precise an enquiry viable.

II. THE BIOGRAPHER AND HIS SOURCES

At first sight the *Lives of the Ten Orators* seems to yield itself up readily to source-criticism. Twenty-eight authors are explicitly cited in the course of the work.⁶ This readiness to cite authorities so explicitly is itself suggestive, as we shall see, but it does not tell the whole story. One soon discovers that elements of the *Lives* which bear no such citational warning-signs are dependent on sources which can nevertheless be traced. At 834C it is claimed that Andocides sailed with Glaucon to aid the Corcyreans in the run-up to the Peloponnesian War. This is most improbable, since the orator Andocides would still have been a child in 433/2.⁷ Moreover, an extant inscription suggests that Glaucon was actually accompanied by Metagenes and Dracontides.⁸ However, Thucydides' account of the episode⁹ likewise asserts that an Andocides, presumably the orator's grandfather, went on the expedition. Whether this is the result of a lapse by Thucydides himself or of interference early in the transmission of the text is not germane to the present enquiry. The important thing is that it is at least highly probable, as Fowler notes,¹⁰ that the error in Thucydides is the ultimate source of [Plutarch]'s blunder.¹¹

⁵ H. N. Fowler, *Plutarch's Moralia* 10 (London, 1936), 342.

⁶ The complete list of citations is as follows: Aeschines (at 840F), Antiphanes (845B), Aristophanes (836F), Caecilius (832E, 833C, 833E, 836A, 838D, 840B), Cratinus (833B), Ctesibios (844C), Deinarchus (843A), Demetrius of Magnes (847A), Demochares (840E), Demosthenes (836B, 840A, 840E, 841A, 848C), Dionysius (836A, 838D), Eratosthenes (847B), Hegesias of Magnes (844B), Heliodorus (849C), Hellanicus (834B), Hermippus (849C), Hyperides (849E), Lysias (833A), Philiscus (836C), Philochorus (846B, 847A), Plato the philosopher (836C), Plato the comic playwright (833C), Satyrus (847A), Strattis (836F), Theopompus the historian (833A), Theopompus the comic playwright (839F), Timocles (845B), and Xenophon (832C, 845E). Cratippus is cited at 834D, but the passage is probably interpolated.

⁷ Since he can plausibly claim to have behaved νεώτητι in 415 (Andoc. 2.7; see further D. Macdowell, *Andokides: On the Mysteries* [Oxford, 1962], 2, n. 8). The voyage is, however, consistent with [Plutarch]'s belief that the orator was born in 468/7 (835A).

⁸ *IG* I³ 364. Note that some conjectural supplementation is required, however.

⁹ Thuc. 1.51.4.

¹⁰ Fowler (n. 5), 355, n. d.

¹¹ Jacoby (*FGH* 323a F24 notes) uses [Plutarch] to argue that the elder Andocides was present. He suggests that καὶ Ἀνδοκίδης ὁ Λεωγόρου in Thucydides is 'an interpolation from the Vita of Andokides, which (as Ps. Plutarch shows) knows of Andokides' participation in the expedition ... such an interpolation is easily conceivable, for the text of Thucydides was

Other unacknowledged debts are betrayed by similarity in wording. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for example, is cited by name only twice in the text. However, the exactness with which [Plutarch] echoes some passages of Dionysius is too great to be the result of coincidence. The description of Lysias' education furnishes a good example.¹² In similar vein, Ofenloch argued for numerous unacknowledged borrowings from Caecilius.¹³

So much is unsurprising. A further query then presents itself. How much of this impressive plethora of sources has our author actually read? Is it possible to discern cases where the author's erudition, such as it is, is demonstrably borrowed?

Some have attempted to bypass this problem by postulating a single preceding work of which the extant *Lives* is a very careless and superficial summary, a 'history' also plagiarized in a later form by Photius to put together codices 259–68 of the *Bibliotheca*.¹⁴ It will be noted that such a hypothesis, even if it were true, would not go far towards accounting for the curious characteristics of the *Lives*, since it merely creates the problem of explaining the curious characteristics of the *Ur-Lives* from which they are supposed to derive. A more pressing problem, however, lies in testing this sort of proposition in the first place. By what criteria is it possible to determine whether references to earlier authors have been ransacked from a preceding biographer?

One tempting line of attack would use the errors and omissions detectable in the *Lives* that would have been rectified through judicious use of the full texts of the authors so airily cited. For instance, [Plutarch] twice cites the Athidographer Philochorus (846B, 847A). However, diligent use of his *Atthis* would have resolved at least one of the problems which faced the biographer, as a passage of Philochorus¹⁵ confirms that Andocides was indeed *Κυδαθήναος* by deme affiliation and not *Θορεύς*, which is the alternative that [Plutarch] gives at 834B. If the biographer had possessed a full text of Philochorus, he should theoretically have been able to resolve this and similar issues.

The problem with this line of thought lies in its assumption that if [Plutarch] had access to an unexcerpted source, he may reasonably be supposed to have made the

in the hands of the rhetors who were particularly interested in Andokides'. If this were true, [Plutarch] would be using a source independent of Thucydides. Note, however, that this does not explain why Thucydides fails to mention Metagenes or Dracontides, that the only evidence that Jacoby cites for the existence of this 'Vita of Andokides' is the orator's entry in the *Suda* (which does not claim to come from a biography and cites only Hellanicus), and that the 'rhetors' who were so ready to interpolate a reference to an alleged piece of diplomatic spear-carrying by their hero's grandfather oddly failed to draw attention to the appearance of the man himself at Thuc. 6.60.2, where the manuscripts preserve the anonymity of *εἰς τῶν δεδεμένων*.

¹² Compare Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 1 (*συνεπαιδευθη τοῖς ἐπιφανεστάτοις Ἀθηναίων*) with [Plut.] 835C (*συνεπαιδευετο τοῖς ἐπιφανεστάτοις Ἀθηναίων*).

¹³ E. Ofenloch (ed.), *Caecilii Calactini Fragmenta* (Leipzig, 1907), p. xxii: 'neque dubium est, quin aliis locis, ubi Caecilii nomen non adscriptum est, tamen is rhetor in usum vocatus sit'. Cf. also p. xxiii.

¹⁴ For example, W. Treadgold, *The Nature of the Bibliotheca of Photius* (Washington DC, 1980), 48. The elaborate hypothesis springs from the conviction that Photius was incapable of originating the stylistic comments which are in the *Bibliotheca*, but not [Plutarch]. This evaluation of Photius' capacities is unduly pessimistic; cf. N. G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (London, 1983), 103–4, for a more balanced assessment. R. M. Smith, 'Photius on the Ten Orators', *GRBS* 33 (1992), 159–89, argues, surely rightly, that Photius used [Plutarch] as a basis but was himself responsible for rearrangement and supplementation. For more on codices 259–68 of the *Bibliotheca* and their usefulness in illuminating [Plutarch], see below.

¹⁵ *FGrH* 328 F149.

comprehensive use of it that a modern scholar would. Examination of the biographer's methodology, however, reveals that such an assumption is perhaps unduly sanguine, as [Plutarch] cannot in fact be relied upon to spot that different data at his command contradict each other. Thus he is capable of asserting in the *Isocrates* that Demosthenes was unable to pay the rhetorician's fee (837D) and then, later in the same life, that Isocrates *πολίτην ... οὐδέποτε εἰσέπραξε μισθόν* (838F), though neither statement bears the hazard-lights of a *ὡς τινές φασι* vel sim.; it is noteworthy that the version of this life in Photius' *Bibliotheca* (codex 260) keeps the story about Demosthenes but silently omits the claim that monies were never demanded from a fellow citizen.

[Plutarch]'s failure coherently to organize the divergent strands of biographical lore with which he is confronted makes this particular mode of source-criticism rather unprofitable. Other modes of analysis, by contrast, work somewhat better. One particular fact which seems to have evaded comment in discussions of the *Lives* is that their explicit citations from other authors are very unevenly distributed. For example, three of the named sources enumerated in footnote 4 (namely Lysias, Theopompus the historian, and Cratinus) are found together in the space of a few lines in the *Antiphon* 833A–B but are cited nowhere else in the *Lives*.¹⁶ By contrast, the comparatively lengthy *Lycurgus*, which goes into great detail concerning the eponymous orator's benefactions, personal habits, and political career, cites only one source.¹⁷ The *Isaeus* too quotes only one source, but since that life is only eighteen lines long, this is not so striking.

Further facts of interest attend upon this distribution. When one looks at the clustered citations in the *Antiphon*, for example, one is struck by their precision; views are attributed to *Λυσίας ἐν τῷ ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἀντιφώντος θυγατρὸς λόγῳ*, *Θεόπομπος ἐν τῇ πεντεκαίδεκάτῃ τῶν Φιλιππικῶν*, and *Κρατῖνος ἐν Πυτίνῃ*. Elsewhere the citations are much less exact: of the six references to speeches by Demosthenes, for instance, only one is allocated to a specific oration (namely, the *Against Neaira* at 836B).¹⁸

The immediate solution to this divergence of practice that springs to mind is, of course, that the passage in the *Antiphon* is excerpted from a source. As indicated above, however, this solution, which in this case is almost certainly correct, raises as many problems as it solves. Why does [Plutarch] use this erudite and diligent source for a short stretch of the *Antiphon* but not, if his practice in the rest of the *Lives* is anything to go by, anywhere else?

Illumination is best sought, perhaps, through consideration of the unique context in which these citational pyrotechnics take place. The biographer invokes these authorities not for a straight piece of biographical narrative, or even to compare differing versions of the same event. When the authorities conflict on a simple question of fact, as in the case of the divergent versions of the death of Demosthenes at 847A–B, [Plutarch] may line up the dissenting sources,¹⁹ but he does not allude to specific works. Rather, the *Antiphon* passage tackles the more fundamental questions of the *chronology* of the orator's demise and the identities of the proliferation of *Antiphons* who still dog efforts to map the intellectual history of the fifth century B.C.

¹⁶ Schaefer (n. 4), 31, notes the oddity that Theopompus is quoted for the *Antiphon* but not for the *Aeschines*, *Lycurgus*, *Demosthenes*, or *Hyperides*, to which the *Philippica* would have been more obviously relevant.

¹⁷ 843A: *περὶ δὲ τῆς κηδείας ταύτης λέγει ὁ Δείναρχος ἐν τῷ κατὰ Πιστίου*.

¹⁸ C. P. Jones, *Plutarch and Rome* (Oxford, 1971), 83, claims that such precision is 'a practice that Plutarch seems to follow only when he has direct access to a work'.

¹⁹ In this case, Philochorus, Satyrus, and Eratosthenes.

Now, explicit discussion of chronological or prosopographical cruxes is very rare in the grand tradition of political, *res gestae* history that Jacoby dubbed *Zeitgeschichte*. Thucydides and his successors may well have taken an interest in resolving such problems to their own satisfaction, but it is unusual for them to 'show their working'.²⁰ Nor does the focus on an individual enjoined by the genre of biography *per se* entail a commitment to the detailed working-out of such problems; Plutarch's attitude to chronological conundrums at *Solon* 27.1 might charitably be described as breezy.²¹

One should not forget, however, that there were in antiquity certain more obscure genres of historical writing, set apart a little from political historiography and biography *à la* Plutarch, in which such discussions found a more prominent position. One thinks of the Atthidographers, whose annalistic format made a concern for correct dating fundamental to their enterprise. The *Vita Aristotelis Marciana*, for example, preserves Philochorus' sensible contribution to a heated debate over the chronology of that philosopher's career.²²

In similar fashion, the identification of rogue bearers of the subject's name was a staple characteristic of the sort of 'antiquarian' biography to which the genuine works of Plutarch form so signal a contrast. Diogenes Laertius, for instance, regularly catalogues homonyms at the conclusions to his lives of the philosophers.²³ A later example of this practice is to be found in the identification of *Θουκυδίδαι πολλοί* in Marcellinus.²⁴

The practitioners of these 'antiquarian' modes of historical writing characteristically demonstrate a far greater readiness to cite chapter and verse than their colleagues elsewhere in ancient historiography. Writers of *res gestae* history are disinclined for the most part to specify the titles, let alone the book numbers, of other texts to which they allude, though exceptions to this rule are by no means unexampled.²⁵ Plutarch himself, although perfectly prepared to specify the titles of treatises to which he alludes,²⁶ appears only once to assign one of his quotations from Aeschines or Demosthenes to a particular speech.²⁷

Hence, both [Plutarch]'s uncharacteristic citational precision with regard to the speeches of his orators, and the sort of discussion on which these citations are brought to bear, suggest a source in the antiquarian tradition. It is thus possible to appreciate that the style, vocabulary, and arrangement of data in our author's handling

²⁰ There are, of course, exceptions: contrast Thuc. 6.54–5 and Polyb. 12.4a. Christopher Pelling remarks that the argument about the genealogy of the Tarquinii at Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.7 is in the same category. It will be noted that when such discussions do crop up in *Zeitgeschichte*, it is usually in the context of assessments of the (in)competence of other historians.

²¹ This passage should not, however, be taken as representing Plutarch's unvarying stance on these matters; see C. B. R. Pelling, 'Truth and fiction in Plutarch's lives', in id., *Plutarch and History: Eighteen Studies* (London, 2002), 143–70, at 162, n. 3, and the passages there cited. See also T. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford, 1999), 312–14.

²² *FGrH* 328 F223.

²³ For example, seven Aristotles at 5.33.

²⁴ Marcellin. *Vita Thucydidis* 28–9.

²⁵ Appian, for example, occasionally gives the titles of works to which he is alluding (*App. Celt.* 1.8, *Syr.* 63.333, *BCiv.* 2.79.330). He also alludes to particular episodes in the text of Homer, although he does not give book numbers (*BCiv.* 5.116.484), a not uncommon way of referencing Homer in antiquity (cf. O. Taplin, *Homeric Soundings* [Oxford, 1992], 286).

²⁶ Plut. *Sol.* 11 gives some good examples. Note that whereas Plutarch is there precise about the provenance of his allusions to Aristotle and Alcmaeon, he does not specify the speech of Aeschines which he also mentions.

²⁷ Namely, the *Against Meidias* at Plut. *Alc.* 10.2.

of a particular theme can be every bit as useful in exploring his use of sources as an explicit citation.

This insight can be generalized and applied to different passages. For example, no reader of the *Lives* can fail to be struck by the appearance of certain words which the author uses in senses uncommon in standard Greek usage. Note in particular the uses of the verbs ἀκμάζω and παρατείνω in describing the lives of the orators. Both verbs are perfectly unexceptionable, but [Plutarch]'s deployment of the former in particular is striking; in the works of the real Plutarch, the word retains its connotations of flourishing vigour, whereas our author sometimes uses it to mean simply 'was alive and neither very young nor very old'.²⁸

A more unusual characteristic of [Plutarch]'s use of these verbs is a seemingly idiosyncratic fondness for the perfect tense where the context does not seem to demand it; ἤκμακε μὲν κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον ἅμα Σωκράτει (835A), παρατέτακεν ἕως καταλύσεως τῆς δημοκρατίας (832F). That this usage disturbed Photius, a man who prided himself upon his feeling for Attic idiom, is shown by the normalization of these tenses in the parallel passages of the *Bibliotheca*; the former becomes συνακμάσαι [rather than συνηκμακέναι] δὲ Σωκράτει τῷ φιλοσόφῳ λέγεται²⁹ and the latter παρέτεινε [rather than παρατέτακε] δὲ τὸν βίον ἕως τῆς ... καταλύσεως τῆς δημοκρατίας.³⁰

What explanation is there for these somewhat unusual usages? The problem is resolved when one realizes that for [Plutarch] the principal use of these verbs is in fixing chronologies. In this sense ἀκμάζω is common in Diogenes Laertius. Diogenes drew upon the chronological tables of Apollodorus, and it is instructive to note that the only parallel for [Plutarch]'s use of παρατείνω in the perfect tense to emerge from a TLG search of all the classical and Byzantine Greek historians is in a quotation from that chronographer in the works of Clement of Alexandria.³¹

It is therefore tempting to speculate that the grammatical oddity which troubled the sensibilities of Photius is a characteristic usage of chronographical scholarship, which [Plutarch], lacking the inclination or capacity to recast his sources into an entirely homogeneous whole, faithfully preserves. Now it becomes clear why our author's lack of stylistic pretensions makes the *Lives* so valuable as a document in the study of ancient biography. The 'pick and mix' texture of the work is the result not merely of recording different versions of events, but of the author's utilization of different *modes* of writing about the past in his sources, which, differing in style, diction, and arrangement of material as well as in subject-matter, are responsible for the curiously rag-bag quality in the finished product.

This is a large claim, and one best illustrated by means of an example. [Plutarch], while unobservant, as we have already noted, with regard to contradictions in his subject matter, is as resistant as most classical authors to the idea of repeating himself.³² When he is compelled for the purposes of explanation to repeat something that he has already covered, he usually remembers to insert a ὡς προεῖρηται.³³ In one instance, however, this resistance is notable by its absence. [Plutarch] twice informs

²⁸ This age qualification is patent at 845E, where it is remarked that Xenophon knew Demosthenes ἡ ἀρχόμενον ἢ ἀκμάζοντα.

²⁹ Phot. *Bibl.* codex 261.

³⁰ Phot. *Bibl.* codex 259.

³¹ *FGrH* 244 F68C: Ἀπολλόδωρος δὲ κατὰ τὴν πεντηκοστὴν ὀλυμπιάδα γενόμενον παρατετακέναι ἄχρι Δαρείου καὶ Κύρου χρόνων.

³² This applies only to material covered in the same life, however, since [Plutarch] never gives cross references to different lives.

³³ For example, Isocrates' adoption of Aphareus (839B) and Aeschines' acquittal (841A).

the reader that Lysias was born in the archonship of Philocles, but the repetition of this datum contains no reference back to the first.³⁴ There is, to be sure, a good reason for the repetition of Lysias' alleged year of birth at this point. [Plutarch] has just set out conflicting reports on the orator's age at his death, and it is therefore logical to insert a reference to his year of birth. The inconcinnity between the two passages remains, however,³⁵ and calls for explanation.

I would tentatively argue that this lapse is the result of a clash between different ways of structuring a biography. When [Plutarch] introduces birth-years at all, their position in the life is not fixed; they are not regularly found at any particular point in the narrative. In the sort of antiquarian biography of which Diogenes is the most voluminous extant representative, however, information about the subject's 'dates' does indeed have a regular spot; it is usually in a position immediately after the narrative of the subject's notable deeds/sayings and before a discussion of their works. It will be noted that this is exactly the point at which the anomalous second notice of the orator's birth is found in [Plutarch]'s *Lysias*, just after the story of the orator's life and before the catalogue of his speeches. A plausible hypothesis for the repetition therefore suggests itself, that the 'antiquarian biography' approach being used at this point in the life tends to put the birth-date in a different location from the genre used earlier on, so leading the impercipient author to repeat himself when he switches between the two.

[Plutarch]'s failure to draw attention to his repetition is therefore somewhat akin to a loose thread, a spot where the incommensurability of different ways of writing biography is laid bare. Like all loose threads, it asks to be pulled. Closer study of the texture of the narrative of the *Lysias* before the second reference to the orator's birth reveals something that, as the examples above indicated, tends to be significant in this author, a stylistic quirk or focus of interest which the rest of the *Lives* does not manifest. In the case of the *Antiphon*, this was an unparalleled cluster of rigorous citations. In the *Lysias*, by contrast, the anomalous phenomenon is a predilection for archon-years.

Archon-years are by no means a rarity in the *Lives*. Outside the *Lysias*, eighteen are given in the body of the text,³⁶ and a further three in the appended documents.³⁷ Nor is the mere quantity of archon-years in the *Lysias*³⁸ unique; there are seven in the *Demosthenes*, although one should note that the former life is approximately 35 per cent of the latter's length. The striking characteristic of the use of archon-years in the *Lysias* is rather that they are deployed in tight chronological sequence to provide a clear temporal framework for the principal events of Lysias' life, namely his birth, his removal to Sybaris, the accusation that he harboured Attic sympathies, and his arrival in Athens. This contrasts strongly with the more haphazard application of archon-years elsewhere in the work,³⁹ and should therefore provoke speculation as to what it signifies.⁴⁰

³⁴ 835C: γενόμενος δ' Ἀθήνησιν ἐπὶ Φιλοκλέους ἀρχοντος; 836A: γεννηθῆναι δέ φασιν ἐπὶ Φιλοκλέους ἀρχοντος.

³⁵ Note too that what is presented as a plain fact at 835C becomes a more cautious γεννηθῆναι δέ φασιν at 836A.

³⁶ At 833D, 835A, 836F, 837E, 839D (bis), 842F, 843C, 844A, 844C, 845D (bis), 845E (bis), 847D (bis), 850B, 850D.

³⁷ At 851D, 851E, and 851F.

³⁸ There are archon years in the *Lysias* at 835C, 835D (ter), 835E, and 836A; there is also a reference to ἀναρχίας τῆς πρὸ Εὐκλείδου at 835F.

³⁹ Contrast, for example, the rather chaotic application of archon years at 845E.

⁴⁰ Ofenloch (n. 13), p. xxv, noting that the whole of this life 'optima coniunctione verborum et sententiarum continua est', was inclined to attribute it all to a lost *Life of Lysias* by Caecilius.

An answer is not far to seek, as a passage in Diogenes Laertius' life of Aristotle adopts a mode of narration strikingly similar to that which is found in the *Lysias*.⁴¹ Once again the key stages in the protagonist's life and, above all, his movements from one place to another are neatly structured around archon-years; Aristotle's migrations to Mytilene, Hermias, and Philip all receive such a date. Diogenes, however, is obliging enough to preface this account with the words *φησὶ δ' Ἀπολλόδωρος ἐν Χρονικοῖς*.⁴² The similarity in the focus of narration and the packaging of the data, therefore, makes it very likely that [Plutarch]'s aberrant conglomeration of archon-years derives from the characteristic concerns and style of Apollodoran chronography. 'As always, material determines treatment.'⁴³

Note too, at the end of this little flare of chronological concern, a flicker of interest in the sort of feat of synchronization that appealed to the chronographers and those whom they influenced:⁴⁴ the reader is assured that the aged Lysias saw the youthful Demosthenes. It is, of course, wildly improbable that the contemporary sources for Lysias' old age saw fit to chronicle all his meetings with the youth of Athens on the off chance that one of the latter might later attain eminence. The comment stems rather from the 'since *x* died *then*, and *y* was born *then*, *x* would have been able to meet *y*' reasoning characteristic of a chronologer with an interest in cultural history. Finally, the conjecture that this extended chronographical lore is limited to the person of Lysias⁴⁵ is confirmed by the fact that on the two occasions in other lives when [Plutarch] gives precise relative ages (namely '*x* was *y* years younger/older than *z*'), Lysias always seems to have been included as the other term, though it should be stressed that the considerable textual problems in both of these passages make this evidence rather insecure.⁴⁶

This survey of [Plutarch]'s relationship to the sources on which he depends has been of necessity very selective, focusing only on a number of paradigmatic passages. Examination of every citation of a preceding author and every passage where a particular predecessor may be inferred would have swollen this study to unmanageable proportions. This enforced brevity has not, however, prevented certain themes from emerging.

⁴¹ Diog. Laert. 5.9 10.

⁴² =FGrH 244 F38A.

⁴³ R. Syme, *The Augustan Aristocracy* (Oxford, 1986), preface.

⁴⁴ Cf. Ap. Rhod. 1.553–8, where Chiron brings the infant Achilles to see off the *Argo* on its voyage. The exercise continues to appeal; cf. the chronological chain back to Charles II at C. M. Bowra, *Memories: 1898–1939* (Cambridge, 1966), 138, and the role played by a very young John Webster in the film *Shakespeare In Love*.

⁴⁵ 'Extended' should be emphasized here; we have already seen traces of chronographical vocabulary elsewhere in the *Lives*.

⁴⁶ 835A [of Andocides]: ὥστ' εἶναι πρεσβύτερον αὐτὸν Λυσίου ἑτεσὶ που ἑκατόν; 836F [of Isocrates]: (νεώτερος μὲν Λυσίου) δυοὶ καὶ εἴκοσι ἐτεσὶ, πρεσβύτερος δὲ Πλάτωνος ἑπτὰ. In 835A the manuscripts read ἑκατόν, which even [Plutarch] would have recognized as false; the name or the number must be corrupt, and critics have rightly preferred to emend the latter (δέκα Westermann; ὀκτώ Taylor). The problem at 836F is more serious. The text in the manuscripts appears lacunose and the word Λυσίου is only a supplement (proposed by Bernardakis, following Wolf). It is, however, a likely one. πρεσβύτερος δὲ in the manuscripts hints at the loss of a preceding νεώτερος μὲν; Λυσίου would provide a neat explanation for the omission, which would have been caused by the homoearecton with Λυσιμάχου Μυρρινουσίου in the preceding line, and it is consistent with the entire ancient tradition to claim that Isocrates was twenty two years younger than Lysias. Whether Lysias was *actually* born in 459/8 is a moot point, but one not germane to the present discussion; see C. Carey, *Lysias: Selected Speeches* (Cambridge, 1989), p. ix, for the arguments.

Above all, the folly of lumping our author's sources together under the commodious designation of 'the biographical tradition' has become plain. The texture of the *Lives* is disconcerting not because it reflects simple disagreements on matters of fact between its sources; such problems are after all present in the genuine works of Plutarch, if not in such opulent profusion. Rather, [Plutarch]'s failure to forge a homogeneous stylistic whole presents the reader with a promiscuous welter of different *ways* of writing about the past, from the epigraphy underlying the *Lycurgus* to the chronographical mode underlying part of the *Lysias*. It is this that produces the chaotic effect, and makes the *Lives of the Ten Orators* perhaps the single most compelling demonstration of the wisdom of Momigliano's insistence on the Protean character of early Greek biography.⁴⁷

However, the methodology which this study has deployed so far risks giving a somewhat partial picture of the *Lives*. Stress has been laid on the author's unwillingness or inability to impose stylistic uniformity, and the ways in which this enables the careful reader to lay bare the nature of his sources. Yet [Plutarch] is not altogether a thing of shreds and patches; it is perhaps possible to see places where his own agenda and consistent interests are evident in his management of his material. The next section of this study will therefore focus on some of these passages.

III. THE LIVES OF THE TEN ORATORS ON THE HISTORY AND PRACTICE OF RHETORIC

The heterogeneous character of the *Lives* may seem to make reference to their 'interests', as if they were consistent, hard to justify. Nevertheless, two test cases indicate instances where the author's own views on the nature of the past and the generic pressures imposed by the sort of format that he has adopted make such a conclusion more compelling.

As in the previous section, it proves useful to work up to wider conclusions through study of a problematic passage. In this case, an interesting point of departure is afforded by the comments which our author appends to the claim that Antiphon was the first to write forensic speeches for those in need of them, ὥσπερ τινές φασι. [Plutarch] then (832D) tries to back up this assertion⁴⁸ with the observation that there are no forensic speeches extant from the pens of either those who lived before Antiphon or τῶν κατ' αὐτόν ... οὐ Θερμοκλέους οὐκ Ἀριστείδου οὐ Περικλέους, because there was not yet any custom of speech-writing, διὰ τὸ μηδέπω ἐν ἔθει τοῦ συγγραφῆναι εἶναι.

The statement itself is unremarkable. The terms of reference that it implies, however, give pause for thought. The problem is that the threesome of Themistocles, Aristides, and Pericles is at once too ample and too restricted in its compass to have a pellucid effect. On the one hand it is disconcerting to find the obvious duo of Themistocles and Aristides supplemented by the much younger Pericles, while on the other, one wonders why the list stops where it does. Pericles was not the only skilled persuader at large in Athens in the second half of the fifth century B.C. What about Cleon, τῷ ... δήμῳ παρὰ πολὺ ἐν τῷ τότε πιθανώτατος,⁴⁹

⁴⁷ A. D. Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 88.

⁴⁸ γοῦν in the first sentence of 832D is used 'to introduce a statement which is, *pro tanto*, evidence for a preceding statement' (J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* [Oxford, 1954²], 451).

⁴⁹ Thuc. 3.36.6.

or the demagogues who succeeded him and were handled at unflattering length, it would appear, in the tenth book of the *Philippica* of Theopompus?⁵⁰

The significance of this passage should not be blown out of proportion. [Plutarch] is not, after all, suggesting that this is an exhaustive list of eloquent speakers active in the Athens of the fifth century. He just needs a few examples of predecessors and/or contemporaries of Antiphon whom one might have expected, given their oratorical prowess, to have contested his forensic primacy.

One might, therefore, be tempted to put down this passage to authorial whim. Such a response is perhaps, however, a little precipitate. I would tentatively suggest that what the reader encounters here is a case of the usually diffident author attempting to impose a structure on the recalcitrant material at his disposal. To be more precise, [Plutarch]'s sense of the appropriate way in which to begin the sort of enterprise that he is undertaking is clashing with the stubbornly static Canon of the Ten that he has inherited.

The date at which the Canon of the Ten Orators came into being has been keenly disputed, as have the reasons for its creation. For the purposes of this discussion, however, it is necessary to note only two salient points. Firstly, the Canon was in all probability in place before the time of our author (whenever that may have been) since it appears that Quintilian was aware of it.⁵¹ Secondly, it is most unlikely that it was intended to map the development of Attic oratory from a diachronic perspective. Whether those who were allotted places in the pantheon won them through the perceived purity of their Attic diction or a more general criterion of 'greatness' remains a matter for conjecture, but it seems highly improbable that the idea was to give a sense of the historical development of the genre, any more than *The Nation's Favourite Love Poems* seeks to plot the metamorphosis of erotic verse from *amour courtois* to 'Celia, Celia'.

Now consider the two other famous collections of potted Greek biographies which are still extant: Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Philosophers* and the *Lives of the Sophists* written by Flavius Philostratus. It will be noted that each of these enterprises opens with an account of the discipline of which its subjects were practitioners. Thus the opening sentence of Diogenes asserts that τὸ τῆς φιλοσοφίας ἔργον ἐνιοὶ φασιν ἀπὸ βαρβάρων ἄρξαι,⁵² and the biographer then goes on to identify Greek originators of the discipline in the persons of Musaeus and Linus.⁵³ Philostratus in similar vein sketches out an early relationship between σοφιστικὴ ῥητορικὴ and philosophy,⁵⁴ and then identifies Gorgias and Aeschines as the originators of the two types of rhetoric.⁵⁵

These passages illuminate [Plutarch]'s problem. The generic propriety of the 'potted biography' format, antiquity's closest approach to what we would call cultural history, impels him to delineate at the outset of his enterprise the origins of the discipline practised by his subjects and to isolate its originator(s). He is immediately faced, however, with the difficulty that Antiphon, the first of the canonical Attic orators, cannot be regarded as the πρῶτος εὐρετής of oratory, which was clearly in

⁵⁰ *FGrH* 115 FF85 100. This capacious catalogue seems to have stretched from Themistocles to Eubulus.

⁵¹ For analysis of the relevant passages, see I. Worthington, 'The Canon of the Ten Attic Orators', in I. Worthington (ed.), *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action* (London and New York, 1994), 244–63, at 249–59.

⁵² Diog. Laert. 1.1.

⁵³ Diog. Laert. 1.3.

⁵⁴ Philostr. *VS* 480.

⁵⁵ Philostr. *VS* 481.

place long before. He therefore has to resort to something that Antiphon *was* the first to do in order to give him some reason for starting his coverage of oratory where he does; hence the emphasis on the orator's unprecedented composition of forensic speeches for the assistance of needy litigants.

This explains why [Plutarch]'s coverage of this particular innovation is so explicit and exhaustive, when his treatment of later departures from previous practice, such as Isaeus' introduction of *σχήματα*,⁵⁶ is much more cursory in its coverage. The drawback of this piece of ingenuity is that the reader is thereby given a misleading impression of the focus of the coming biographies. Diogenes uses a discussion of the origins of philosophy to introduce lives of philosophers and Philostratus a discussion of the genesis of sophistic rhetoric to introduce lives of sophists. By this logic, one would expect [Plutarch]'s initial emphasis on the development of *forensic* oratory to lead to the biographies of *forensic* orators. The *Lives*, however, shows no such inclination to privilege *δικανικοί λόγοι*, or any type of rhetoric, over any of the other types.⁵⁷ The tension between the inherited canon's synchronic gallery of merit and the 'potted biography' genre's emphasis on diachronic development has forced our author into a not entirely successful effort to square the circle, hence the somewhat incongruous nature of this passage.

It is instructive to contrast Cicero's reflections on Attic oratory at *Brutus* 26–7. Untrammelled by [Plutarch]'s cramping canon, the Roman orator is free to people his stage with rather more players and allude to the inferred rhetorical prowess of Pisistratus, Solon, and Cleisthenes,⁵⁸ all of whom our author lumps anonymously together as *τῶν ... προ αὐτοῦ γενομένων*, as well as commenting on the skills of Cleon, Alcibiades, Critias, and Theramenes.⁵⁹ For [Plutarch], this strategy would be more problematic, as extensive coverage of orators outside the canon points up the rather arbitrary nature of its selection criteria when viewed from the diachronic perspective enjoined by cultural history.

The curious passage at the start of the *Antiphon* gives a demonstration that the 'potted biography' format of the *Lives* is not just a capacious bag into which assorted data can be flung willy-nilly; the form exerts its own influence on the way in which data and arguments are presented. It is also possible, perhaps, to detect our author in occasional efforts to impose his own order on the data that he has inherited. This is most evident in his treatment of the nature of rhetoric itself.

It is a central paradox of the *Lives of the Ten Orators* that the author of a work concerned with some of the most stylish and elegant writers of Attic prose does not in fact seem to be very interested in matters of style. [Plutarch] does deliver short summaries of the stylistic features of some of the ten,⁶⁰ reports Isocrates' alleged derivation of his *Panegyricus* from Gorgias and Lysias (837F), and shows an interest in matters of *actio* such as the linguistic mannerisms of Demosthenes (845B) and the vocal qualities of Isocrates (837A) and Aeschines (840E). However, some of the orators (notably Lycurgus) escape stylistic evaluation

⁵⁶ 839F: *πρῶτος δὲ καὶ σχηματίζειν ἤρξατο καὶ τρέπειν ἐπὶ τὸ πολιτικὸν τὴν διάνοιαν.*

⁵⁷ Thus [Plutarch] is equally accommodating to, for example, Lysias' speech at Olympia (836D), Isocrates' epideictic extravaganzas (837F), and Hyperides' skill at symbouleutic rhetoric (849D).

⁵⁸ Cic. *Brut.* 27: *opinio est ... Pisistratum et ... Solonem posteaque Cleisthenem multum valuisse dicendo.*

⁵⁹ Cic. *Brut.* 28: *Cleonem ... eloquentem constat fuisse; 29: huic aetati suppare Alcibiades Critias Theramenes.*

⁶⁰ Antiphon at 832E, Andocides at 835B, Lysias at 836B, Isaeus at 839E, and Deinarchus at 850E.

altogether, and even the characterizations that are included have some curious aspects; while that of Andocides, for example, is expressed in wholly unexceptionable critical vocabulary,⁶¹ that of Antiphon concerns itself almost entirely with *inventio* and is couched in very peculiar terms.⁶² Again, a curious fluctuation in our author's use of his sources is evident here; while a sentence from Dionysius' essay on Isaeus is repeated almost word for word in order to define the orator's resemblance to Lysias,⁶³ the critic's examination of the stylistic qualities of Isocrates in his essay on that orator is not used at all. It is once more helpful to consider the reaction of Photius, whose interest in matters of style was keenly developed.⁶⁴ The future patriarch, clearly feeling [Plutarch]'s coverage of this topic to be jejune, supplemented the stylistic analyses extensively.⁶⁵

[Plutarch]'s disinclination to spend much time on analysis of the stylistic qualities of his subjects is reflected, perhaps, in his general lack of interest in the notion of style as an expression of character, an idea well established in ancient literature,⁶⁶ and one that might well be expected to have appealed to a biographer.⁶⁷ More significant for the present purposes, however, is his resistance to the attempts enshrined in one of his most important sources to deconstruct the opposition, in modern parlance, between philosophy and rhetoric. The most explicit example of this idea is the preface to the discussions of the ancient orators written by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, where the critic hails the return of ἡ . . . ἀρχαία καὶ φιλόσοφος ῥητορική, as opposed to the inferior variant which arose ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Μακεδόνα τελευτῆς.⁶⁸ The means by which rhetoric can be made 'philosophical' are made clear in Dionysius' *Isocrates*.⁶⁹

[Plutarch]'s views on the relationship between philosophy and rhetoric, however, seem to have been rather more old-fashioned, in that he appears to embrace the standard division between the contemplative ivory-tower nature of philosophy and the political engagement characteristic of rhetoric. He is perfectly prepared, it is true, to note that some considered Aeschines, Demosthenes, Lysurgus, and Hyperides to have been imitators or students of Plato.⁷⁰ For all except Aeschines, however, he is quick to introduce the alternative mentor Isocrates, and the phraseology of the *Lysurgus* passage in particular shows that he views philosophy and rhetoric not as fundamentally indissoluble but rather as distinct and discrete paths of life.⁷¹

⁶¹ 835B: ἔστι δ' ἀπλοῦς καὶ ἀκατάσκευος ἐν τοῖς λόγοις, ἀφελὴς τε καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος. That ἀκατάσκευος and ἀφελὴς go naturally together in this sort of critical vocabulary is shown by their proximity at Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 39: [of the less elevated style] ἀποιήτως δέ πως καὶ ἀφελῶς . . . κατεσκευάσθαι βούλεται, παράδειγμα ποιουμένη τὴν ἀκατάσκευον φύσιν.

⁶² 832E; I am very grateful to Professor D. A. Russell for discussing this passage with me.

⁶³ Dion. Hal. *Isaeus* 2: εἰ μὴ τις ἔμπειρος πάντων τῶν ἀνδρῶν εἶη . . . οὐκ ἂν διαγνοίη ῥαδίως πολλοὺς τῶν λόγων, ὁποτέρου τῶν ῥητόρων εἰσίν. Cf. [Plut.] 839E.

⁶⁴ Wilson (n. 14), 103.

⁶⁵ R. M. Smith, 'Photius on the Ten Orators', *GRBS* 33 (1992), 159–89, and id., 'A hitherto unrecognized fragment of Caecilius', *AJP* 60 (1994), 3–7, deal at length with Photius' additions to [Plutarch]. I am indebted to Dr D. Innes for drawing my attention to these articles.

⁶⁶ The classic treatment is in Sen. *Ep.* 114.

⁶⁷ See below for its use in Plutarch's *Demosthenes*.

⁶⁸ Dion. Hal. *Concerning the Orators of Old* 1.

⁶⁹ For example, Dion. Hal. *Isoc.* 4: καὶ εἰ τις ἐπιτηδεύει τὴν ἀληθινὴν φιλοσοφίαν, μὴ τὸ θεωρητικὸν αὐτῆς μόνον ἀγαπᾶν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ πρακτικόν . . . παρακελευσαίμην ἂν αὐτῷ τὴν ἐκείνου τοῦ ῥήτορος μιμῆσθαι προαίρεσιν.

⁷⁰ 840B (Aeschines); 841B (Lysurgus); 844B–C (Demosthenes); 848D (Hyperides).

⁷¹ 841B: ἀκροατὴς δὲ γενόμενος Πλάτωνος . . . τὰ πρῶτα ἐφιλοσόφησεν· εἶτα καὶ Ἰσοκράτους . . . γνώριμος γενόμενος ἐπολιτεύσατο ἐπιφανῶς.

It might be argued that this view of the opposition between rhetoric and philosophy is simply imported from older sources which did not share the deconstructing zeal of Dionysius. Against this argument, however, one notes that [Plutarch] can be detected in the act of strategically recasting Dionysian material in order to make it accord with the more traditional dichotomy between rhetoric and philosophy to which he himself adheres. It is instructive to look at a significant way in which his account of the life of Isocrates differs from that offered by Dionysius.

Both writers note that at one stage in his life Isocrates turned to the writing of morally improving works and tried to set out the nature of his thought, in phraseology so nearly identical that [Plutarch] is clearly drawing upon Dionysius.⁷² Dionysius, however, implies that this was the way in which Isocrates spent the rest of his life, and thus that all of his subsequent work is to be seen as a continuation of this practice. [Plutarch], by contrast, both points up the 'philosophical' character of this retreat⁷³ and asserts that Isocrates failed in his purpose in this pursuit and so changed to a different tack: *διαμαρτάνων δὲ τῆς προαιρέσεως, τούτων μὲν ἀπέστη, σχολῆς δ' ἡγγείτο*. In Dionysius, who is eager to officiate at the wedding of philosophy and oratory, Isocrates' 'philosophical' phase is the consummation of his achievement; for [Plutarch], who is not, it is an unsuccessful aberration.

One might also remark in passing on another case where it is possible that [Plutarch] is strategically recasting his sources in order to suit his own view of the relationship between philosophy and rhetoric. This concerns an odd omission in his list of the pupils of Isocrates (837C–D). This includes both such celebrated alumni as Theopompus and Ephorus and more obscure figures such as Asclepiades and Theodektas, yet it conspicuously fails to mention Xenophon. It is noteworthy that this omission is duly rectified at the appropriate point in Photius' *Bibliotheca*.⁷⁴ In the light of the observations above, it is perhaps possible to speculate why [Plutarch] left him out. While our author is perfectly aware of Xenophon's work as a historian,⁷⁵ the description of him as *ὁ Σωκρατικός* at 845E shows that [Plutarch] shares the general tendency of antiquity to think of him primarily as a philosopher.⁷⁶ To introduce a person of this philosophical bent as a student of the rhetorician Isocrates would have blurred our author's established dichotomy between the two disciplines. There again, one should not, perhaps, read too much into this omission. It has already been noted that [Plutarch] has no objection to the reverse process of describing orators as students of Plato, and several alleged pupils of Isocrates with no philosophical leanings whatever are passed over just as silently as Xenophon.⁷⁷

⁷² Dion. Hal. *Isoc.* 1: *ἐπὶ τὸ γράφειν ἃ διανοηθεὶ κατέφυγεν*; [Plut.] 837B: *ἐπὶ τὸ φιλοσοφεῖν καὶ γράφειν ἃ διανοηθεὶ ἐτράπετο*.

⁷³ Note the insertion of *ἐπὶ τὸ φιλοσοφεῖν* in the [Plutarch] passage, which is not there in Dionysius.

⁷⁴ Phot. *Bibl.* codex 260. R. Henry, *Photius: Bibliothèque Tome 8* (Paris, 1977), 44, n. 5, doubts that this insertion is the work of Photius himself, but even if it is 'une glose qui a été introduite dans la tradition', it remains significant that *someone* was troubled by [Plutarch]'s omission.

⁷⁵ Note the reference to the *Hellenica* at 845E.

⁷⁶ Diogenes Laertius, for example, gives him a biography as such (Diog. Laert. 2.48–59); it is suggestive that Diogenes does not mention the tradition of study with Isocrates either. For the attitude of Plutarch himself to Xenophon, L. Van der Stockt, "Polybiasasthai"? Plutarch on Timaeus and Phylarchus (and the like) in the *Acta* of 'The Shadow of Polybius: Intertextuality as a Research Tool in Greek Historiography', a 2001 Leuven conference (forth coming), is illuminating.

⁷⁷ For example, the Atthidographer Androtion; cf. the passages collected at *FGrH* 324 TT1 2.

To sum up, therefore, this section's analysis of [Plutarch]'s coverage of the history and nature of rhetoric suggests that our author is not, after all, entirely incapable of putting his own 'spin' on the material that he has inherited, and that he is demonstrably setting himself within the tradition of 'potted biography' of which Diogenes Laertius and Flavius Philostratus are the most voluminous extant representatives. While the preceding section stressed the extent to which the characteristic styles and preoccupations of [Plutarch]'s sources may be detected in the completed work, this one has suggested that our author is not always merely a transparent vessel wherein his untransmuted source-material may be seen.

IV. SOME VERSIONS OF *DEMOSTHENES*

Even without recourse to the divergent versions whose survival makes it the logical choice for use as an extended test case, [Plutarch]'s *Demosthenes* clearly manifests to the attentive reader certain of the features that have been noted above as characteristic of our biographer. It contains, for instance, a fine example of [Plutarch]'s far from infallible eye for inconsistencies in his source-material;⁷⁸ the basis of Epicles' gibe at 848C⁷⁹ is contradicted by the statement of Demosthenes' gift for extempore speaking only a few lines later,⁸⁰ yet our author shows no sign of being troubled by this. Likewise characteristic is the failure to make use of the Demosthenic material covered in the other lives or to direct the reader to the material in question; one scours the *Demosthenes* in vain for anecdotes about the orator's dealings with Isocrates (cf. 837D–E), his failure at the court of Philip (841A), the allegation that Isaeus wrote the speeches against his guardians (839F), or the claim that Hyperides surpassed him as an orator (849D).⁸¹

The *Demosthenes* likewise betrays the fluctuations in the deployment of sources that have already been detected elsewhere in the *Lives*. Although Aeschines is cited explicitly only once in the course of the *Lives* (840F), one can detect certain statements that seem to find their original sources in the orator's speeches. A case in point is the claim vaguely attributed to 'certain people' that Demosthenes was a transvestite; [Plutarch]'s neutral *φασὶ δὲ τινες καὶ ἀσώτως αὐτὸν βιῶναι, γυναικείαις . . . ἐσθῆσι χρώμενον* (847E) masks the tradition's probable origin in the sneers of Aeschines in his speech against Timarchus.⁸² One suspects that this assertion came to [Plutarch] pre-packaged in an intermediate source; Hermippus, to whom the *Suda* attributes the claim that Demosthenes was *πρὸς τὰς ἡδονὰς ἀκόλαστος*,⁸³ is a likely candidate.⁸⁴

The passage on Demosthenes' personal life therefore exemplifies what we have already noted in Section II above, in its demonstration of the ways in which the biographer's sources can be discerned through the texture of his work. At the same time, however, it brings out the theme of Section III, the ways in which we can nevertheless

⁷⁸ Noticed as such by Fowler (n. 5), 436, n. A.

⁷⁹ *ὀνειδίσαντος δ' αὐτὸν Ἐπικλέους ὅτι αἰεὶ σκέπτοιο.*

⁸⁰ *τοὺς δὲ πλείστους λόγους εἶπεν αὐτοσχεδιάσας.* J. Bollansée in G. Schepens (ed.), *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker—Continued*, 4A. *Biography*, fasc. 3 (Leiden, 1999), 419 n. 139, notes that this is the only extant passage from antiquity claiming that Demosthenes had good improvisational abilities.

⁸¹ He does, however, repeat at 848C the information that Lysias was aware of the young Demosthenes from 836A.

⁸² Aeschin. 1.131.

⁸³ *Suda*, s.v. *Δημοσθένης*.

⁸⁴ As noted at Bollansée (n. 81), 422.

discern the author's consistent interests, in that [Plutarch] demonstrates throughout the *Lives* a regular fascination with such prurient details, being particularly interested in sexual idiosyncrasy or incontinence.⁸⁵ The *Demosthenes* is therefore of clear use in bringing out the themes adumbrated above, even without recourse to alternative treatments of the life of the eponymous orator.

However, it remains true that the most fruitful mode of analysis where the *Demosthenes* is concerned lies in comparison with the other accounts of its subject's career, and above all that from the pen of the genuine Plutarch.⁸⁶ At its simplest level, this consists simply of noting the latter's response to lines of thought which [Plutarch] leaves untouched. Plutarch, for example, despite his professed unwillingness to become bogged down in stylistic analysis,⁸⁷ makes great capital out of the way in which the *πικρία* of Demosthenes' temperament is mirrored by a like *πικρία* in his rhetoric.⁸⁸ This is explicit in the passage concerning the nickname 'Argas', where balanced parallel clauses drive home the congruity between character and style (ὁ δ' Ἀργᾶς ... ἢ πρὸς τὸν τρόπον, ὡς θηριώδη καὶ πικρὸν ἐτέθη ... ἢ πρὸς τὸν λόγον, ὡς ἀνιώντα τοὺς ἀκρωμένους)⁸⁹ and is kept before the reader's attention through the several later characterizations of Demosthenic utterances as *πικρός* vel sim.⁹⁰

Again, observation of the citational habits of [Plutarch] and his inclination to focus on certain subjects can likewise be illuminated by simple comparison with Plutarch's different methodology. Use of material from the speeches of Aeschines constitutes a good example, in that Plutarch, unlike our biographer, shows a judicious reluctance to repose much faith in the unsupported testimony of his subject's sworn enemy. When he does quote Aeschines' aspersions on Cleobule's parentage, he inserts an authorial disclaimer,⁹¹ and, unlike our author, he never alludes to the famous story of Demosthenes' drying-up in the presence of Philip, for which Aeschines is, of course, the witness.⁹² What makes this silence particularly interesting is that this anecdote of a great orator whose powers failed him through timidity just when they would have been most useful offered Plutarch a tempting parallel for Cicero's similar failure in the trial of Milo, which he does cover in the parallel *Life of Cicero*.⁹³ Likewise, enthusiastic endorsement of Aeschines' mud-slinging about Cleobule would have facilitated the comparison which Plutarch explicitly draws between the relatively humble origins of the two orators, ἐκ μὲν ἀδόξων καὶ μικρῶν ἰσχυροὺς καὶ μεγάλους γενομένους.⁹⁴ This restraint is not always paralleled

⁸⁵ Cf. e.g. the scented pillow of Isocrates (839A) and Hyperides' collection of kept women (849D).

⁸⁶ Westermann's view that [Plutarch]'s *Demosthenes* represents the second attempt of Plutarch himself is comprehensively refuted by Schaefer (n. 4), 32–5.

⁸⁷ Plut. *Dem.* 3.1: τὸ δὲ τοὺς λόγους ἀντεξετάζειν καὶ ἀποφαίνεσθαι ... ἔασομεν, on which see C. B. R. Pelling, "You for me and me for you ...": narrator and narratee in Plutarch's *lives*, in id. (n. 21, *Plutarch and History*), 267–82, at 272.

⁸⁸ So correctly J. Mossman, 'Is the pen mightier than the sword? The failure of rhetoric in Plutarch's *Demosthenes*', *Histos* 3 (1999) (<http://www.dur.ac.uk/Classics/histos/1999/mossman.html>). For such reflections in other *lives*, see C. B. R. Pelling, 'Rhetoric, *paideia*, and psychology in Plutarch's *lives*', in id. (n. 21, *Plutarch and History*), 339–47, at 339–40.

⁸⁹ Plut. *Dem.* 4.8.

⁹⁰ Cf. Plut. *Dem.* 6.3, 8.4, and 11.5. Plutarch regards excessive or pointless *πικρία* as a defect, but recognizes its gadfly usefulness; cf. Plut. *Phoc.* 10.6.

⁹¹ Plut. *Dem.* 4.2: ἃ δ' Αἰσχίνης ὁ ῥήτωρ εἶρηκε ... οὐκ ἔχομεν εἰπεῖν εἴτ' ἀληθῶς εἶρηκεν εἴτε ... καταψευδόμενος.

⁹² Aeschin. 2.34–5.

⁹³ Plut. *Cic.* 35.5.

⁹⁴ Plut. *Dem.* 3.4.

in the later tradition,⁹⁵ and is noteworthy in Plutarch, who has been accused, not entirely without justice, of sometimes sharpening his comparisons at the expense of historical accuracy.⁹⁶

The list of these examples could easily be extended. It is important to remember, however, that these divergences are not the result of spur-of-the-moment decisions by the several authors; rather the slant in each case is aimed at crafting a larger vision of the life of Demosthenes. The extent to which the different authors are capable of doing this varies. It has already been seen that [Plutarch]'s ability to do this, while not negligible, is distinctly limited, whereas the genuine Plutarch's mastery of his material is considerably more complete. Nevertheless, σύγκρισις of selected passages must not exclude the larger contexts in which these passages are embedded.

A simple demonstration of this principle is given by the different ways in which our author, Plutarch, and Zosimus of Ascalon handle the suit brought by Demosthenes against his guardians. In [Plutarch], he succeeds in the suit but exacts none of the penalty, τοὺς μὲν (ἀφείς) ἀργυρίου, τοὺς δὲ καὶ χάριτος⁹⁷ (844D). In Plutarch, by contrast, he is unable to retrieve more than a portion of his birthright: κατεντυχήσας ἐκπράξαι μὲν οὐδὲ πολλοστὸν ἡδυνήθη μέρος τῶν πατρῶων.⁹⁸ Finally, according to Zosimus he was careful to reclaim only what was due to him, not as much as he could have exacted: τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἦν τῆς δεινότητος τῆς ῥητορικῆς, τὸ δὲ τῆς Δημοσθένους φιланθρωπίας.⁹⁹

Investigation of the larger concepts of Demosthenes being propagated by the different authors lays bare the reasons behind this divergence. One of [Plutarch]'s persistent interests throughout the *Lives* is the documentation of precise amounts of money,¹⁰⁰ an interest not really shared by the two other authors under discussion. His specification of the penalty at ten talents is therefore unsurprising. One then notes the difference in nuance between his account of the orator's motives and that of Zosimus; he gives the motives as ἀργυρίου and χάριτος.¹⁰¹ The latter word, of course, tends to carry a reciprocal *do ut des* flavour, and so connotes a more pragmatic benevolence far removed from Zosimus' φιλανθρωπίας, with its implication of a pattern of universal benignity. This σύγκρισις makes clear Zosimus' agenda in telling the story in the way he does; he wants to give a picture of a Demosthenes whose oratory is prodigious

⁹⁵ Zosimus of Ascalon (*Vitarum Scriptores Graeci Minores*, ed. A. Westermann [Amsterdam, 1964], 297–302, at 297) asserts without qualification that Demosthenes ἐκγονέων δὲ μὴ πάντι σεμνῶν προελθὼν τοῖς αὐτοῦ τὰ κείνων συνέκρυψεν, because he wants to present Demosthenes as an all but superhuman θεῖος ἀνὴρ whose triumph over his humble origins is therefore only to be expected. Demosthenes himself would seem to have deployed a similar piece of *συνουκείωσις*, if Rutilius Lupus' excerpt at *De figuris* 2.9 is genuine.

⁹⁶ For example, A. B. Bosworth, 'History and artifice in Plutarch's *Eumenes*', in P. Stadter (ed.), *Plutarch and the Historical Tradition* (London, 1992), 56–89.

⁹⁷ This passage is difficult textually. The manuscripts lack ἀφείς, which Wolf inserts from Photius. Some surgery is clearly required, but Photius' reading is still problematic, as it is perhaps doubtful whether ἀργυρίου and χάριτος can stand as bare genitives of cause, even in [Plutarch]'s idiosyncratic Greek. Perhaps ἐνεκα has fallen out after ἀργυρίου?

⁹⁸ Plut. *Dem.* 6.1.

⁹⁹ Westermann (n. 95), 299.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. eg. the 3,000 drachmas received for dropping the suit against Meidias (844D), the 10,000 drachmas paid to Neoptolemus for training in breath control (844F), the 700 talents brought by Harpalus (846B), Isocrates' 1,000 drachma tuition fee (837D), the 250 talents entrusted to Lycurgus (841D), and the 6,000 drachma fine introduced by the same orator for women travelling to Eleusis in a carriage (842A).

¹⁰¹ The textual problems noted in n. 97 make any interpretation provisional, however.

even at this early stage in his career, and it is noteworthy that he drives this point about Demosthenes' precocious stature home by having his hero refer to himself by name.¹⁰² This treatment thus follows on nicely from a version of earlier events which consistently emphasizes the youth's precocity; Zosimus' Demosthenes, for example, turns to oratory while still a lad *in order* to punish his guardians, whose fraud he has already detected.¹⁰³

Plutarch's treatment is more subtle. He is not really interested in the monetary aspect of the business, and his reference to it is correspondingly vague, although one may note that his insistence that Demosthenes did not manage to win back *all* his birthright fits in with his general treatment of the orator's early years as full of painful toil and hard-won success, in marked contrast to that of Cicero.¹⁰⁴ His concern is rather with the tastes which the experience wakens in Demosthenes; *τόλμαν* δὲ πρὸς τὸ λέγειν ... λαβών, καὶ γευσάμενος τῆς περὶ τοὺς ἀγῶνας φιλοτιμίας καὶ δυνάμεως, ἐπεχείρησεν ... τὰ κοινὰ πράττειν. It will be observed that Plutarch is here skilfully drawing out the themes to which he alluded at the very start of the life, where he emphasized the salient points of the characters of Demosthenes and Cicero, *τὸ φιλότιμον* ... πρὸς δὲ κινδύνους ἄτολμον;¹⁰⁵ the *φιλοτιμία* from this case will remain with Demosthenes, but the *τόλμα* proves to be short-lived.¹⁰⁶

It is not only 3.3 that is here recalled, however. The conjunction of *φιλοτιμίας* and *δυνάμεως* likewise looks back to the two grounds on which Demosthenes admired Callistratus: *ἐκείνου μὲν ἐξήλωσε τὴν δόξαν ... τοῦ δὲ λόγου μᾶλλον ἐθαύμασε ... τὴν ἰσχὺν πάντα χειροῦσθαι καὶ τιθασεύειν πεφυκός*.¹⁰⁷ The juxtaposition therefore neatly recapitulates for the reader the tension that Plutarch is plotting between Demosthenes' unambiguously admirable devotion to rhetoric as something that can *do* things, compelling people to virtue through its *δύναμις*,¹⁰⁸ and his less praiseworthy yearning for immediate *δόξα*, an outlook the limitations of which are made clear near the beginning of this work,¹⁰⁹ and laid bare more thoroughly in the accompanying *Life of Cicero*.¹¹⁰ It is worth noting that *φιλοτιμία* is by no means an unambiguous good in Plutarch's moral vocabulary.¹¹¹

Similar powers of architectonic construction are evident in Plutarch's approach to the orator's dealings with the elderly Eunomus and Satyrus. Here, however, our

¹⁰² That is, *τῆς Δημοσθένους φιλανθρωπίας*, rather than, for example, *τῆς αὐτοῦ φιλανθρωπίας*.

¹⁰³ Westermann (n. 95), 298: *ὡς γὰρ ἑώρα τοὺς ... ἐπιτρόπους ... ἔργον ποιούντας ... πολεμίων ... παῖς μὲν ὢν ἔτι ... διδασκάλοις ἑαυτὸν παρεδίδου, ἵνα σχοίῃ τὴν κατηγορίαν ... ἡκονημένην*.

¹⁰⁴ Mossman (n. 88).

¹⁰⁵ Plut. *Dem.* 3.3.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. the criticisms of Eunomus in *Dem.* 6, *προδίδωσιν ὑπ' ἀτολμίας ... ἑαυτὸν*, and the comments of Mossman (n. 88).

¹⁰⁷ Plut. *Dem.* 5.4.

¹⁰⁸ This is exemplified by the narrative at 18.2, where, significantly, *ἡ τοῦ ῥήτορος δύναμις* is the subject of the sentence.

¹⁰⁹ As Mossman (n. 88) notes, there is a meaningful contrast at Plut. *Dem.* 1.2 between professions that aim only at business or fame and the true happiness of virtue.

¹¹⁰ Suggested in the very first chapter of his life—*εἰπεῖν ὡς ἀγωνιέται τὸν Κικέρωνα τῶν Σκαύρων ... ἐνδοξότερον ἀποδείξαι*—and is rebuked explicitly by the Pythia at Plut. *Cic.* 5.1; *μὴ τὴν τῶν πολλῶν δόξαν ἡγεμόνα ποιέεισθαι τοῦ βίου*.

¹¹¹ See F. Frazier, 'A propos de la *philotimia* dans les *Vies* de Plutarque. Quelques jalons dans l'histoire d'une notion', *R. Phil.* 62 (1988), 109–27; C. B. R. Pelling, 'Plutarch: Roman heroes and Greek culture' in M. Griffin and J. Barnes (edd.), *Philosophia Togata I* (Oxford, 1989), 199–232, at 209–13, and the passages discussed therein.

biographer's input is more illuminating, which makes this example an apposite one with which to conclude. Both Plutarch and our author include a narrative of individuals consoling Demosthenes after a failure in the assembly, but as well as a change in personnel, the nature of the advice and the crafting of the anecdotes differ. This invites examination.

The most interesting aspect of [Plutarch]'s narrative is Demosthenes' statement on the importance of *actio*. There interest lies not in the material, but in the way in which it is framed. Demosthenes is fed his opportunity by an anonymous questioner and the expression *ἐρομένου αὐτόν τινος* ... (845B).

Investigation reveals that this way of crafting an anecdote is not unique to our author. In Diogenes Laertius, it becomes almost a structural feature, whereby his philosophers are given the opportunity to deliver themselves of a succession of pithy one-liners.¹¹² When Plutarch himself is brought into the equation as well, matters become still more interesting. What one might, not entirely accurately,¹¹³ call the *ἐρομένου δέ τινος* formula turns up only once in the *Life of Demosthenes*, and that one occurrence is the work not of Plutarch himself but of Ariston, an author, like Diogenes Laertius, of lives of philosophers. Here it is Theophrastus who dispenses the wisdom: *ἐρωτηθέντα γὰρ ὁποῖός τις αὐτῷ φαίνεται ῥήτωρ ὁ Δημοσθένης, εἰπείν' Ἀξίος τῆς πόλεως.*¹¹⁴

It is therefore a tempting hypothesis that the *ἐρομένου δέ τινος* formula is a stage-property of the sort of antiquarian biography for which Diogenes is the best evidence and the rhythms of which are usually avoided by Plutarch in *propria persona*. It is its use in [Plutarch] that is intriguing, since Demosthenes is not the only person to be asked this question in the *Lives*. The other is Isocrates at 838F, and his response is just as illustrative of the qualities of his oratory (in which [Plutarch], as we have seen, is otherwise little interested) as Demosthenes' is of his experiences in overcoming his defects.

This example therefore puts us in the unusual position of using other texts to illustrate our author's ingenuity in adapting the characteristic tropes of the biographical traditions that he inherited, rather than vice versa. In the hands of [Plutarch] (or of the source from which these two passages were cribbed), what in Diogenes tends to be a mere opportunity for the exercise of putative wit is melded more organically with the texture of the narrative. Wit is used to characterize, not merely to sparkle.

The last instance has therefore brought us back to the contention of this study's introduction. None would argue that in terms of construction or stylistic control, *The Lives of the Ten Orators* is in any way comparable to the works of Plutarch. However, the very heterogeneity of the piece, and the odd effects that are produced through the clash of so many ways of writing the stories of the men of old, make it valuable to one who wishes to explore the modes of this writing which existed outside the work of a Plutarch. *The Lives of the Ten Orators*, this study has perhaps succeeded in demonstrating, is an important and unduly neglected document of the ancient world's facility for doing biography, to misquote Dickens, in different voices.

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¹¹² The life of Thales gives a sequence of examples (Diog. Laert. 1.36–7).

¹¹³ The exact wording varies in Diogenes Laertius; one finds *πρὸς τὸν πυνθόμενον τί ...*, *ἠρώτησέ τις αὐτὸν εἰ ...*, *ἐρωτηθεὶς τί ...*, all in the passage on Thales in the preceding footnote.

¹¹⁴ Plut. *Dem.* 10.2.