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THE DECLINE OF ROMAN STATESMANSHIP IN PLUTARCH'S *PYRRHUS-MARIUS**

Pyrrhus-Marius contains a discussion of Roman statesmanship that has gone unnoticed.[1] In it, Plutarch identifies and analyses a decline in élite Roman leadership that occurred between the middle and late republic. Such an analysis is possible in this pair, and in this pair alone, because both *Lives* are concerned with the internal workings of the Roman republic: *Pyrrhus* depicts the republic of the early third century B.C., *Marius* that of the early first century B.C. When *Pyrrhus* and *Marius* are read together, a dual progression becomes apparent: first, the Roman people decline from obedience into a dysfunctional mob; second, the élite Roman leadership grows less effective until, by Marius' day, it is unable to oppose populist demagogues. I have considered the decline of the Roman people, elsewhere.[2] I will here concern myself with the conservatism and resulting impotence of the Roman élite.

My focus in this study will be literary rather than historical, less on the persons and events in *Pyrrhus-Marius* than on Plutarch's depiction of them.[3] Most of my argument will be based upon *Pyrrhus-Marius* itself; comparative evidence and modern historical analysis will only come into play where such evidence enhances our understanding of Plutarch's narrative strategy.[4] Because *Pyrrhus-Marius* is the only pair among the parallel *Lives* that lacks both a formal introduction and a closing comparison, and because these in turn are the only places in which Plutarch ever explicitly compares the characters and events of paired *Lives*, I will necessarily rely upon connections between the two *Lives* that are implicit.[5] So that

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[1] G. Schepens, 'Plutarch's view of ancient rome: some remarks on the *Life of Pyrrhus*', in L. Mooren (ed.), *Politics, Administration and Society in the Hellenistic and Roman World: Structure and Change* (Leuven and Paris, 2000), 349 64, argues that the portrayal of Rome in *Pyrrhus*, especially in the negotiations between Pyrrhus and Fabricius, is a βίος Ῥωμαίων. He does not, however, consider the ramifications of that portrayal for *Marius* or for the pair as a whole.

[2] See B. Buszard, 'The decline of the Roman republic in *Pyrrhus-Marius*', in L. de Blois et al. (ed.), *The Statesman in Plutarch's Works*, 2: *The Statesman in Plutarch's Greek and Roman* Lives (Amsterdam, 2004), forthcoming.

[3] For a historical analysis of Pyrrhus' eastern campaigns, see D. Zodda, 'Tra Egitto, Macedonia e Sparta: Pirro un monarca in Epiro', *Seia* n.s. 2.2 (Macerata, 1997). For more general surveys, see P. R. Franke, 'Pyrrhus', *CAH*^{2} 7.2 (1989), 456 85; P. Garoufalias, *Pyrrhus: King of Epirus* (London, 1979); A. B. Nederlof, *Pyrrhus van Epirus* (Amsterdam, 1978); P. Lévêque, *Pyrrhus*, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome fasc. 185 (Paris, 1957); and G. Nenci, *Pirro: Aspirazioni egemoniche ed equilibrio mediterraneo*, Università di Torino: Pubblicazioni della facoltà di lettere e filosofia 5.2 (Turin, 1953). For Marius, see R. J. Evans, *Gaius Marius: A Political Biography* (Pretoria, 1994); T. F. Carney, *A Biography of C. Marius* (Chicago, 1970); and J. Van Ooteghem, *Caius Marius* (Brussels, 1964).

[4] E.g., Dionysius' portrayal of Fabricius (nn. 20 and 21).

[5] The beginning of the only other potential candidate, *Them. Cam.*, has been lost. On the role of the proems, see P. A. Stadter, 'The proems of Plutarch's *Lives*', *GRBS* 16 (1988), 77 85. On the concluding comparisons (*synkriseis*), see the bibliography in T. Duff, 'Plutarchan *Synkrisis*: comparisons and contradictions', in L. Van der Stockt (ed.), *Rhetorical Theory and Praxis in*

my conclusions are firmly grounded in the evidence of Plutarch's text, I will base my analysis on passages in which analogous character and behavior are described in similar language.

My analysis will comprise five salient themes in the pair: the personal qualities of aristocratic leadership, the effect of such aristocratic leadership on a healthy *demos*, the rise of demagogy, the ineffectiveness of noble leadership when confronted with demagogy, and the role of expedience. Plutarch interweaves these themes to great effect, producing a nuanced analysis of leadership both in healthy states, here represented by the middle republic, and in debased states, which are represented by third-century Tarentum in *Pyrrhus* and by the late republic in *Marius*. His analysis would have had particular relevance for an élite reader of the early second century A.D., the audience for whom he composed his *Lives*, so I will conclude by discussing the ramifications of that analysis for imperial Rome.[6]

THE CHARACTER OF THE ARISTOCRATIC STATESMAN

The aristocratic leader most frequently depicted in *Pyrrhus-Marius* is C. Fabricius Luscinus.[7] Not only is he the most prevalent Roman in *Pyrrhus*, he receives the most elaborate characterization of any figure in that *Life*, excepting only its primary subject. Fabricius is the central focus of two passages in particular: the Roman embassy to Pyrrhus in chapter 20, and the surrender of Pyrrhus' treacherous doctor in chapter 21.[8] He does not interact with the Roman people in either, but provides instead an idealized individual personality. In *Pyrrhus* he is an example of Roman statesmanship at its best; in *Marius* he is transformed in retrospect into a model for the statesmen of the late Republic.[9] Plutarch's depiction of Fabricius is therefore crucial for both halves of the pair.

The first description of Fabricius is given in chapter 20 by Cineas, who is Pyrrhus' ambassador, chief orator, and an informed observer of Roman character.[10] When a Roman embassy led by Fabricius arrives to treat with Pyrrhus, Cineas informs the Epirote king that Fabricius is a man both noble and warlike, and the man held in the greatest esteem by the Romans, but also a man in extreme poverty

Plutarch (Leuven and Namur, 2000), 141 61. C. B. R. Pelling's 'Plutarch and Roman politics', which Duff cites, was subsequently reprinted with slight modifications in C. B. R. Pelling (ed.), *Plutarch and History* (Swansea, 2002), 207 36.

[6] See the discussions of Plutarch's audience in P. A. Stadter, 'Plutarch's *Lives* and their Roman readers', in E. N. Ostenfeld (ed.), *Greek Romans and Roman Greeks* (Aarhus, 2002), 123 35; T. Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2001), 48 57; P. A. Stadter, 'The rhetoric of virtue in Plutarch's Lives', in L. Van der Stockt (ed.), *Rhetorical Theory and Praxis in Plutarch* (Leuven and Namur, 2000), 494 8 (*contra* E. Valgiglio, 'Dagli "Ethica" ai "Bioi" in Plutarco', *ANRW* II.33.6 [1992], 4027); A. E. Wardman, *Plutarch's* Lives (Berkeley, 1974), 37–41; and C. P. Jones, *Plutarch and Rome* (Oxford, 1971), 103 9.

[7] S. C. R. Swain discusses *paideia* and Fabricius' character in 'Hellenic culture and the Roman heroes of Plutarch', *JHS* 110 (1990), 126–45 at 137 40.

[8] The chronology of Fabricius' embassy is a problem, see R. Scuderi, 'La "Vita di Pirro" di Plutarco: una rievocazione del primo incontro fra Greci e Romani', *ACD* 34–5 (1998 9), 219 20. Since the problem does not affect my argument, I will follow the chronology given by Plutarch.

[9] Fabricius' nobility in *Pyrrhus Marius* matches his consistent *uirtus* in Latin literature, see Cic. *Amic.* 8.6, Cic. *Off.* 3.86 7, and Val. Max. 4.3.6.

[10] Cineas' abilities are described in *Pyrrhus* 14.1 3, his qualifications for assessing Fabricius in *Pyrrhus* 19.6.

(*Pyrrh.* 20.1).[11] Far from denigrating Fabricius' nobility, the concluding caveat would lead readers of Plutarch's other *Lives* to expect admirable simplicity in his character.[12] And the opposition between luxury and nobility implicit in the portrayal of Fabricius will be made explicit in *Mar.* 34.[13] Fabricius is not virtuous despite his poverty; his poverty reflects and enhances his virtue.

Pyrrhus nonetheless sees in Fabricius' poverty an opportunity for an alliance, and offers him gold as a token of friendship. Pyrrhus' motives are expressed in positive terms, both by Plutarch as narrator (ἰδίᾳ φιλοφρονούμενος, 20.2) and by Pyrrhus himself (ἐπ' οὐδενὶ δῆθεν αἰσχρῷ, 20.2), but Fabricius spurns his generosity.[14] This refusal is best understood in the light of a slightly earlier episode, the rejection of Pyrrhus' gifts by the wives and children of the leading Romans (*Pyrrhus* 18.5). Though Pyrrhus offers the gifts without condition, the Romans insist that a public treaty must first be ratified before they can accept them. Appearing less than two chapters before the Roman embassy, this passage offers the reader a context for Fabricius' behaviour: like his fellow aristocrats, he perceives a conflict of interest and refuses to acknowledge a personal relationship with Pyrrhus because no public treaty exists between Pyrrhus and Rome. Like them, he readily subjugates personal benefit to his role as an élite member of a corporate entity.[15]

Fabricius' refusal leads to three more attempts by Pyrrhus to win Fabricius' friendship. The focus throughout is not on the political negotiations, but instead on the individual characters of the Epirote king and the Roman statesman. The first is Pyrrhus' attempt to surprise Fabricius with an elephant; the second is a discussion of Epicureanism between Fabricius and Cineas; the third is Pyrrhus' offer to make Fabricius his chief general and closest companion.

The appearance of the elephant in *Pyrrhus* 20.3–5 is motivated in the narrative merely by Pyrrhus' desire to shock (ἐκπλῆξαι, 20.3) the Roman ambassador. Yet the episode is an important addition to Plutarch's depiction of Fabricius. His reaction, or rather lack thereof, reveals a virtue that is central to his effectiveness as a statesman. Although he has never seen an elephant before, his only response to the sudden revelation of Pyrrhus' largest elephant, which trumpets right on cue, is to turn calmly to Pyrrhus, smile, and say 'The gold did not move me yesterday, nor does the beast today' (20.5). Insouciance in the face of the unexpected does not in itself make one a great leader: the key is Fabricius' brief speech, which extracts a general principle from the specific event. It is his moral stability, the virtue reflected in his reactions to Pyrrhus' monetary gift and elephant, that ennobles him.[16]

The elephant episode is followed by a sympotic discourse on Epicureanism. Pyrrhus has no interest in extra-military intellectual pursuits, so the exposition of

[11] Notably absent from Cineas summary is any assessment of Fabricius' generalship, which is only significant in so far as it earns Pyrrhus' admiration. His consulship of 282, for instance, during which he defeated the Samnites, Lucani, and Bruttii (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 19.13 and 19.16), is never mentioned.

[12] Cf. *Lys.* 30 and *Arist.* 1, each praising the virtuous poverty of their eponymous subject, and *Aem.* 5, which extols the same virtue in the Aelii.

[13] In *Mar.* 34.3 4 Plutarch inveighs against the growing extravagance of the late republic by condemning the price paid for Marius' house at Misenum by its subsequent owners.

[14] All citations from the *Lives* in this article are taken from the Teubner edition by Ziegler and Gärtner. The translations are my own.

[15] Contrast *Phoc.* 32.4 10, where the otherwise admirable Phocion receives a narratorial rebuke for preferring personal virtue to his civic responsibilities.

[16] Plutarch regularly praises stability in the character of his subjects. Cf. *Eum.* 9.5, *Sert.* 10.2, and *Alc.* 2.1.

epicurean dogma is given by Cineas. He first introduces three points of Epicurean doctrine: its views on the gods, on politics, and on the meaning of life.[17] He then explains these aspects in chiastic order: the goal of life is pleasure; politics are to be shunned as an injurious confusion of happiness; the gods have nothing whatever to do with gratitude, or anger, or us, but live a far-off existence of idleness among pleasures. As elsewhere in Plutarch, Epicureanism is portrayed in a negative light.[18] Cineas' first point recalls the pernicious obsession with pleasure that is the hallmark of the decadent Tarentine *demos* (see p. 00); the latter two project that same obsession on to the state and the gods.

Cineas' presentation, which climaxes in an ascending tricolon, is rhetorically brilliant, but Fabricius is immune to such stylistic bravura and reacts instead to the substance of the declamation. So surprised is he by the Epicurean view of the world that he interrupts the orator and exclaims 'By Heracles! I wish Pyrrhus and the Samnites would hold to these precepts so long as they war against us' (*Pyrrh.* 20.7).[19] The tenets of Epicureanism are anathema to him because he adheres to a system of beliefs emphasizing public service.[20] He does not dispute the individual benefits that might accompany those beliefs; he sees only the dangerous ramifications for the state if its leading men should adopt an apolitical doctrine. Fabricius is again shown to be a man who places his country's interests above his own.

The third incident, Pyrrhus' offer to befriend Fabricius, expands the reader's perspective beyond the purely individual to the interaction between statesman and state, and explores the limitations of even the best statesmanship. Given a chance to join Pyrrhus as the foremost of his generals and companions, Fabricius calmly (ἡσυχῇ) rebuffs the offer with a warning. 'Majesty, this would turn out poorly even for you. If those who honour and admire you should get to know me, they would want to be ruled by me instead of you' (20.9). His reply hints at a problem inherent in debased states. He does not imagine that the people might themselves change, only that they will see in himself a better king than the one they now serve.[21] Neither Fabricius nor the version of the Epirote people that he constructs posit institutional reform. He might supplant Pyrrhus, but as a monarch, not as a statesman in a newly created republic. Considered from the perspective of *Pyrrhus* alone, this point would be no more than *argumentum ex silentio*. Viewed in retrospect, however, and reinforced by the portrayal of the Roman *demos* in *Marius*, Fabricius' comment becomes the first suggestion of the irreversibility of the demagogic disease.[22]

[17] ...περὶ θεῶν καὶ πολιτείας καὶ τέλους (20.6). By τέλος, Cineas means more literally 'the proper goal of the philosophical life' (LSJ III.3.b).

[18] See J. Hershbell, 'Plutarch and Epicureanism', *ANRW* II.36.5 (1992), 3353 83; H. Wzn. G. J. D. Aalders, *Plutarch's Political Thought* (Amsterdam, 1982), 6; and R. Flacelière, *Plutarque: vies VI* (Paris, 1971), 21–2.

[19] The smooth flow of Cineas' performance in 20.6 enhances the surprise and impact of Fabricius' interjection. Cicero describes Fabricius' reaction similarly in *Sen.* 43.

[20] This aspect of Fabricius' character was already present in Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.*, a work Plutarch cites twice in *Pyrrhus* (17.7 and 21.13). Cf. Fabricius' defence of his poverty at *Ant. Rom.* 19.14.

[21] In Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 19.15 18 Fabricius frames his denial as a contrast between his own freedom and the humility required of a royal subject. He never mentions the Epirote people.

[22] Disease is a frequent Plutarchan metaphor for political decline. Cf. *Mar.* 35.1, *Lys. Sull. synkrisis* 1.2 (see T. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* [Oxford, 1999], 194 7), *Luc.* 38.2, *Cim. Luc. synkrisis* 1.1, *Pomp.* 16.1 and 67.5, *Caes.* 23.6, *Cat. Min.* 26.1, and *Cic.* 10.5.

Fabricius is the focus of one other incident in *Pyrrhus*, one that is wholly favourable to Fabricius himself, but has dangerous ramifications for Rome. The year after his embassy to Pyrrhus, a man approaches him with a written offer from Pyrrhus' doctor to poison the king. Disgusted, Fabricius and his colleague send the man back to Pyrrhus with a letter of their own.

> C. Fabricius and Q. Aemilius, Roman consuls, to King Pyrrhus. Greetings. It seems that you are an unfortunate judge of friends and enemies alike. You will realize, once you have read this letter that was sent to us, that you wage war against good and just men and put your faith in unjust and evil men. Be sure that we do not mention this for your benefit, but to prevent your downfall from becoming a false accusation against us, and to avoid the impression that we concluded the war through deception because of our inability to do so through virtue. (21.3 4)

Fabricius' decision to alert Pyrrhus would be an admirable one if personal virtue, not state policy, were at issue. And since the war ends favourably for Rome, Fabricius' moral stance redounds to Rome's credit. His noble gesture does, however, put Rome at risk against the king who is, by common consent, the greatest general of his day.[23] Pyrrhus gratefully responds with a parole of Roman prisoners and a second embassy from Cineas; nothing more is said of the affair in *Pyrrhus*. But the reader will have cause to reflect on these matters further in the latter stages of *Marius*, when Optimates like Octavius and Metellus Pius lose Rome to Marius and Cinna through similarly noble gestures (see p. 00). Personal virtue will turn out to be no substitute for pragmatic politics in a debased state.

Neither the later troubles of Octavius and Pius nor the vague hints at the eventual decline of the republic affect the impression made by Fabricius himself. In the context of his time, he is an ideal leader because he leads an idealized people. His character never wavers, even when he must subjugate his own welfare to that of his state. He is, then, a model statesman, both for the readers of *Pyrrhus-Marius* and, as we will see, for his successors in the early first century B.C.

ARISTOCRATIC STATESMANSHIP IN A UNIFIED STATE

For all the space allotted to Fabricius in *Pyrrhus*, he never interacts directly with the Roman people. That role is left to Ap. Claudius Caecus, who comes out of retirement in *Pyrrhus* 19 to give a rousing speech that reinvigorates Roman martial spirit.[24] His appearance is prompted by Pyrrhus' formal offer of peace to the Senate. When the Roman people, Senate and commons alike, are on the verge of accepting Pyrrhus' terms, Claudius is moved to intervene.

Plutarch prepares Claudius' speech with a brief but important sketch of the great statesman's character. 'When the message from the king had been announced and the common opinion was that the Senate intended to vote a cessation of hostilities, then indeed was Claudius Appius, a man of great repute, despite having given up his public duties and retired because of his age and blindness, unable to hold back' (18.8). Plutarch's description here establishes an important precedent, both for

[23] No less an authority than Hannibal is said to have ranked Pyrrhus the greatest of all generals (*Pyrrh.* 8.5; cf. *Flam.* 21).

[24] I exclude from my discussion P. Valerius Laevinus, who makes a bold reply to Pyrrhus' peace gesture in 16.5 and is blamed by Fabricius for the defeat at Heracleia in 18.1. Neither instance reveals much about the man. Laevinus is a more important character in Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 19.11; in *Pyrrhus*, where a third aristocratic Roman leader contributes little to Plutarch's analysis, he is largely ignored.

Metellus Numidicus (see p. 00) and Marius. Because of his old age and blindness Claudius has withdrawn from public life; despite his old age and corpulence, Marius will not. Claudius' willingness to retire is emphasized by the pleonastic phrase ἀπειρηκὼς...καὶ πεπαυμένος; Marius' refusal to do so is described in similar vocabulary: '[Some] called upon Marius to take the waters at Baiae and look after his body, which was exhausted (ἀπειρηκός) by age and rheumatism' (*Mar.* 34.2). In short, Claudius acknowledges the limitations of old age; Marius keeps going even after his body has given up.[25] That Claudius comes briefly out of retirement here is no cause for blame, moreover, because he is not driven by his own ambition (as Marius will be) but by his outrage over the impending treaty, which will irreparably damage Rome's reputation.[26] It is not his own diminishment but the decline of the Roman state that he cannot endure.

His speech is remarkable: while direct discourse is common in the *Lives*, it appears more often as anecdotes than as extended orations.[27] Plutarch's desire for rhetorical *uariatio* and the fame of this particular speech might be adduced to explain the length of the passage, but such justifications are made unnecessary by the importance of the passage within the pair's thematic programme.[28] Claudius' rebuke provides the best example of effective aristocratic statesmanship in *Pyrrhus-Marius*. His frank rhetoric is both a foil for the demagogic leaders of the late republic, including at times Marius himself, and a model of aristocratic leadership to which the *aristoi* of first century Rome will aspire. The surprising length of the passage is appropriate to its significance.

The most striking aspect of Claudius' speech is its insistence upon the unity of Rome (*Pyrrh.* 19.1–4).[29] He opens by addressing the Senate as Romans (ὦ Ῥωμαῖοι, 19.1), not with some Greek equivalent for *patres conscripti*, a formula Plutarch knew.[30] When Claudius expresses his outrage at the impending decision of the Senate, he fears not for some element of the state, but for the reputation of Rome itself (19.1). The haughty Roman boast that Alexander could not have withstood them (19.2) and the glory of his imagined defeat are both arrogated to the

[25] Plutarch's implicit comparison of Marius and Claudius here mirrors his comparison of Marius and Lucullus at *Luc.* 38.

[26] Cf. Plutarch's critique of Marius' greedy ambition (πλεονεξία) at *Mar.* 28. Ambition is also a fundamental problem for Pyrrhus, see Duff (n. 22), 112 14; and J. Mossman, 'Plutarch, Pyrrhus, and Alexander', in P. Stadter (ed.), *Plutarch and the Historical Tradition* (London and New York, 1992), 98 9.

[27] See the comments on Cleopatra's lament for Antony in C. B. R. Pelling, *Plutarch: Life of Antony* (Cambridge, 1988), 316–18. Pelling cites *Cleom.* 52, *Aem.* 31.4 10, *Eum.* 17.6 11, *Caes.* 37.6 7, and this passage as *comparanda*.

[28] Some form of the speech had been preserved at least until Cicero's day (*Brut.* 61). Whether that version was authentic or a rehash of Ennius is debated. See Scuderi (n. 8), 215 n. 18 for a summary of the arguments. W. Suerbaum discusses the treatment of this speech in Ennius and in the Roman oratorical tradition in 'Rhetorik gegen Pyrrhos: zum Widerstand gegen den Feind aus dem Osten in der Rede des Appius Claudius Caecus 280 279 v. Chr. nach Ennius, Oratorum Romanorum fragmenta und B. G. Niebuhr', in C. Schubert, K. Brodersen, and U. Huttner (ed.), *Rom und der Griechische Osten: Festschrift für Hatto H. Schmitt zum 65. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart, 1995), 253 61. See also A. E. Douglas, *M. Tulli Ciceronis Brutus* (Oxford, 1966), 55.8, who records three passages in Livy substantiating Claudius' reputation for eloquence (10.15.12, 10.19.6, 10.11.7).

[29] While we cannot know to what degree Plutarch fashioned this speech himself, Claudius' emphasis on the novelty of the Roman submissiveness in 19.1 does echo a surviving fragment from Ennius' verse adaptation: 'Whither on the road have your thoughts, which before this used to stand upright, thoughtlessly turned themselves?' (Cic. *Sen.* 6.16).

[30] He translates it literally (πατέρας συγγεγραμμένους) in *Rom.* 13.6.

entire state. If the treaty is ratified, it is the Romans, not just the Senate, who will be the object of Tarentine and Samnite scorn (19.4).

Claudius' portrayal of Roman unity is active on two levels. From the reader's perspective, his rhetorical construction of a unified republic is congruous with the depiction of the city throughout the *Life*; it therefore contributes to the idealized depiction of the third-century republic in *Pyrrhus*. From Claudius' perspective (a perspective available to Plutarch's readers) his rhetorical homogenization may also reflect his desire to smooth over any differences between potential factions in the state and to strengthen Roman unity by encouraging civic spirit. The speech both reflects and reinforces that unity.

Claudius' depiction of a united Roman state is far from inevitable. While Plutarch describes a harmonious early republic in certain *Lives*, such as *Numa* and *Romulus*, others portray a state incapacitated by demagogic faction.[31] Nor does Plutarch's unified republic appear to be inherited from his sources. In Appian *Sam.* 10.7, composed a generation after the *Lives* but employing similar sources, the Roman response to Claudius' speech comes from the Senate alone; Plutarch's description in *Pyrrhus* 19.5 makes no such distinction. And Dionysius, although he does not mention Roman *stasis* in those fragments that concern the Pyrrhic war (*Ant. Rom.* 19 and 20), focuses repeatedly upon the strife between plebeians and patricians throughout his description of the earlier republic. The striking unity of the Roman state in *Pyrrhus* thus neither represents Plutarch's own preconceptions nor those of his predecessors, but is tied to the literary role of the middle republic in this pair. By creating a unified Rome, Plutarch provides a healthy state against which diseased states like Tarentum and the late republic can be contrasted.

DEMAGOGY IN TARENTUM

Between them, the depictions of C. Fabricius and Ap. Claudius Caecus in *Pyrrhus* establish an ideal type of Roman statesmanship that is well suited to a healthy state. Both men are forthright and principled. In a unified republic, they are also effective. Aristocratic leadership in *Pyrrhus-Marius* becomes problematic when the state is divided by faction and principled leaders must confront demagogic opposition. In *Pyrrhus* the Roman republic is united, and such opposition does not arise. Plutarch instead sets the pattern for diseased states in the assembly of Tarentum (*Pyrrh.* 13.4–11). Although demagogy *per se* is not the subject of this study, the Tarentine demagogues merit some attention.[32] They are both a cause and a symptom of Tarentum's decline, and a force against which Tarentine leadership must contend.

We know from Dionysius *Ant. Rom.* 19.4, Appian *Samn.* 7, and the *Periochae* and *excerptores* of Livy that in 282 B.C., the year preceding the Tarentine assembly described in *Pyrrhus* 13.4–11, a small Roman fleet had entered the Tarentine harbour, thereby breaking a treaty that excluded Rome from the Gulf of Tarentum.[33]

[31] Cf. the Roman *stasis* in *Cor.* 5 7 and *Cam.* 31, which matches the Athenian *stasis* in the paired *Lives* of Alcibiades and Themistocles.

[32] On demagogy in *Marius*, see Duff (n. 22), 119 and L. de Blois, 'The perception of politics in Plutarch's Roman "Lives"', *ANRW* II.44.6 (1992), 4583. See L. de Blois, 'Political concepts in Plutarch's *Dion* and *Timoleon*', *AncSoc* 28 (1997), 217–18; Aalders (n. 18), 30; and Wardman (n. 6), 49–57 on demagogy elsewhere in Plutarch.

[33] For modern reconstructions of the events preceding the Tarentine assembly, see T. J. Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome: Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (c. 1000 264 B.C.)* (London and New York, 1995), 363 4; Franke (n. 3), 456 8; Nederlof (n. 3), 90–1; and Lévêque (n. 3), 175.

Thus, when the Tarentines and Romans are introduced in *Pyrrhus* 13, a state of war already exists. The question under consideration in the assembly is whether to seek Pyrrhus' aid in that war. Tarentum provided Pyrrhus with a fleet earlier that year in his successful campaign to recapture Cilicia (according to Paus. 1.12.1), and were thus to a degree already his allies. It is therefore hardly surprising that Tarentum would call upon his aid in the current crisis.

None of this enters into the narrative of *Pyrrhus*, however. Plutarch says only that the Romans were fighting the Tarentines (13.3). He elsewhere cites Dionysius' account of the war, and thus would have known about the existing ties between Tarentum and Pyrrhus, but he passes over them in silence. The Epirote king is not portrayed as a Tarentine ally, but becomes instead a foreign military adventurer who is summoned because of his availability and his military skill (13.4). The decision to summon Pyrrhus is thereby transformed from the *quid pro quo* of an existing military alliance into the foolish policy of rash demagogues.

The vote in the Tarentine assembly is accorded nearly a full chapter in the narrative. It is made clear from the outset that two groups vie for control of the city: the demagogues, who wish to summon Pyrrhus, and the nobles, who oppose the idea.[34] It is also clear that the former group has the upper hand. 'Because of the boldness and insolence of their demagogues (the Tarentines) were neither able to endure the war nor to reject it' (*Pyrrh.* 13.4).[35] The nobles do attempt to block the motion, but some of them are forcibly ejected from the assembly, and the rest withdraw voluntarily.

A third kind of politician is now introduced, however, a man named Meton who acts in the best interests of the state, but does so through a kind of demagogic showmanship. The adjective employed to describe Meton (ἐπιεικής, 13.6) suggests that he is both capable and well suited to the current emergency.[36] Dressing himself as a drunkard, he parades into the assembly behind a flute girl, earning the applause of the Tarentine *demos* (ἐκρότουν, 13.7). He appears ready to break into song, but having gained the attention of his fellow citizens he instead rebukes them (13.8–9). At first his speech appears to have succeeded, but those who fear a treaty with Rome rebuke the citizens in turn for their willingness to be deceived by such tactics, and eject Meton from the assembly. Plutarch thus demonstrates the ineffectiveness of reasoned statesmanship when confronting a divided people: first the opposition of the aristocrats fails, then Meton's attempt to lead by adopting demagogic tactics comes to nothing when similar tactics are employed against him by men more skilled in their use.

The dysfunctional Tarentine assembly is the foil for the unified middle republic of Claudius and Fabricius. Unlike the Tarentine aristocrats, who fail miserably, Claudius is immediately effective (19.5). The former are shouted down by those in favour of war (13.5); the latter is revered by his receptive audience. Claudius' opposition resembles that of the aristocrats at Tarentum, but succeeds because the Roman state

[34] The demagogues are clearly labelled as such (13.4), but the nobles are called 'the elder and thoughtful citizens (τῶν δὲ πρεσβυτέρων καὶ νοῦν ἐχόντων πολιτῶν, 13.4)'. Though somewhat vague to the modern eye, this phrase would have had aristocratic connotations for an ancient reader, see G. S. Shrimpton, 'Accuracy in Thucydides', *AHB* 12.3 (1998), 71–82. See Pelling (n. 5), 211–16 for a discussion of civic polarity elsewhere in the *Lives*.

[35] Dionysius' account of this assembly in *Ant.* 19.8 lacks Plutarch's emphasis on demagogy. Although the speech he gives to Meton is similar, his only mention of *stasis* and demagogy comes in an oblique reference at the end of the chapter: '... those responsible for the troubles (οἱ τῶν κακῶν αἴτιοι) seized (Meton) and threw him headlong from the theatre'.

[36] LSJ II.2 and I, respectively.

is united.[37] Taken together, *Pyrrhus* 13 and 19 make an important point: frank speech, παρρησία Ῥωμαϊκή as Plutarch will later name it (*Mar.* 31.5), is an effective, even admirable quality in a statesman, but can only succeed when directed towards a proper audience. When employed in a diseased state, it accomplishes nothing.

INEFFECTIVE ARISTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP IN THE LATE REPUBLIC

Tarentum is not only a foil for the third-century Roman republic, but also for the late republic in *Marius*, where the demagogy of Saturninus, Sulpicius, and (at times) Marius will be the driving political force. The primary inheritors of Fabricius' and Claudius' aristocratic mantle are three of the Caecilii Metelli: Delmaticus, Numidicus, and Pius.[38] All three perform the same function, and are therefore assimilated into the same character, with almost no attempt made to distinguish one from another.[39] They form, in effect, a literary unity that is Marius' main political nemesis. The opposition of the eldest, Metellus Delmaticus, is very brief,[40] so I will focus instead on two later instances of Metellan opposition: Metellus Numidicus' refusal to swear Saturninus' oath (28–9), and Metellus Pius' refusal personally to oppose Marius' invasion of Rome (42). These two acts are the late republican *comparanda* for the statesmanship of Fabricius and Claudius in *Pyrrhus*.

Before addressing Plutarch's narrative of Saturninus' demagogy and the exile of Metellus Numidicus (*Mar.* 28.6–29.12), we should first consider Plutarch's peculiar explanation for the origins of the strife between Metellus and Marius. In *Iugurtha*, a text Plutarch consulted in composing *Pyrrhus-Marius*, Sallust links the origins of their feud to Metellus' refusal of Marius' request to return to Rome and stand for the consulship (*Iug.* 64).[41] Although that incident is also recounted in *Marius* (8.6), Plutarch eschews Sallust's explanation and instead finds the origins of their enmity in Marius' execution of a certain Turpillius,[42] who was an ally (ξένος) of Metellus (*Mar.* 8.3–5).[43] Plutarch's recasting of Marius' and Metellus' feud does not affect Metellus' character much; the latter's haughty refusal of Marius' request remains. Marius' character, on the other hand, is blackened considerably, and the struggle between Marius and Metellus is made to appear even more bitter and violent, foreshadowing the bloodiness of the coming struggle between the groups they represent.

[37] Plutarch explicitly praises a similar unity in *Cimon* 17.9, where the Athenian defeat at Tanagra prompts Cimon's recall.

[38] RE s.v. Caecilius Metellus 91, 97, and 98.

[39] They are all simply called Metellus. Only in 42 5, where Metellus Pius is identified as the son of Metellus Numidicus, is any distinction noted, and even there the close familial tie between the two and the similarity of their behaviour reinforces, rather than detracts from, their assimilation.

[40] He appears only in *Mar.* 4, the narrative of Marius' tribunate, where the consul L. Aurelius Cotta is being haled off to prison for opposing Marius' voting legislation. Cotta appeals to Delmaticus, who sponsored Marius' candidacy (4.1), but when Delmaticus expresses his support for Cotta, he is threatened in turn with incarceration. None of the other tribunes come to his assistance, and the Senate withdraws its opposition.

[41] Plutarch cites Sallust three times elsewhere in the *Lives*, but not in *Marius*. His use of the Roman historian in this *Life* is nonetheless all but certain, see Flacelière (n. 21), 87 and E. Valgiglio, *Vita di Mario*, I classici della nuova Italia 47 (Florence, 1967), vii.

[42] 'Ever since then (ἐκ τούτου) they were openly enemies' (8.6), with οὗτος, as usual, pointing backwards (Sm. 1245). Ziegler places a colon after the phrase, apparently indicating that οὗτος should point forward. I do not agree with his interpretation.

[43] Plutarch's use of ξένος in this passage is probably not an indication of a legal relationship, such as patronage. If Plutarch had wanted to translate the term *cliens*, he would probably have used the word πελάτης, as he does at *Rom.* 13.7.

Yet neither the Turpillius affair nor Metellus' rejection of Marius' request lead directly to Metellus' exile in *Marius*. Plutarch instead blames Marius' fear and his abject prostration of himself to the Roman *demos*.[44] '[Marius] primarily feared Metellus, to whom he had shown a lack of gratitude, and who was by nature, because of his true excellence, opposed to those who insinuate themselves into the people's favour and cater to their pleasure to the detriment of all' (28.6). Plutarch actually gives two reasons for Marius' fear, but to the first, Marius' ingratitude, he grants only three words. The second, Metellus' innate virtue and resolute opposition to demagogues, is explained at greater length and placed in the rhetorically stronger final position. Plutarch thus effectively links Marius' plot to his subsequent demagogic programme. It is not the political contest between Marius and Metellus *per se* that prompts the latter's exile, but Marius' decision to resort to demagogic tactics.

Metellus' expulsion is engineered through a rider attached to Saturninus' land bill. It directs the members of the Senate to 'come forward and swear to abide by whatever measures the people enact' (*Mar.* 29.2).[45] Marius feigns resistance to the bill on the grounds that such compulsion of the Senate, regardless of the merits of the bill, would be arrogant, and declares that he will not swear the oath. Metellus promises that he too will refuse to swear. But when Saturninus calls the senators to the rostra a few days later to take the oath publicly, Marius rejects his 'youthful brashness' in the Senate and declares his willingness to obey the law (29.6). When he swears his oath, the Roman people, like the Tarentine *demos* in *Pyrrhus*, burst into applause (ἀνεκρότησε, 29.7; cf. ἐκρότουν, *Pyrrh.* 13.7). The other senators, though enraged by Marius' defection, feel compelled to follow suit. Metellus, however, refuses to compromise his former commitment and departs the forum, prepared to suffer anything rather than acquiesce. As he leaves, he lectures those near him on morality: 'Doing wrong is base, doing what is right in safety is common, but it is solely the mark of a good man to do what is right when danger is involved' (29.8).

Having now the necessary pretext, Saturninus proceeds with Metellus' interdiction (29.9). *Stasis* ensues. The basest element of the state (τὸ φαυλότατον) is prepared to kill Metellus; the 'best men' (οἱ βέλτιστοι) rush to his aid. Unwilling to be the cause of civil bloodshed, however, Metellus leaves Rome. His parting words, which are described in the narrative as 'well reasoned' (ἔμφρων λογισμός), reveal his assessment of the situation: 'Either affairs will improve and the *demos* will change its mind and summon me back, or the situation will remain the same and it will be best if I am gone' (29.11).

[44] The word Plutarch consistently employs in *Marius* to describe such obsequious governance is χάρις (4.6, 28.1, 28.5), which recalls the Tarentine obsession with χάρις in *Pyrrhus* 13.4 11 and 16.2–3. See C. L. H. Barnes, *Tarentum Victum: Processes of Evolution*, Diss. University of Michigan, UMI 9938398 (Ann Arbor, 1999), 78–111 for more on the *topos* of Tarentine decadence.

[45] Plutarch's description of the rider (...ἢ μὴν ἐμμενεῖν οἷς ἂν ὁ δῆμος ψηφίσαιτο) poses an interpretive problem. The presence of ἄν indicates that the optative ψηφίσαιτο within the relative clause must represent what would in direct discourse be an aorist subjunctive (ἐμμενῶ οἷς ἂν ὁ δῆμος ψηφίσηται), which would in turn require that the clause be construed as either a future more vivid or a present general relative conditional (Sm. 2565, 2626). If one understands a future more vivid construction, *Marius* 29.2 would not limit the rider to this law alone, but also entail a future obligation to support the decrees of the voting assemblies. This interpretation is unlikely, however, because it is neither supported elsewhere in Plutarch (cf. *Cato Min.* 32.6), nor in the accounts of other authors (cf. App. *BCiv.* 1.29). Construing the phrase as a present general relative clause in a mixed condition is therefore the most plausible solution.

Metellus' behaviour throughout this affair seems noble. From the perspective of merely personal virtue, he is clearly admirable. In the third-century republic, he would doubtless have been effective as well. But is Metellus a good statesman for the *late* republic? If not, how is his ineffectiveness to be reconciled with his apparent nobility and wisdom, virtues that are reinforced by the subsequent mention of his philosophical pursuits in Rhodes (*Mar.* 29.12)?[46]

In seeking an answer, we should re-examine Metellus' apparent acceptance of Marius' declaration in the Senate. Marius' words are repeatedly described as deceptive (29.4–6), so the reader cannot be taken in by his duplicity. Even though Metellus lacks such guidance, however, one marvels that he seems unable to perceive Marius' charade. The senatorial opposition that Saturninus' rider seeks to forestall is precisely the type of resistance Marius himself once overcame by threatening to have a consul thrown into prison (*Mar.* 4.3–4, see p.00), so the idea that Marius would balk at a bill forcing the Senate's hand is ludicrous. Metellus' reception of Marius' implausible stance, if sincere, would suggest a frightening inability to deal with unprincipled opposition. The description of Metellus himself in this section is ostensibly positive; he is even assimilated via Pindaric citation to an athletic victor.[47] Yet it would seem that the inflexible personal virtues for which he is praised create a weakness for his enemies to exploit.[48]

Metellus' reaction to the threat of *stasis* after his interdiction compounds the problem. It demonstrates his public spirit and a laudable willingness to subjugate his own welfare to that of the state, but also the narrow limits of his concern. When he speaks of acting nobly in a dangerous situation (29.8), he refers only to his own danger. He does not mention the danger to the state now robbed of his leadership. Further, his departing aphorism in 29.11 is remarkably passive: he does not say that he will try to improve the state, but hopes that the state will somehow improve itself and recall him in chagrin.

The key to understanding Plutarch's praise for Metellus lies not in *Marius*, but in the Tarentine precedent of *Pyrrhus* 13. Because the Tarentine aristocrats did not recognize their own impotence, they struggled in vain against their demagogic opponents. Metellus, on the other hand, realizes that the *demos* is in control. He is not deceived by Marius' ploy; he is simply unwilling to compromise his own principles in a hopeless effort to combat it. Because he believes the rider is wrong, he declares at once that he will oppose Saturninus, and is later true to his promise even though the consequences of opposition are dire. He will never resort to counter-demagogy, as Meton did at Tarentum (and the results at Tarentum suggest that he is wise not to try), so the only response left to him is open opposition and a ready acceptance of the consequences. Because he does not truly lead the state, those consequences are borne by him alone. Metellus Numidicus is thus a tragically ineffective, but still admirable figure. The causes of his impotence lie not within his own character, but in the Roman state itself.[49]

[46] Metellus' retirement to Rhodes is not an Epicurean withdrawal from affairs; Plutarch consistently decries such withdrawal. Cf. *Pyrrh.* 20.6–7, see p. 00; cf. also *Non posse suauiter uiui secundum Epicurum* 1098d and *De lat. uiu.*, which are discussed in Aalders (n. 18), 6.

[47] See below, p. 00.

[48] Such, at least, is the opinion of Plutarch's Marius, whose explicit intent in feigning opposition to Saturninus' bill is to entice Metellus into doing the same (29.5).

[49] Metellus Numidicus, by my interpretation, has much in common with the noble Verginius Rufus of *Galba* 6 and *Otho* 18.

When the name Metellus next appears, it refers not to Numidicus but to his son, Metellus Pius, whose interaction with the Roman army affirms his father's political judgement. As Marius and Cinna advance on Rome, the Roman army asks Pius to take command (*Mar.* 42.5–6).[50] The episode recalls Marius' repeated consulships against the Teutones and Cimbri, which were motivated by the people's confidence that he was the best available commander. But where Marius was eager to seize the opportunity, Metellus is too strictly loyal to his personal aristocratic code to subjugate it to the exigencies of the situation.[51] 'Metellus was outraged, and ordered the men to return to the consul, whereupon they departed instead for the enemy. Metellus gave up hope for the city and withdrew as well' (*Mar.* 42.6).

Metellus Pius' error is his misconception of the relationship between himself and the Roman troops; he mistakes himself for their leader, when in fact it is they who command.[52] He expects the soldiers to return to Octavius in shame, cowed by his haughty remonstration, and is caught off-guard when they instead defect to Marius' side. In effect, his interaction with the soldiers teaches him what his father already knew, that Rome has no place for a traditional aristocrat. His reaction upon realizing this fact is the same as that of his father: he withdraws from the city.[53]

EXPEDIENT STATESMANSHIP IN THE LATE REPUBLIC

Thus far, my analysis of statesmanship in *Marius* has been concerned primarily with the Roman aristocrats who oppose Marius. It is now time to consider Plutarch's depiction of Marius himself.

Although he is a prominent statesman, Marius is never portrayed as one of the élite aristocracy.[54] The Metelli and Octavius are cast in the mould of Fabricius and Ap. Claudius, noble men who lead in a manner consistent with firm principles. Marius is more a populist leader who panders to the *demos* in pursuit of his own ambitions. Yet he is not a typical demagogue either. As the primary subject of the *Life*, he is granted a more nuanced treatment than stereotypical rabble-rousers like Saturninus and Sulpicius. Plutarch highlights three of Marius' assets in particular: his military ability, his political achievements, and his successful pursuit of expedient measures. The last of these merits particular attention: while Marius' political and military successes differentiate him from Rome's demagogues, it is his recognition of advantage

[50] The army in *Marius* is an incarnation of the Roman *demos*. It falls prey to Marius' demagogy in 7.6 and votes him a large share of the victory spoils in 21.4.

[51] Contrast Plutarch's praise for Solon's flexibility in adapting his laws to the needs of Athens (*Sol.* 16, 20), and for Agesilaus' decision to allow Sparta's laws against cowardice to 'sleep' for one day after the battle of Leuctra (*Ages.* 30).

[52] Cf. Plutarch's condemnation of Galba in *Galba* 29.3: 'He expected to rule men domesti cated by Tigellinus and Nymphidius as Scipio, Fabricius, and Camillus had ruled the Romans of their day.'

[53] Unlike Metellus Numidicus, Metellus Pius' departure from *Marius* does not coincide with the end of his political life. Yet, though Plutarch was aware of Pius' later career (cf. *Crass.* 6.2, *Pomp.* 8 and 17 19, *Sert.* 12 13 and 21 2), he does not mention it here. His silence sharpens the portrayal of both Pius and Rome. Because nothing is said of Pius' later defeats by Sertorius, his stature as commander is enhanced. Because his subsequent alliance with Sulla is ignored, the downfall of the republic is made to seem more imminent and final. See T. R. S. Broughton, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic*, 3 vols (Chico, CA, 1951 84), 2.33, 2.42, 2.79, 2.83, and 3.41 for references and bibliography on Pius' career.

[54] Contrast Plutarch's *Cato Maior*, in which a *nouus homo* is much more closely integrated into the ruling élite. Note especially *Cat. Mai.* 16.8, where the admission of Cato into the censorship is interpreted as a sign of Roman greatness.

and his unscrupulous willingness to exploit it that distinguish him from his noble opposition.

The narrative of Marius' tribunate in chapter 4 sets the pattern for his subsequent conflicts with the élite. Two of his priorities in that year are noted, his voting legislation (4.2 6) and his resistance to agrarian reform (4.7). The former is explicitly described as demagogic (4.6), and so poses no problem.[55] The significance of the latter, which frustrates the people's wishes, is far more difficult to ascertain. The crux of the passage comes at its end. In Greek, it reads as follows: *εἰς τὸ ἴσον ἑαυτὸν κατέστησε τῇ τιμῇ πρὸς ἀμφοτέρους, ὡς μηδετέροις παρὰ τὸ συμφέρον χαριζόμενος*. Both the independent and dependent clause pose interpretive problems, and those problems hinge upon the meaning of the two phrases *εἰς τὸ ἴσον* and *παρὰ τὸ συμφέρον*.

The expression *εἰς τὸ ἴσον* occurs only here in Plutarch, so we must look elsewhere for context. There are nine other instances extant from the fourth century A.D. or earlier, four of which are the products of editorial reconstruction.[56] I will restrict my attention to the three closest parallels from the remaining five passages, all of which come from Xenophon.[57] In the first, *Cyr.* 1.4.5, *εἰς τὸ ἴσον* refers to an equal level of ability: '[Cyrus] swiftly achieved a level of skill in horsemanship equal to his peers (*εἰς τὸ ἴσον ἀφίκετο τῇ ἱππικῇ τοῖς ἥλιξι*).' But while Xenophon's dative of respect (*τῇ ἱππικῇ*, Sm. 1516) has a parallel in Plutarch (*τῇ τιμῇ*), his use of *εἰς τὸ ἴσον* does not: Marius cannot have simultaneously gained equality *with* both the Senate and the mob, a logical impossibility, but must have received an equal share of honour *from* them. Xenophon provides closer parallels in *Cyr.* 1.6.28—'Why did you not stand and fight against lions and bears and leopards (*λέουσι καὶ ἄρκτοις καὶ παρδάλεσιν*) on even terms (*εἰς τὸ ἴσον*)'?—and in *An.* 4.6.18, '... nor do I think (the enemy) are willing to come down against us (*ἡμῖν*) on equal terms/terrain (*εἰς τὸ ἴσον*)'. The datives in these two passages, in the former following *μάχομαι*, in the latter standing alone, mirror Plutarch's use of the preposition *πρός* with the accusative, which should then mean 'against' (LSJ C.II.4). True, *πρός* can express a mutual relationship lacking hostility (LSJ C.III.1), but given the confrontational tone of *εἰς τὸ ἴσον* in Xenophon, and Marius' turbulent relationship with the senatorial class, we might better construe the independent clause of *Marius* 4.7 as meaning: 'He placed himself into an equal position, in respect of honour, against each party.'

The phrase *παρὰ τὸ συμφέρον* in the dependent clause is difficult to interpret because of its ambiguity. It can be literally translated as 'against expedience', but whose expedience is meant, that of Marius, or of Rome, or both? Prima facie, the second option is the most natural reading for the context, especially because the *ὡς* governing the clause indicates that this assessment of Marius' behaviour is made by the Senate and the mob, not by Marius himself or the narrator. Plutarch is a subtle author, however, and we should not discount the other possibilities out of hand.

[55] Demagogy and tribunes go hand in hand in *Marius*. All five tribunes in the *Life*, Marius (4.1 7), Saturninus (14.12), A. Pompeius (17.10), Sulpicius (34.1), and the unnamed tribune of 8.9, behave in a demagogic manner. The one who might have been portrayed otherwise, Nonius, is murdered by Saturninus before assuming office (29.1). As the focuses of civil strife, tribunes naturally play no role in the idealized republic of *Pyrrhus*.

[56] These four are Athenaeus 21.21 and 21 32, Epiph. *Pan.* 3.41, and Philo *CW* 152.4.

[57] The other two instances, Arist. *Eth. Eud.* 1242b34 and Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.42.3, would add little to the analysis.

Unfortunately, the full expression *παρὰ τὸ συμφέρον* only appears three other times in Plutarch, and each of these contains the same potential ambiguity.[58] We must therefore look to the more general expression *τὸ συμφέρον*, which occurs much more frequently. Although some instances of the shorter phrase are also ambiguous, there are several in which *τὸ συμφέρον* must refer to the personal interest of the character whose viewpoint is expressed (in narratological terms, the focalizer). In *Pyrrhus* 12.4, for instance, Plutarch reproaches the strife between the Hellenistic kings thus: '... as for the two words, war and peace, they employ whichever is at hand just like currency for their (own) advantage (*πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον*), not for justice'. Later in the same chapter, Plutarch again rebukes the kings, this time for their faithlessness. 'Kings cannot therefore blame the many for changing parties in accordance with their (own) interest (*πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον*) ...' (12.12).[59] *τὸ συμφέρον* does not always refer to the interest of the focalizer, however. *Cato Min.* 26–9 recounts the attempt by Q. Caecilius Metellus Nepos to vote Pompey a special command. Cato is adamantly opposed to this measure, and goes to extravagant lengths to block it. When Nepos perceives that Cato's resistance is swaying the people towards *τὸ συμφέρον*, which must here refer to their own advantage and not that of Nepos himself, he orders his men to charge and disperse the assembly (28.2).

τὸ συμφέρον in Plutarch can therefore refer either to one's personal advantage or the advantage of another party. Since we have no reason to exclude either possibility in *Marius* 4.7, I would argue that both meanings are in play. The passage describes Marius' early career, when his advantage and that of the state are aligned. From the perspective of his fellow Romans, Marius has the state's interest at heart and is unwilling to gratify a faction if doing so would harm Rome. From Marius' own perspective, he is unwilling to please any particular faction when it is not in his own interest to do so. No distinction is necessary because at this early stage in his career Marius' interests are in tune with those of the republic at large.

Once he has been exiled, however, Marius' interests and those of his native city diverge; the principled and therefore impotent Roman élite must confront his ruthless expedience in the military theatre.[60] The contrast is clearest in Marius' struggle against Cinna's erstwhile colleague Cn. Octavius. The background for their lopsided conflict is established in 41.1–2, where Plutarch describes the dispute between Cinna and Octavius, and the ensuing *stasis* in Rome. Marius, who is at this time a fugitive, sees in Cinna's ouster an opportunity to return to power, and therefore sends to Cinna offering his aid (41.5). Plutarch cites two motives for Marius' decision: first, his recognition of Cinna's demagogic nature; second, his assessment of Octavius' character: 'He knew that Octavius was a noble man, and one wishing to rule in the most just manner' (*...εἰδὼς δὲ τὸν μὲν Ὀκτάβιον ἄριστον ἄνδρα καὶ τῷ δικαιοτάτῳ τρόπῳ βουλόμενον ἄρχειν*, 41.5). Plutarch's description of Octavius is strikingly similar to his earlier description of Metellus Numidicus in 29.5: '[Marius] knew that Metellus was a steadfast man, and one who considered truth, as Pindar says, to be the "foundation of great excellence"' (*...τὸν δὲ Μέτελλον εἰδὼς βέβαιον ἄνδρα καὶ τὴν 'ἀλήθειαν ἀρχὴν μεγάλης ἀρετῆς' κατὰ Πίνδαρον ἡγούμενον...*). Both descriptions combine the word *εἰδώς* with a participial

[58] In *De tuenda sanitate praecepta*, *τὸ συμφέρον* could be either the common advantage or that of certain orators; in *Alex.* 20.6, it could refer either to Darius' advantage or that of his army as a whole; in *Mar.* 42.4 it could mean either Octavius' advantage or that of Rome.

[59] Cf. also *Sulla* 6.9.

[60] Contrast *Cimon* 17, where Cimon's willingness to fight for Athens at Tanagra, despite his ostracism, endears him to his fellow Athenians and earns his recall.

construction; both employ the noun ἄνδρα, modified by an adjective (ἄριστον/βέβαιον) and a second dependent clause linked with καί; both are, moreover, focalized through Marius. Octavius is thereby assimilated into Marius' aristocratic opposition.

Octavius' response to the threat posed by Marius and Cinna is aristocratic, foolish, and ultimately fatal: he refuses to raise a defensive army by freeing slaves (42.4). The incident follows Marius' and Cinna's seizure of the Janiculum (42.1–3) and immediately precedes the soldiers' appeal to Metellus Pius, with which it is closely linked. The account of Octavius' decision is strangely inverted: a narrative rebuke precedes the event. The reader is thus told how to interpret Octavius' decision even before it is made.

Octavius did not hurt matters through lack of experience so much as through the severity of his sense of justice, (which led him to) abandon what was necessary, contrary to expediency (παρὰ τὸ συμφέρον). Although many called upon him to declare freedom to household servants, he said he would not hand the fatherland over to slaves.

Again the expression παρὰ τὸ συμφέρον appears. Of the three instances of this phrase in Plutarch's corpus, two are in *Marius*. The first (*Mar.* 4.7) praises Marius' refusal to act παρὰ τὸ συμφέρον; this second one condemns Octavius' insistence on acting παρὰ τὸ συμφέρον. The two passages embody the distinction between Octavius, a noble aristocrat who ignores expedience, and Marius, a *nouus homo* who does not. The contrast is further strengthened by a second parallel: the measure that Octavius refuses to adopt, the creation of an emergency army by freeing slaves, is the very one that Marius has himself taken twice already, once when Sulla marched upon Rome (35.7), and again when Marius returned to Italy from exile (41.3). Octavius, like Metellus Numidicus in 29.10, like Metellus Pius in 42.6, rejects expedience; Marius, in his tribunate, in his successive consulships from 104 to 101 B.C., in his decision to postpone his triumph over the Teutones, in his alliance with Cinna and subsequent march on Rome, recognizes and pursues expedience to great effect.Whether acting for or against Rome, it is his willingness to do so that gives him the advantage over his aristocratic opponents. Octavius and the Metelli are unwilling to subjugate their moral code to the needs of the moment, and their deficiency in this regard goes a long way towards explaining their failures throughout the *Life*.

CONCLUSION

By placing middle republican heroes like Ap. Claudius and Fabricius alongside the late republican Metelli and Octavius, *Pyrrhus-Marius* depicts a rigid aristocratic code that persists despite the radical changes that take place in the Roman *demos* between the third and first centuries B.C. The trouble with the leadership of the late republic is, in part, its inflexibility: not that it declines in the generations after Claudius and Fabricius, but rather that it does not adapt. Against demagogues like Sulpicius and Saturninus (and in some cases Marius), old-school politics have become ineffective, and the Roman nobility is unable to meet the new challenge.[61]

[61] This aspect of Plutarch's depiction is similar to Sallust's *Bellum Iugurthinum*. In Sallust, however, the readers' sympathies are drawn to the demagogues. The elite leaders are portrayed as arrogant, and demagogy is the only effective form of political opposition (*Iug.* 5.1).

The deeper question posed by *Pyrrhus-Marius*, however, is whether the senatorial leadership could have been effective if their methods had been different. Whatever one thinks historically, and whatever answers might be drawn from a (perhaps unwise) sifting of evidence from all the *Lives*, the outlook within *Pyrrhus-Marius* is quite pessimistic. The shadow of Meton, who appears in the early stages of *Pyrrhus*, looms large over the end of *Marius*. Even if a Roman aristocrat should resort to demagogic tactics, he would merely reduce himself to the level of the other demagogues, as Meton had, and would still be unable to resist the combined efforts of his opponents. The only characters who learn this lesson in *Marius* are Metellus Pius (albeit a bit late) and Metellus Numidicus, and their final solution is to abdicate responsibility and exile themselves.

That Plutarch investigates this political question at such length should not be surprising. In fact, although the primary interest of Plutarchan biography is ethical (see *Aem.* 1.1–4 and *Per.* 1.4–2.4), the relationship between the great individual and the state is a common theme in the *Lives*.[62] Plutarch's explorations of this theme, however, are elsewhere always confined by the chronological limits of an individual lifespan. Only in *Pyrrhus-Marius* does he grant himself sufficient scope for diachronic political analysis, which in turn allows him to pursue an agenda distinct from that in his other work. He does not focus his attention on the aspects of Rome's role that are dominant in the *Moralia* and the other *Lives*, namely Rome's special status as a world power and its relationship to the Greek *poleis*.[63] Instead, he treats Rome itself as a Greek *polis* on the Tarentine model: at first a much healthier version of Tarentum, to be sure, but one that nonetheless eventually suffers the same decline. The result is a starkly negative portrayal of Rome and an effective defence of one-man rule. His relatively positive depiction of the middle republic is quite similar to Livy's analysis in *Ab urbe condita* 9, especially in its encomium of republican statesmanship, but his conclusions diverge radically: where Livy sees a recurring need for great men who operate within the republican system, Plutarch argues that the republic eventually devolved to the point where such men could not save it, and one of them had to assume sole power.[64]

What might a reader of the second century A.D. conclude from this analysis? Even under the benevolent influence of Trajan's reign, there might be a strong tendency to look back upon the republic as a time of glorious freedom and virtue. A reading of *Pyrrhus* in isolation would contribute to such a view. There is a more melancholy alternative suggested by the combined *Pyrrhus-Marius*, however. Perhaps immanent in the nature of the republic was a weakness, an inability to counter demagogy, that meant chaos was inevitable once demagogic tactics began to be employed. According to the dictum of *Pyrrhus* 12.12 (p. 00), faithless kings engender faithless people. One might say the same of leaders in general. If so, the demagogic innovation in Rome would necessarily lead to a decline in the Roman people; they would then respond solely to demagogy. The only options

[62] See J. Ma. Candau Moron, 'Plutarch's *Lysander and Sulla*: integrated characters in Roman historical perspective', *AJPh* 121.3 (2000), 465; F. Frazier, *Histoire et morale dans les* Vies par allèles *de Plutarque*, Collection d'études anciennes 124 (Paris, 1996); and S. C. R. Swain, 'Plutarch, Plato, Athens, and Rome', in J. Barnes and M. Griffin (ed.), *Philosophia Togata II: Plato and Aristotle at Rome* (Oxford, 1997), 165 87.

[63] The former is discussed in S. C. R. Swain, 'Plutarch: chance, providence, and history', *AJPh* 110 (1989), 272 302; on the latter see H. Halfman, 'Die Selbstverwaltung der kaiserzeitlichen Polis in Plutarch's Schrift *Praecepta gerendae rei publicae*', *Chiron* 32 (2002), 83–95.

[64] On Livy see R. Morello, 'Livy's Alexander Digression (9.17 19): counterfactuals and apologetics', *JRS* 92 (2002), 62 85, especially 65 6 and 80 2.

available to the leader of such a people would be either to join the demagogues or to force a change of government. The former would resolve nothing; the latter eventually occurred. In Caesar Augustus Rome finally produced a statesman with sufficient vision, ruthlessness, and longevity to impose the necessary changes. From the perspective of the second century A.D., the rule of Trajan would, by extension, seem both happy and necessary, and any longing for greater freedom would be tempered by the knowledge of the conflict that such freedom would inevitably entail.

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