explanation of the death of Drusus, but they may have been borrowed from his source. See also note 13.
53. Cf. Suet. *Nero* 7.4.
54. R. Syme, *Tacitus*, I 306ff., II 482ff., 692ff.
55. E. Koestermann, *Tacitus Annalen*, p. 80, note on 5.1.
56. Hunter, op. cit., p. 190; Buckland, op. cit., p. 103.
57. *Ann.* i 6.2.
58. Art. cit., 361.
59. Dio lvi 46.1 ταῦτα (rumours about Augustus and Tiberius) μὲν δὴ οὖν ὕστερον διαθροεῖν ἤρξαντο.
60. Suet. *Aug.* 65.3 and 9, Vell. ii 104.1, ii 112.7, Dio LV 32.1-2. For a full discussion of Agrippa's character see Pappano art. cit. 33.
61. Tac. *Ann.* i 10.7, i 7.5, Suet. *Tib.* 21.1, Vell. ii 121.1.
62. Tac. *Ann.* i 3.3, 4.3.
63. Suet. *Aug.* 19.2.
64. Tac. *Ann.* ii 39-40. For a fuller (but insufficiently sceptical) discussion see J. Mogenet, 'La Conjuration de Clemens', *L'Antiquité Classique*, xxiii (1954) 321-330.
65. Art. cit., 333. Dio lvii 4.1 regards Germanicus as a much more serious rival.
66. Cf. Suet. *Tib.* 18.
67. Tac. *Ann.* i 6.2: illum (Tiberium) metu, hanc (Liviam) novercalibus odiis, suspecti et invisi iuvenis caedem festinavisse.
68. See B. Walker, *The Annals of Tiberius* (Manchester, 1952), esp. pp. 33-34, 158. A similar principle may be seen in the attempt in the first sentence of *Ann.* i 6 to arouse sympathy for Agrippa.
69. Cf. Hohl, art. cit., 355.

THE PORTRAYAL OF AUTOCRATIC POWER IN PLUTARCH'S *LIVES*

B. F. Harris

It is not without reason that the *Lives* of Plutarch are still studied predominantly as historical material, for often they describe men and periods about which we are poorly informed elsewhere, and this has led to intensive work on Plutarch's sources and his methods of composition. This historical work[1] has been of great value to those whose interest in Plutarch is also literary and philosophical, who study the *Lives* in the setting of his other extant writings and, more broadly, of the Greeks who lived under the early Roman Empire.

This paper belongs to the latter class, and aims to explore one broad theme, that of autocratic power, as Plutarch depicts it in a number of representative *Lives*. It will be relevant first briefly to consider his biographical method and its tradition, and also his own political attitudes.

I

Plutarch was a moralist and literary artist; as a biographer he disclaims the writing of 'pragmatic history'.[2] Rather, his interest is in character. He portrays the 'signs of the soul' in notable men, like a portrait painter who selects certain features only of his subject to convey the essential impression.[3] Plutarch is fully aware that he is working at second hand, historically speaking. In the preface to the *Nicias* he says he will rapidly traverse the writings of Thucydides and Philistus on this topic, to show that he bases himself on a reliable historical framework, and cannot be charged with carelessness or laziness. However, he also claims to add extra material from ancient decrees about Nicias, οὐ τὴν ἄχρηστον

ἀθροίζων ἱστορίαν, ἀλλὰ τὴν πρὸς κατανόησιν ἤθους καὶ τρόπου παραδιδούς. This one remark epitomizes his whole attitude.

This is far from an academic exercise. Plutarch believes in the wholesome effect of the contemplation of great characters, and summons his readers to active participation. History, he says in the *Timoleon*, is a kind of mirror by which a man may adorn his life in accordance with virtue. In his own researches (as, he hoped, in his reader's experience) he 'lived a common life' with his subject, 'entertaining him as a guest'.[4] The *Pericles* expounds the same view in more philosophical terms. The soul, says Plutarch (writing as a Platonist) is by nature φιλομαθής καὶ φιλοθέαμος, and must fix on worthy objects, that is, virtuous deeds. Whereas in other areas of perception such as works of art we remain detached, virtue inevitably arouses emulation; it implants an impulse towards action and a settled moral purpose.[5] The corollary of this, stated in the *Timoleon* and the *Demetrius*, is that the soul is naturally repelled by what is malicious or ignoble, and thus it is also salutary to view some historical figures notable for their vices.[6] But Plutarch takes a lenient view of moral faults, remarking in the *Cimon* that he prefers to call them 'deficiencies in virtue',[7] and we shall observe how this materially affects some portraits in the *Lives*.

This belief about the purpose of historical writing has affinities with the Greek and Roman historians. There is a strong didactic note in Thucydides and Polybius, in Sallust and Livy and Tacitus, and the attitude to human character in Plutarch was widely held. It goes back to the *Nicomachean Ethics*, when in defining moral virtue Aristotle began with the natural impulses present in all men, which by means of repeated actions (πράξεις) develop into a fixed moral disposition (ἕξις).[8] Hence the stress in all Peripatetic biography on actions as the key to character; historical study from this angle was an integral part of the young politician's training outlined in the *Rhetoric* and *Politics*.

The effect of this doctrine in Greek and Roman historiography has recently been described by Professor Gordon Williams. He points out that 'it harmonised perfectly with that curious substantial and mechanistic view of character held by the ancient world . . . Instead of regarding the concepts of virtue and vice as a convenient method of classifying human actions, there seems to have been a tendency to regard character as a constituent element of a human being, something actual and given like the physical features, a determinant of his actions, such that every action reflected a basic trait of character.'[9]

In biography, the early successors of Aristotle had developed the study of character found in the *Ethics*. Theophrastus' *Characters* is most familiar because of its survival, but it was Aristoxenus his contemporary who established the literary genre in the wide scope which Plutarch much later inherited.[10] How did he go about the composition, however, of individual *Lives*? The only sure means of determining this is to have before us the same historical source or sources as Plutarch can be proved to have used in a particular case, and to deduce this method thereby. But the analysis of Plutarch's sources has been found a very complex matter, and there have been extremes of interpretation. Earlier German scholars, who did pioneer work in analysis (particularly in the use of the 'chronographische-eidologische' distinction in the narratives) often became too sceptical of Plutarch's standards and ability. If there were considerable differences, for instance, between Plutarch's fifth century *Lives* and Herodotus or Thucydides, the assumption tended to be that he was not following the original authorities at all but recasting an existing biography of the Hellenistic school,[11] and the use he repeatedly makes, on his own information, of *Apophthegmata* or collections of sayings, seemed to support this view. But Plutarch has been rehabilitated in this group of *Lives*, by the memorable discussion of A. W. Gomme in particular,[12] who concludes 'I do not in fact believe that a man, universally declared to be widely read and universally admitted to be honest, used only one or two books for an essay or a *Life*, keeping closely to their form and content, using all their learning (which may also be second or third hand) pretending to quote from so many authors, criticizing some of them, and suppressing the name of one author in particular—the one from whom he took nearly everything he knew.' Having regard to Plutarch's own comments and his relative isolation at Chaeronea from the major libraries, he pictures him as writing with a limited number of books around him, relying on the voluminous notes of his previous reading and beyond that on a capacious if sometimes inadequate memory.[13]

In certain other *Lives* it has been possible to locate Plutarch's main sources with some confidence and thus follow his method. Thus J. E. Powell argued from the similarity with Arrian's history of Alexander that he and Plutarch followed a common *Life*, and Plutarch in addition the spurious Letters of Alexander, but even here it is risky to limit Plutarch to these sources only.[14] More recently D. A. Russell has analysed the *Coriolanus*[15] on the assumption, widely held, that Plutarch's sole historical source here was

Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* V-VIII, and that the other elements, antiquarian and philosophical, can be fairly readily identified. Russell is therefore able to look at these expansions and alterations of Dionysius where Plutarch is 'applying criteria of psychological probability to his source-narrative': that is, where the biographer, dissatisfied with Dionysius in matters of ἤθη καὶ πάθη, gives his own reconstruction. It becomes apparent that Plutarch finds the key to Coriolanus' character in his φιλοτιμία and ὀργή, and that he has used his sources with considerable freedom, relying on his own character evaluation and supplementing Dionysius with material from his own wide reading.

It has thus been possible, by the consideration of a representative number of the *Lives*, to test the accuracy of Plutarch's own description of his aims and methods. There can be no doubt that what he says in general terms is perfectly true—he is selective in his historical material, he does not deal exhaustively even with the selected episodes in his subjects' careers; οὔτε γὰρ ἱστορίας γράφομεν, ἀλλὰ βίους, οὔτε ταῖς ἐπιφανεστάταις πράξεσι πάντως ἔνεστι δήλωσις ἀρετῆς ἢ κακίας, ἀλλὰ πρᾶγμα βραχὺ πολλάκις καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ παιδία τις ἔμφασιν ἤθους ἐποίησε μᾶλλον ἢ μάχαι μυριόνεκροι καὶ παρατάξεις αἱ μέγισται καὶ πολιορκίαι πόλεων (*Alex.* 1.2). This may exaggerate the case, but it makes it plain that as he read his sources Plutarch made a constant habit of analysing men's actions so as to form a 'model' in his mind of their moral constitutions. To this extent one might call his method inductive. But he took the process further. Having decided what the major springs of a man's actions were, he then chose his material so as to illustrate his thesis.

II

Although there is this concentration on ἤθη καὶ πάθη, Plutarch's political attitudes entered into his total estimate of character. It was against the background of the constitutional propriety of a man's position, in Plutarch's eyes, that many of his actions public and private were to be judged, and this was particularly so with the exercise of autocratic power.

It is not difficult to find from the *Lives* themselves, and also the political *Essays*, where Plutarch stood. As a Platonist he took an aristocratic view of government, with the familiar picture of the philosopher-king as his starting point. In the *Ad principem inerudi-*

tum and the *Maxime cum principibus philosopho esse disserendum* Plutarch sets forth the qualities of good rulers, blending his Platonism with shrewd commonsense. The ruler embodies the divine law on earth,[16] and the secret of greatness is self-rule, which is the opposite of the popular misconception that the primary advantage of kingly power is freedom from the rule of others. The king has not come to this moral eminence unaided—it is the philosopher who has inspired in him the qualities of enlightened rule. Prominent among these are εὐβουλία, δικαιοσύνη, χρηστότης, μεγαλοφροσύνη.

This political ideal in Greek thought had been adapted to the reality of the Roman principate before Plutarch's age, and it is instructive to study his *Essays* alongside Pliny's *Panegyricus*, and the four *Speeches on Kingship* of Dio of Prusa, which are documents of the same period.[17] Plutarch accepted the Roman Empire philosophically, and speaking of the roles of Τύχη and Ἀρετή in this regard, could say εἰκός ἐστιν αὐτὰς σπεισμένας συνελθεῖν καὶ συνελθούσας ἐπιτελειῶσαι καὶ συναπεργάσασθαι τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἔργων τὸ κάλλιστον.[18]

It was thus as a monarchist in the Platonic tradition that Plutarch approached the widely differing political situations in which his characters moved, Greek, Roman and barbarian, and of course a serious weakness in his historical appreciation was his inability to gain a deep understanding, even of Greek democracy in the fifth century.[19] But for our purposes his view of the influence of power on individual character is more important, and his discussion in the *Praecepta gerendae rei publicae* is very useful in this regard. It is a curious mixture of advice to a young man entering public life: at some points, writing with an aristocratic flavour, he seems to assume a career of eminence in the context of Greece centuries before. Thus he lists as prime qualifications ἀρετή, φρόνημα, λόγος, and warns against the habitual sins of φιλαρχία, φιλοκέρδεια, ὑπεροψία. This is all for a young Pericles. More frequently, Plutarch gives his advice in the realistic setting of the Greek provinces of the early Roman Empire: he points to a *modus vivendi* with Roman governors whereby a Greek with a statesman's gifts can retain some of the true dignity of office, and at the same time show proper deference towards his rulers.

It is here that his general comments on φιλοτιμία are instructive, for in the *Lives* this is a central motif. Ambition has its source in many virtues and abilities, but is innate in men of robust and impetuous spirit and 'the wave that comes from the mass of men, raising

it aloft and sweeping it along by praises, often makes it uncontrolled and difficult to manage'. It is not outward honours that the true statesman should covet, but Plato's 'gold of one's own, mingled in the soul', and Plutarch gives this the aristocratic interpretation as that virtue which a man inherits by his birth.[20]

III

We shall first consider two examples of Plutarch's portrayal of τύραννις of the 'conventional' kind, the *Artaxerxes* and the *Dion*.

The *Artaxerxes* lies outside the series of parallel Greek and Roman *Lives*, but displays some of the motifs we shall observe to be prominent in them. Artaxerxes in his early career is the benign τύραννος, contrasted strongly with his brother, the stormy Cyrus, whose outstanding natural qualities become submerged beneath his ὀργή—resentment at his older brother's accession to the throne. Thus Cyrus is λαμπὸς τῇ ψυχῇ, πολεμικὸς διαφερόντως, φιλέταιρος, but also highly-strung and impetuous. His supporters believed he possessed the φρόνημα and φιλοτιμία essential in the king. Artaxerxes is a much milder man, and like his father was known for his πραότης and μεγαλοψυχία. The first motif is therefore two conflicting aspects of tyranny, and Cyrus attempts to wrest power from his brother. But his evil ambition predestines him to failure. In the background, as frequently with such conflicts in Plutarch, another pair are contrasted. The long resentment of Parysatis against her daughter-in-law Stateira breaks out in the incitement of her favourite Cyrus. One woman is beautiful and noble, the other an embittered schemer. The narrative gains momentum with the recklessness of Cyrus' revolt and the violence of his death in battle against his brother.

The second motif has as its starting-point the ἀνέλπιστος εὐτυχία of Cyrus' death for the fortunes of Artaxerxes. It is the μεταβολή of this *Life*, a frequent ingredient in Plutarch's narratives, particularly in a tale of autocratic power.[21] We now read a study of the deterioration in a king whose rule is unchallenged. Artaxerxes, not content until he himself has the credit of killing Cyrus, reveals typical vices of an Eastern despot: he is inconstant and hideously cruel, and plays into the hands of Parysatis with her plots to remove her personal enemies. Stateira is poisoned (although Plutarch rejects Ctesias' account of Parysatis' responsibility). The king wards off the Greek threat to the 'empty vaunt' of his Empire

by bribery, and the shameful 'Peace of Antalcidas', but later betrays the Spartan whom he once called his guest-friend. Darker deeds now mark his decline—the incestuous marriage with Atossa and delusions of his divinity as Law incarnate. The only redeeming feature is Artaxerxes' endurance of hardships on the expedition to Egypt: but his failure brings on what Plutarch regards as the most ruinous quality in tyrants, δειλία. Only its opposite, θαρραλεότης, can lead to a rule where the tyrant can afford to act generously (25 fin.).

The stage is now set for the third 'act', which itself arises from Artaxerxes' deterioration into despotism—the rivalry of his sons Darius and Ochus for the throne. There are complexities here similar to those in the earlier struggle of Artaxerxes and Cyrus. Darius is declared the future king, but his mistrust in his father is inflamed by the tempestuous Teribazus (ἀνώμαλος καὶ παράφορος) who displays in a minor role the fatal flaws of a tyrant's character. Artaxerxes removes both by a counter-plot, but is faced by the even more menacing Ochus, who is now consolidating his own position by the removal of another brother Ariaspes (who by contrast is πρᾷος δὲ καὶ ἁπλοῦς καὶ φιλάνθρωπος). The narrative concludes with the despairing death of the aged Artaxerxes, and the murderous cruelty of Ochus.

Within the familiar framework of barbarian tyranny, Plutarch's narrative is marked by these dominant motifs. He was fascinated, it seems, with the outworking of φιλοτιμία, good and evil, in contrasting pairs of aspirants to power, and with the seeming inevitability of corruption and decline in the despotic character. This was the 'model' which determined the choice of material from his sources.

Amongst the Greek *Lives* the *Dion* provides the best parallel, for Syracusan tyrants were in some ways as fickle and barbarous in Plutarch's eyes as the Persian. The pattern is more complicated, for the personal rivalries for power are matched by the contrasts of political systems, monarchical, tyrannical and democratic. Viewed in this light, the story has two main motifs. First there is the strong contrast Plutarch portrays between Dionysius the Elder and the young Dion. The former is a tyrant of the mould described in Chapter 7—ruined in his youth by the flatteries of courtiers, absorbed in pleasures and amours, and thus cloaking for a time the cruelty of his rule. Dion, however, is a man of spirited and philo-

sophic temperament: ὄγκος, παρρησία, μεγαλοψυχία, σεμνότης, ἐγκράτεια are the keynotes, but there is a streak of τραχύτης in his dealings also, and his enemies speak of ὑπεροψία and αὐθάδεια. With youthful idealism he enlists Plato in the effort to civilize the older tyrant, but Plato is expelled, and he turns his attention to Dionysius the Younger. The latter is not naturally harsh like his father, but his character has already been perverted by the time Dion tries to reform him through Plato's advice. At this point Plutarch draws out the king-tyrant distinction through the mouth of Dion: 'the adamantine bonds of power were not, as the Elder had said, fear and force, a large navy and a huge garrison of barbarians, but rather goodwill and enthusiasm and the favour which was engendered by virtue and justice.'

A second theme thus develops, and Dion is cast in the role of physician of Syracuse, an ailing city which Dionysius wished only to make 'the tomb of his falling tyranny'. In the series of struggles between the two their fortunes are swayed by the fickleness of the Syracusan *demos*, and the democratic motif is introduced. Plutarch has remarked earlier (12 fin.) that Dion, while holding as his ideal for the city a healthy aristocracy, would acquiesce in a democracy if this could not eventuate, and Heraclides now enters the narrative. He is the returned exile who is elected naval commander by the Syracusans in opposition to Dion, a projection of the *demos* in his character—οὐκ ἀραρὼς τὴν γνώμην, ἀλλὰ πρὸς πάντα κοῦφος, ἥκιστα δὲ βέβαιος ἐν κοινωνίᾳ . . . (33.2). The picture is filled out with colourful descriptions of the undisciplined mob, given over to premature rejoicings during the temporary restorations of popular rule.

Dion's exercise of power in Syracuse is the theme of the latter section of the *Life*. His philosophical bias is now evident, after extreme vicissitudes of fortune, in his ἐγκράτεια. He is generous, lives simply, dresses modestly, 'as though he was eating with Plato in the Academy' (52.2). But he also retains his innate σεμνότης and aloofness towards the common people. By contrast, the submissive Heraclides still reveals his vices; he is ταραχώδης καὶ εὐμετάθετος καὶ στασιαστικός, and out of this situation arises Dion's single but fatal error. He yields to those who wanted any lingering threat from Heraclides removed, and allows him to be murdered. This, Plutarch believed, was the μεταβολή in Dion's career, and the *Life* concludes on a dramatic note. He becomes the victim of his one folly, for his former associate Callippus plots his death in revenge for Heraclides. Dion has portentous visions, declares his willingness 'to die many deaths', and his murder takes on something of a ritual aspect (57.3 fin.). Thus Dion, who in all other aspects exercised a kingly rule, yielded at a crucial point to a tyrannical deed. The story towards the end has overtones of the tragic drama.

It is apparent that the characterizations in the *Dion* are more subtle than those of the *Artaxerxes*. Plutarch is moving on the more familiar ground of Greek history, and his Platonic loyalties come out in the contentions of rival political systems at Syracuse. A benevolent monarchy is his ideal, with an equal distaste for the excesses of tyranny and democracy, all of which is depicted in contrasting character portraits. There are three generally accepted sources for the *Dion*, of which two, the Letters of Timonides and the Platonic Epistles (especially the Seventh) are contemporary with the events. The third, the history of Timaeus which Cornelius Nepos also used, gave a strongly biased view of the Sicilian tyrants, and there is good evidence that Plutarch used Timaeus intelligently. That is, source criticism of the *Dion* bears out what the narrative itself leads us to conjecture, that Plutarch formed his own view of these rulers and the dramatized story bears the imprint of his personality.[22]

Of other *Lives* in the Second Series, the *Alexander* and *Caesar* are the most illuminating studies of autocratic power.[23] Here was the opportunity *par excellence* to compare the outworking of φιλοτιμία, and it will be noticed that the external struggles for power which mark these *Lives* are matched fully by inner moral contentions, and the reader becomes absorbed as much in the 'signs of the soul' in Alexander and Caesar as in the outward course of their careers.[24]

The dynamism of Alexander's personality is the major impression at the beginning of this *Life*. It is φιλοτιμία, τόλμη, μεγαλοφροσύνη which impel him onwards towards the youthful goals of δόξα and ἀρετή: he wants to receive from his father not a kingdom of wealth, luxury and pleasures, but ἀγῶνας καὶ πολέμους καὶ φιλοτιμίας. The first 'contest' Plutarch describes is in Alexander's own development. On the one hand there is the philosophical training under Aristotle, when Philip saw he was amenable to following the path of reason towards his royal duties, on the

other the quarrels between father and son over the women of the Macedonian court, and then between Alexander and his half-brother Arrhidaeus.

At the outset of the reign Plutarch stresses his resolve to rule the turbulent kingdom boldly, and a vivid picture is rapidly built up of Alexander's invincibility, both in purpose and action. The Delphic acknowledgement of his power (14.4) followed by the portents before his expedition is the prelude to victory at the river Granicus. From this point in the narrative Alexander's generalship is matched by the benevolence of Fortune, and there is much emphasis on the conqueror's ἐγκράτεια and σωφροσύνη (especially over the captive women) as against the indulgence of the other Macedonians in the wealth and soft living of Persia (24.2). It is in the story of the arduous journey to the temple of Ammon in Egypt that Plutarch finally comments: ἡ τε γὰρ τύχη ταῖς ἐπιβολαῖς ὑπείκουσα τὴν γνώμην ἰσχυρὰν ἐποίει, καὶ τὸ θυμοειδὲς ἄχρι τῶν πραγμάτων ὑπεξέφερε τὴν φιλονεικίαν ἀήττητον (26 fin.). Alexander's apotheosis has now been achieved: son of Ammon, son of Zeus, the king of men stands in a special relation to the king of the gods. But here also may be seen the μεταβολή in the inner history of his spirit. Although not puffed up by the popular belief in his divinity, he uses this as an instrument of power (28 fin.). Darius, believing he has been conquered by a supernatural foe, becomes a mere foil to Alexander, and the new lord of Asia begins to act imperiously towards the Greek cities when he delivers them from their tyrannies by a stroke of the pen (34).

Plutarch however by no means depicts a king who is steadily corrupted by power. Alexander continues to act in a kingly manner; he is μεγαλοδωρότατος, φιλόφρων, and his ἐγκράτεια and μεγαλοφυχία stand in increasing contrast to the extravagance of his lieutenants. Here again, his πρᾳότης and εὔνοια are prominent, and these qualities are strained to the limit in the face of Philotas' treachery. But with the killing of both Parmenio and Philotas, Plutarch depicts the unloosing of the conqueror's ὀργή, which soon leads to the clash with Cleitus and the killing which plunges Alexander into deep remorse. Then, under the flatteries of the philosopher Anaxarchus, his character becomes εἰς πολλὰ χαυνότερον καὶ παρανομώτερον, and there are signs of the end. His ambition to cross the Ganges thwarted, he lies in angry seclusion (62.3), and back in Babylon he begins to doubt the favour of heaven and the fidelity of his friends (74.1), and loses that self-control which has been so remarkable. Plutarch finally introduces the accounts of

Alexander's death with a sombre comment on the excesses of his superstitious fears (75.1). Here is a kind of inner *peripeteia* of the spirit—Alexander of all men the prey of fear! Corresponding to this outwardly is the casting off of all his ἐγκράτεια in sacrifices, feasts and drinking-bouts.

The biographer means his readers to feel a sense of awe at this supreme spectacle of human power, and the setting of eastern despotisms and ancient cults is well-suited to bringing out the drama of Alexander's battles of the soul, which are as real as his military campaigns. As with the *Dion*, there are distinct suggestions of the tragic drama in the latter parts of this *Life*, and the *Alexander* is related to the *Demetrius*, where tragedy is an explicit motif, in rather the same way that the *Caesar* is linked to the *Antony*.

Many of the features of Plutarch's *Alexander* naturally find their counterpart in the *Caesar*. Early instances of Caesar's τόλμη and παρρησία abound, but the soil in which his innate φιλοτιμία is nurtured is very different in Plutarch's view. He openly courts the favour of the common people, who admire his eloquence in the courts and on the public platform: πολλὴ δὲ τῆς περὶ τὰς δεξιώσεις καὶ ὁμιλίας φιλοφροσύνης εὔνοια is Plutarch's early picture, with lavish expenditure as the hallmark of Caesar's first magistracies. On this was built a political strength which few assessed highly enough: all could observe Caesar's δεινότης τοῦ ἤθους, but only Cicero, Plutarch reports, rightly interpreted this as a τυραννικὴ διάνοια (4.4).

Just as Alexander's φιλοτιμία necessitated rivalry and opposition, so Caesar's relentless ambition elicits the fears of the Senate and *nobiles*. The cult of Marius his kinsman and the defeat of Catulus in the elections for Pontifex Maximus conspired to make them fear him for 'his intentions to lead the people on to every extreme of recklessness' (7.3). The pattern thus set is now intensified: Plutarch recalls the Catilinarian Conspiracy, moves on to the clash with Cato, the praetorship, and the Bona Dea trial, and the alliance with Crassus, a man who needed the Καίσαρος ἀκμὴ καὶ θερμότης against Pompey. Plutarch places the well-known incident of Caesar's reading from the *Histories* of Alexander at this point, during the praetorian year in Spain where it has dramatic fitness if not historical.

There is a strong contrast in the narrative between the disciplined, brilliant Gallic campaigns by which Caesar 'like an athlete greatly outdistanced his fellow-runners' and equalled Pompey's fame, and the virtual anarchy in Rome (τὴν πόλιν ὥσπερ ἀκυ-

βέρνητον ναῦν ὑποφερομένην . . . 28.4) which made 'monarchy' the only solution. At the brink of the Civil War Plutarch reinforces his nautical metaphors. Caesar after agonizing hesitations cast himself on the future, but Pompey 'yielded and was swept along by the universal tide' (33.5) and Rome herself 'was the most pitiable spectacle, with so great a storm bearing down upon her, carried onwards like a ship abandoned by her helmsmen' (34.2).

After Pharsalus and the campaigns in Egypt and Asia, Caesar's mildness and clemency appear in sharp contrast to these storms of state. But Plutarch believed a μεταβολή took place in the conqueror's spirit after Thapsus: the speech back in Rome was boastful, the triumphs and spectacles showed a dangerous excess. They were the portents, as it were, of the triumph following Munda into which Plutarch introduces the note of *hybris*—ἀνῃρηκότα ταῖς τῆς πατρίδος ἐπιπομπεύειν συμφοραῖς οὐ κακῶς εἶχεν, ἀγαλλόμενον ἐπὶ τούτοις ὧν μία καὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ἀπολογία τὸ μετ' ἀνάγκης πεπρᾶχθαι (56.4). A verdict on the dictatorship is added: it 'was acknowledged as a tyranny, since the monarchy had added the element of permanence to its irresponsibility' (37.1). The shadow of Fate now casts itself over the narrative, and in spite of numerous generous actions and the revival of Caesar's φιλοτιμία in fresh military plans, it is his passion for the kingly title, and an increasing aloofness, even from the highest magistrates, which seal his doom—humanly speaking. For beyond this Plutarch resorts to the *daemones*. It was they who as it were staged the assassination, and the calculating Caesar is now strangely filled with an ἐνθουσιασμὸς καὶ πάθος (66.2). This theme Plutarch develops in his final assessment. Caesar himself, he concludes, was impelled by his φιλοτιμία, his passion for *gloria*, but only his 'great daemon' made this possible, and lingers beyond his death as the avenger on the tyrannicides (69).

There is an obvious parallelism in the structure of the *Alexander* and *Caesar*. Here Plutarch was attempting the portrayal of two men in whom innate superiority joined with an unswerving φιλοτιμία to make possible the exercise of virtually complete autocracy. This of course has meant considerable manipulation of historical materials, but it has imparted a dramatic unity to the *Lives*. Plutarch felt impelled both by personal and artistic conviction to search for supernatural explanations of the dynamism he has portrayed. Hence the motifs of Τύχη in the *Alexander* and the δαίμων in the *Caesar*. These are a study in themselves as employed in Plutarch's *Lives* and expounded in the Essays,[25] but are mentioned here as elements

in two narratives where they have a particular dramatic appropriateness.

Of the two pairs of *Lives* in the Third Series the *Demetrius* and the *Antony* are of exceptional interest for this enquiry. Reference has already been made to Plutarch's professed purpose, stated at the beginning of the *Demetrius*, of selecting some notable characters in whom vices outweighed virtues, so that his readers may be further edified. Plato is properly appealed to on this point,[26] and both Demetrius and Antony are to be painted on a large canvas—powerful personalities, great successes, great vicissitudes and failures. These two *Lives* specially lend themselves to dramatization, as Plutarch says explicitly at the end of the first: Διηγωνισμένου δὲ τοῦ Μακεδονικοῦ δράματος ὥρα τὸ Ῥωμαϊκὸν ἐπεισαγαγεῖν.

Phillip de Lacy has demonstrated that Plutarch's attitude to the tragic drama itself was closer to Plato's evaluation in ethical terms than to the literary evaluation of Aristotle: and, since allusions to drama are so frequent in the *Demetrius*, he has analysed this narrative to show how Plutarch's views have provided the framework of a biography. It is the story of a man who is by nature humane and generous, but whose φιλοτιμία and φιλονεικία bring him to eventual ruin. There is a close parallel to the degeneration from aristocracy through timocracy to tyranny of the *Republic* viii-ix.[27]

It will suffice here to show that the *Antony* is constructed on very similar lines. Like Demetrius, Antony has exceptional gifts, but they are perverted early in life through Curio and Clodius. His character, like the Asiatic oratory he practised, is 'swash-buckling and boastful, full of empty exultation and of φιλοτιμία ἀνωμάλος'. However, it was some time before the Romans saw him as he really was. First he established a high military reputation in Egypt, and besides having an aristocratic appearance was known for his φιλανθρωπία, εὔνοια, ἐλευθεριότης. But as Antony moves into the orbit of Caesar, the portrait becomes more complex. On the one hand he is the trusted commander of the left wing at Pharsalus, who returns to Rome as Master of the Horse, but he also abuses his power by a life of debauchery which Plutarch believes contributes greatly to the unpopularity of Caesar's regime (6.6, 9.3-6). It is only his marriage with Fulvia which brings a temporary reform.

After Caesar's death, Antony exploits his power: ἔπραττεν αὐτοκρατορικῶς is the key expression. But from this point the conflict with Octavian becomes dominant, and Antony's strangely contrast-

ing qualities are displayed. In flight after Mutina he is an inspiring leader with astonishing resilience (17.2), as a *triumvir* he is cruel and exultant and reverts to his former depravity (20.2, 21.1). In Greece, however, he acts as an enlightened commander and philhellene. But this is only the prelude to his entry into Asia, at which point Plutarch sets a distinct though minor μεταβολή in Antony's life.

In the East Antony meets with adulation and the temptation to live as if he is a god. In the *Demetrius* it is the Athenians' flattery which works the fatal change, and father and son both accept the title of king. On this Plutarch comments: 'it excited proud thoughts in the men, inflated their judgments, and made them haughty and oppressive in their manner of life and intercourse with others, just as actors of tragedies, on changing costumes, change also their walk, their speech, their manner of reclining and address' (18). So Antony now reveals his character in actions which will inevitably lead to his doom. Flattered by kings and their queens, surrounded by Asiatic performers, he is 'swept back by his passions into his wonted mode of life' (24.1). He enters Ephesus surrounded by bacchantes and satyrs, hailed as Dionysus the Giver of joys and blessings, a title which Plutarch took as full of irony in view of his exactions and punishments. Thus the dramatic climax, Antony's infatuation with Cleopatra and his abject submission, the τελευταῖον κακόν, has been well anticipated. From this point the biography reads more and more like a play.

There are continual interchanges of light and shade in the story. Antony's revels by night in Alexandria are called his 'comic mask', but all the time he is caught in the toils of Cleopatra, and must resume the 'tragic mask' when sombre reports come from Rome (30.1). Octavia, beautiful, dignified and intelligent, becomes the foil in the drama to the Egyptian queen. Again, Antony's bravery and endurance can still win the admiration of his men (43), but his Eastern campaigns are mishandled through Cleopatra's machinations. The extravagances of both in Egypt, growing more and more bizarre (54), are matched dramatically by the reading of Antony's will to the Senate in Rome and the declaration of war. Plutarch's narrative of Actium relies on the tension between Antony's residual skills and his subordination to the wishes of Cleopatra, and the climax is reached when, with the queen's ships already in full flight, he makes it clear that he 'is being dragged along by this woman as if he has become part of her very nature and involved in her every movement' (66.4).

Antony's gloom and remorse now becomes the dominant note, and Plutarch pictures him dramatically as seated for three days in silence, head in hands, at the prow of his ship: then at Alexandria he withdraws to the solitude of Pharos and strikes a pose as a second Timon, wronged by his friends and hating all mankind. The sheer unreality of the final residence of Antony and Cleopatra in the city is vividly portrayed in the rest of the *Life*. This is theatre as much as history, and Plutarch's skill is undeniable. Cleopatra displays more and more of the flamboyance of an eastern ruler in her preparations for death—the poisons, the tomb, the excesses of grief over the dying Antony, the speech over his urn, the prostrations before Octavian whose attempts to deceive her succeeded no more than Cleopatra's to deceive him. If it is her εὐγένεια which still excites Octavian's admiration after her death (86.4), it is the innate manliness of Antony that Plutarch invites us still to respect: ἐπιφανέστατος ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος καὶ πλεῖστον ἰσχύσας καὶ νῦν οὐκ ἀγεννῶς Ῥωμαῖος ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίου κρατηθείς (77.4). It was perhaps an empty claim for the historical Antony, but in the setting of this elaborate narrative it has a certain dramatic truth.

We have remarked that the vocabulary of tragedy is more noticeable in the *Demetrius*, and the portrayal of a disastrous decline in character and power clearly suggests the mould of an actual play. Demetrius, who at first possessed βασιλικὴ σεμνότης and is generous, just and humane, dies a drunken captive who perhaps now really believes he has found what he missed in his folly and ambition (52). But in the *Antony* the tragic framework is no less present, and Antony more closely approaches the tragic hero of Aristotle's analysis. The reader's pity for him is enlisted, and the domination of Cleopatra seems not so much the reward of his wickedness as the crowning evil sent by the gods, as Antony moves to a predetermined end. Thus he surely sustains a truer εὐγένεια in the closing act than does Cleopatra, and he excites a more lively sympathy in us than does Demetrius.[28]

IV

In this review attention has deliberately been focused on Plutarch's literary and dramatic skills rather than on the historicity of these *Lives*. There can be no doubt that the biographer was fascinated by the spectacle of autocratic power, probably more as a human problem than as a political phenomenon. Within the framework of

a 'conventional' tyranny of the Persian type he has portrayed the human tensions behind the exercise of dynastic power, and with Greek tyrannies, as we have seen in the *Dion,* he has given added depth to the characterization of individuals by describing the contention between the different systems of which they were symbols. Faced with the supreme examples of human ambition and power in Alexander and Caesar, he has given an unmistakable impression in the narratives of a progress which seems to be irresistible, and as a Greek of religious sensitivity has looked for a supernatural dimension to the story. Has Plutarch really succeeded in picturing κακίαι μεγάλαι with his *Demetrius* and *Antony?* It would seem not, for he possessed a natural humanity which made him draw these characters with that blend of good and evil which we associate with tragedy, and which evokes as much pity as condemnation.

This aspect of the *Lives* helps us to understand Plutarch as a biographer of the particular type he claimed to be. To his genuine historical interest he had added the perception of a moralist and of a literary artist, and the importance of all three elements must be borne in mind in an appreciation of him. On the historical side it is really beside the point to regret that he lacked the understanding of a Thucydides or Polybius. In the Greek tradition of biography and moral philosophy there were undoubtedly, as described above, elements which limited his achievement. There is a certain artificiality about the framework of the *Lives;* the analysis of personality in men of power has not the psychological depth we associate with a great modern historian or historical novelist—virtues and vices are mechanically conceived as ingredients of character, and the μεταβολαί, although legitimate aspects of this group of *Lives,* tend to be schematic. But Plutarch the man attracts us by his own φιλανθρωπία, a quality of which he is among the best ancient examples and also expositors,[29] and this suffuses his biographical writing with life. To the student of Greek literature in the early Roman Empire it is not difficult to see why he is without a rival in this genre.

NOTES

1. For useful bibliographies, see G. T. Griffith 'The Greek Historians' in *Fifty Years (and Twelve) of Classical Scholarship* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1968), pp. 203-4 with notes, also Appendix p. 238; A. Lesky, *History of Greek Literature* (London, 1966), pp. 828-9.

2. *Galba* 2.3. For the most recent discussion of Plutarch, as biographer see J. R. Hamilton, *Plutarch, Alexander: A Commentary* (Oxford, 1969), p. xxxviiff. This book reached the writer too late for fuller consideration in the present essay.
3. *Alexander* 1.3.
4. *Timoleon* 1.1.
5. *Pericles* 1.2-4, 2.3.
6. *Timoleon* Praef. 3, *Demetrius* 1.3.
7. *Cimon* 2.3-5.
8. N.E. ii.1-2.
9. *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford, 1968): Excursus—'The Roman view of historical explanation', p. 627.
10. See F. Leo, *Die griechisch-römische Biographie nach ihrer litterarischen Form* (Leipzig, 1901), p. 97ff.; D. R. Stuart, *Epochs of Greek and Roman Biography* (California, 1928), p. 119ff.
11. Cf. A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* Vol. 1, p. 81ff.; for an earlier criticism, G. H. Stevenson, *JPh,* 1920, 204ff.
12. Op. cit., p. 54ff.
13. Ibid., pp. 82, 84.
14. J. E. Powell, 'The sources of Plutarch's *Alexander*' JHS lix (1939), 229-240: cf. Gomme op. cit., p. 82 n.1.
15. D. A. Russell, 'Plutarch's Life of Coriolanus.' *JRS* liii (1963), 21-28.
16. 780E.
17. See F. E. Adcock, *Roman Political Ideas and Practice* (Michigan, 1959), Ch. VI; Ch. Wirszubski, *Libertas as a political idea at Rome* (Cambridge, 1950), Ch. V; B. F. Harris, *Bithynia under Trajan* (Univ. of Auck. Bulletin 67, 1964), pp. 22-28.
18. *De Fortuna Romanorum* 316E; cf. R. H. Barrow, *Plutarch and his times* (London, 1967), p. 142ff.
19. Cf. Gomme, op. cit., p. 70.
20. *Praec. g.r.p.* 819F-820A. For a treatment of φιλοτιμία as a personal moral quality see H. Martin Jnr., 'The character of Plutarch's Themistocles', TAPA xcii (1961), 331-339.
21. Cf. Gomme, op. cit., p. 66.
22. For the sources, see the discussion in W. H. Porter, *Plutarch's Life of Dion* (Dublin, 1952), p. xviiff.
23. The fifth century Greek *Lives* form a separate group, best studied in another context. The *Timoleon* is a kind of sequel dramatically to the *Dion.* Here is the gentle tyrant, favourite of Fortune and 'common father' of Syracuse. But it is less successful as a biography.
24. For Alexander's portrait, see also Hamilton, op. cit., p. xlff.

25. For Plutarch's *daemones*, see Barrow, op. cit., p. 86ff., Hamilton, op. cit., p. 140.
26. *Rep.* 491 D-E, 495B.
27. P. de Lacy, 'Biography and Tragedy in Plutarch,' *AJP* 73 (1952), 159-171.
28. It is surprising to find the bald statement in *CAH* X. p. 875 that 'in the *Antony* Plutarch is obviously out of sympathy with his protagonist'.
29. See J. Ferguson, *Moral Values in the Ancient World*, Ch. VI: H. Martin Jnr., 'The Concept of *Philanthropia* in Plutarch's *Lives*', *AJP* lxxxii (1961), 164-175.

THE EPISTLES OF CYPRIAN

G. W. Clarke

My title is somewhat of a misnomer. For what I really wish to deal with are a few aspects of life in Carthage as revealed by an ecclesiastical writer of the mid-third century, by a man who was born,[1] lived,[2] and died[3] in Carthage, namely Saint Cyprian, bishop of Carthage. And the particular works of Cyprian of Carthage which I wish to place under scrutiny are his surviving letters.

For this period of the mid-third century of the Christian era, our extant literary sources are notoriously meagre and jejune. Cassius Dio, the consular Greek historian of the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire, who tended anyhow to become not a little episodic, and indeed downright scrappy, as he reached that dangerous period of contemporary or near-contemporary events, had left off his History long ago in the glorious year of his second consulate, when he shared the consular *fasces* with the Emperor Severus Alexander himself, in A.D. 229.[4] Herodian, another Greek historian, who had himself been writing, for the most part, the history of his own times, had begun his chronicle—a singularly unfactual and uninformative chronicle—with the death of Marcus Aurelius and the accession of Commodus, that is to say, with the year A.D. 180; but even he had left off his feeble exercise in ersatz Thucydides with the portentous year of A.D. 238, the year that witnessed Pupienus, Balbinus and the three Gordians all Emperors.[5]

Thereafter, for better or for worse, we live with the company of the *Historia Augusta*, a series of biographies of the Caesars which are in fact ancient forgeries dating most probably from the late fourth century A.D.[6] This Augustan History is our only major guide down to the beginning of the reign of Philip the Arab (A.D. 244), and then even that most peculiar document breaks down entirely, only to begin again with the closing passages of the *uita* of Valerian.[7] That is to say, for the years A.D. 244 to A.D. 259, cov-

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