Nel rimbalzare delle minacce dagli uni all'altro (scandite anche formularmente) di αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος, si prepara lo scioglimento della sin qui incerta *querelle*: ora i Proci non sfuggiranno alla *sicura* rovina (v. 43).

Torino

Cultural Interchange in Plutarch's *Antony*

Simon Swain

Possession of education is something of enduring importance to Plutarch. Many of the works of the *Moralia* are directly or indirectly concerned with παιδεία and φιλοσοφία. It is the key to behaviour and character. When Plutarch speaks of education, he means of course Hellenic education. In his confident assumptions about the value of Hellenic culture he well reflect his membership of the developing Second Sophistic. This confidence may explain the fact that in the *Lives* he is more interested in scrutinizing the education of his Roman rather than his Greek heroes, and seems to feel that, because Romans may lack Hellenic learning, they are potentially less civilized than Greeks. Certainly, though in some Roman *Lives* culture/education is not exploited at all (perhaps most surprisingly in the *Gracchi*), in many cases Plutarch does point out, as he does not with Greeks, a close relationship between character and παιδεία, for good (Marcellus, Lucullus, Brutus) or for bad (Coriolanus, Marius, Cicero) [1].

Naturally Plutarch explores tensions which may arise between adherence to Roman values and interest in Greek ones [2]. One sees this especially in *Marcellus, Marius*, and *Cato Major*. In the latter Plutarch traces Cato's dependence on both cultures by carefully juxtaposing Greek and Roman preoccupations so that when finally we come to Cato's explicit condemnation of Greek culture at 23,1-2, we are fully responsive to Plutarch's forthright rebuttal (23,3).

The subject of one *Life*, the *Antony*, takes Plutarch further along this road, for Antony moves within three differing cultural systems — Roman, Hellenic, and Egyptian. Hellenic culture and philhellenism are

[1] I discuss this matter in articles to appear in *Journ. Hell. Stud.* and *Hermes*.

[2] Note that he altogether avoids discussing the Roman notion of the *debilitating* effect of Greek culture (though *cf.* the rejoinder at *Cato Maj.* 20,8).

clearly important in the *Life*; but the major axis is Egyptian-Roman. This presentation naturally owes much to Octavian's original propaganda about Roman Antony being bewitched and enslaved by the Egyptian Cleopatra [3]. Plutarch was aware of the propaganda about Egypt (58,9-59,1; 60,1). Typically he did not take it on board unthinkingly. He made Alexandria and Cleopatra Egyptian rather than Greek (25,3; 29,5; 31,3; 50,6-7) because, although he thought of Alexander the Great as a man who had possessed real Hellenic virtue (*Alex., De Alex. Mag. fort. aut virt.*), in a number of passages he rebukes his successors intensely for their dissimilarity to the divine, their abominable conduct, and importantly their barbarian Macedonian origin [4]. As for Plutarch's Antony, he seems at times not so much a Roman cozened and bewitched as μισορρώμαιος (54,5) and Oriental. At other times his Roman side reemerges and he dies a Roman (77,7). The success of the *Antony* depends in large part upon this oscillation from the one culture to the other.

Greek culture is introduced early on in a comment on Antony's rhetorical education (2,8): "he adopted the so-called Asian style of speech..., that showed great similarities to his way of life, which was boastful like a snorting stallion and full of empty prancing and uneven ambition" [5]. Plutarch plays on his interests in education in pointing to a different type of instruction Antony had to receive, his 'schooling' in lubricity. Curio, who was ἀπαίδευτος ("ineducable", cf. *De aud. poet.* 31c) in this field, showed him the way (2,4). Fulvia left him πεπαιδαγωγημένον in obedience to women and Cleopatra owed her the fees for his tuition (10,6). Later Cleopatra herself "gave Antony a coure of training" (διεπαιδαγώγει, cf. *Per.* 11,4) in pleasure (29,1). The teacher-pupil

[3] See K. Scott, 'The Political Propaganda of 44-30 B.C.', *Mem. Am. Acad. Rome* 11, 1933, esp. 35 ff.

[4] *Arist.* 6,2-5; *Pyrrh.* 7,3; 8,2; 12,2-12; *Demetr.* 3,3-5; 41,4-5; 42,8-11; *Arat.* 16,2,4; 38,6; *Ag./Cl.* 37,7; *Phil.* 8,6; cf. *Ad princ. indoct.* 780f-781a. For the Macedonian origin of Alexandria, cf. Dio of Prusa XXXII 65, where it is the cause of the Alexandrians' rumbustiousness; Dionysius of Alexandria (*Perieg.* 254, Μακηδόνιον πτολίεθρον). At *Alex.* 26,4 Plutarch in a different train of thought makes Alexandria a πόλιν μεγάλην καὶ πολυάνθρωπον Ἑλληνίδα (cf. 26,10). Note that Jewish writers (Philo, III Maccabees, Josephus) carefully distinguished Greeks and Macedonians together from Egyptians in blaming anti-Jewish troubles in Alexandria on the native element in the population; see J. Colins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, New York 1983, 107-108.

[5] Plutarch often expresses the belief that character is revealed in and by what one says or does not say (cf. e.g. *Fab.* 1,7-8; *Lyc.* 20,10; *De Alex. mag. fort. aut virt.* I 330e; *De cap. ex inim. util.* 90b, etc.).

image is a nice one for Plutarch to use in presenting Antony as easily led by bad examples around him.

Antony is likewise influenced by the places he is in. After Philippi he crosses into Greece on his way to extract money from the eastern provinces. "Towards the Greeks Antony behaved without rudeness or offence, at least at first, and indulged his playful side at literary readings, athletic spectacles, and initiation cerimonies. In legal judgements he was fair, and delighted to be called φιλέλλην, and still more to be addressed as φιλαθήναιος, and he presented that city with a great many gifts" (23,2). Plutarch appears to expose Antony's cultural posturing by immediately recording his offensive remarks to the Megarians about their senate (23,3).

Now Antony crosses over to Asia, where he reverts to his old uncultured ways (24,1 ff.; cf. earlier at Rome 9,21) and indulges his playful side in luxury and licentiousness. He is surrounded by an Ἀσιανῶν ἀκροαμάτων θίασος (24,2). At Ephesus the people dress up as Bacchanals, Satyrs, and Pans, and hail Antony as "Dionysus Giver of Joy and Beneficent". Plutarch comments: "For some he was no doubt like this, but for many others he was Dionysus Carnivorous and Savage" [6]. Plutarch explains what he means by citing Antony's exactions of property. "Finally, when he was imposing a second levy on the cities, Hybreas dared on behalf of Asia to proclaim in public in a manner agreeably suited to Antony's style that, "If you can make a levy twice in a single year, you can arrange for us to have a summer twice and a harvest twice too"; and he concluded with bold realism, saying that Asia had given 200,000 talents: "If you have not received it, demand it from those who took it; if you received it but do not have it, we are done for" (24,7-8).

Plutarch could here have commented strongly on the excesses of Roman rule in the provinces. In the *Sulla* and the *Lucullus* he includes some very strong comments on the sufferings of Greece and Asia as caused by Rome [7]. These tie in with major themes of those *Lives* (corruption and benefaction respectively). In *Antony* Asia's pain in c. 24 is clearly

[6] Dionysus Omestes was for Plutarch clearly associated with human sacrifice (*Them.* 13,3; *Arist.* 92; *Quaest. Graec.* 299f).

[7] *Sulla* 12,9-14; 25,4-5; *Luc.* 7,4-7; 20,1-6; cf. *Sert.* 24,5. There are revealing parallels between the *Luc.* passages and the essay *De vit. aere alieno* which treats debt in Plutarch's own day (esp. the image of the money lenders as Harpies [832a 7,7] and the debtors as slaaves [828b, 828c, 828f, 832a, 20,1-21].

reflected in Greece's agonies at the time of Actium (62,1, 68,6-8). However, Plutarch does not press the facts home now or later. The major focus is always Antony, his failings and weaknesses. The suffering of Asia functions a vehicle on which to hang the picture of Antony as the easy prey of flatterers (24,9-12). Hence he excuses Antony's behaviour: "he was ignorant of most of what was going on... trusting those around him from simplicity" (24,9). Similarly, when Cleopatra comes to meet Antony at Tarsus and "the word on everyone's lips was that Aphrodite had come to revel with Dionysus for the good of Asia" (26,5), Plutarch does not comment further on the benefits (or problems) for the Asian Greeks.

It is to be noticed that Plutarch does not condemn the Asian Greeks for luxury here (or indeed elsewhere). Asian decadence is used like Asian suffering to comment on a hero who exacts luxury just as much as he is trapped by it. There is nothing to suggest that Plutarch saw Greek Asia as necessarily corrupt. Asian and peninsular Greeks are spoken of together and not distinguished when Plutarch talks of Antony behaving properly to τοῖς μὲν οὖν Ἕλλησιν... τὸ γε πρῶτον (23,2); his later, bad behaviour is his carousing in and fleecing of Asia's cities (24,1, ἐπεὶ δὲ κτλ.) as well as his destruction of Greece in the Civil War (62,1; 68,6-8) [8]. There is a great difference in Antony's character when he crosses to Asia Minor. But the presentation is preparation for the influence of Egypt and not rebuke of Asia. The exactions and the degeneracy lead into the character sketch (24,9-12), which leads in turn to the arrival of Cleopatra (25 ff.).

There is no contrast between Antony's philhellenism, even its corrupt face, and the Roman side of his nature. The real cultural clash in the *Life* stems, as has been said, form the incompatibility between involvement with Egyptian Alexandria and Egyptian Cleopatra and the expected *mores* of a Roman general.

Antony's career at Alexandria gets off to a good start in 55 BC. The Roman expeditionary force considers him to be λαμπρότατος and he leaves "a very high reputation" among the Alexandrians (3,11). His return in 41 BC sees him appealing to the city's baser nature (29,4):

[8] The Asian Greeks distinguished themselves as οἱ ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀσίας Ἕλληνες in their second century league (see J. Deininger, *Die Provinziallandtage der römischen Kaiserzeit bis zum Ende der dritten Jahrhunderts n. Chr.*, Munich 1965, 36 ff.), but the cultural and political background of the Greek world was seen as the same (as Plutarch assumes in *Praec. ger. reip.* addressed to the Sardian Menemachus).

"they adored him, and said that he put on a tragic mask for the Romans, but a comic one for them". Antony uses the tragic mask, as it were (theatre imagery is important in the pair), for his *rapprochement* with Octavian in 40-39 BC (30-32) and again in 37 BC (35)[9]. He then discards it by giving away bits of the Roman empire to Cleopatra, gifts which "particularly annoyed Romans" (36,4). "Nevertheless, since he was good at turning disgraceful actions to his own glory, he would say that the majesty of the Romans' empire was shown not by what they received but by what they bestowed" (36,6). Plutarch points out both that Antony's actions were not Roman, and that now Antony did not care.

In the Parthian campaign (37-52) Antony's nature reverts temporarily to its Roman side. Plutarch stresses the especially Roman soldierliness of Antony (43,3-6). Then, just as the army is brought to safety by Antony's tactful dealings with the Armenian king, Artavasdes, he records anachronistically that on a later invasion of Armenia Antony seized Artavasdes and triumphed over him at Alexandria (50,6-7): "he caused Romans particular offence by bestowing their country's honours and cerimonials on Egyptians to please Cleopatra" (50,7). Plutarch goes further in his comment on the 'donations' of Alexandria in 34 BC (54,5-9): "he was hated for the distribution he made to his children at Alexandria which appeared showy, arrogant, and anti-Roman" (54,5). Antony's pandering to the Egyptians has now made him appear μισορρώμαιος. Plutarch probably coined this word for the occasion [9].

Plutarch certainly builds up Antony's alienation from Roman values with care, with μισορρώμαιος used to signal the end of the development. Φιλέλλην (23,2) is not of course the beginning, for it is in Egyptian contexts that Antony is anti-Roman (he has indulged in un-Roman behaviour already in 9 and 21). By his attachment to Cleopatra he does something "no Roman had dared to do" (taking a second wife, *synkrisis* 4,2). Further, whereas μισορρώμαιος is Plutarch's comment,

[9] In literature anyway it occurs in his sense perhaps only in Eustathius *Opusc.* p. 299, 96 ed. Tafel (it is otherwise used in ecclesiastical Greek meaning "opposed to the orthodox [Roman] Church"); Plutarch is fond of μισο- compounds (μισοχαῖσαρ, μισοσύλλας, μισοβασιλεύς occur only in him). But Metrodorus of Scepsis was first to be given the name (Plyny *H.N.* XXXIV 34; H. Fuchs, *Der geistige Widerstand gegen Rom in der antiken Welt*, Berlin 1938, 43 n. 43), no doubt in reaction to the title φιλορώμαιος (cf. *Crass.* 21,2, *Cato Maj.* 8.13) taken first by Ariobarzanes I of Cappadocia (ca. 95-63 BC; D. Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King. The Character of the Client Kingship*, London-Canberra-New York 1984, 105-107.

it does not seem to be Plutarch himself who labels Antony 'philhellene' — it is how Antony likes to be styled — and in recording Antony's comments to the Megarians Plutarch at least implies that the philhellenism (but not necessarily the philathenianism) was insincere. True, Plutarch lets Antony's regard for Athens herself in c. 23 pass, and his gymnasiarchy there in the winter of 39/38 BC is not commented upon adversely (33,7). However, we are reminded of Demetrius' honours and carryings-on in the city (*Demetrius* 10,3-13; 24), and Plutarch must have known of Antony's increasing identification with Dionysus in this period [10]. Moreover, in the back of Plutarch's mind must always have been the terrible damage done to Greece as a whole by Antony in the Civil War (see below). After the war his notification of Athens as a second-choice residence after Egypt does not stem obviously from philhellenic motives (72,1).

It is typical of Plutarch that suffering is the same wherever and to whomever it happens. Thus in the Civil War he notes Italy's hardships, and the misery caused by Octavian's fund-raising (58,2, cf. *Brut.* 46,2, *Pomp.* 70,6, *Caes.* 55,6 on Italy's woes during the wars). The agony of Greek, though, is stressed far more: "Antony was superior by land but he wished his power to lie with the fleet for Cleopatra's sake, although he saw that because of a lack of full complements journey-men, mule-drivers, harvesters, and cadets were being impressed form 'much suffering' Greece by his ships-captains" (62,1). The part quotation from Euripides' *Hercules Furens* is clearly significant [11]. Herakles, the subject of the line, is at the end of the play at his weakest and undergoing great suffering: Antony, who is associated with Herakles in lineage (4,1-2), is imposing suffering, also form weakness. As Plutarch points out at *synkrisis* 3,4 Herakles himself was not always a strong figure. The quotation cleverly links the plight of Greece with Antony's impending catastrophe [12].

Plutarch happened to have an eye-witness account of the cities' travails. After Philippi Octavian came to Athens, made a settlement with the Greeks, and distributed grain to the cities: "these were in a wretched condition, striped of their moneys, slaves, and transport animals. Indeed, my great-grandfather used to tell how all the citizens [of Chaeroneia] were forced to carry a set measure of wheat on their backs down to the sea at Anticyra, their pace quickened by whips. They had carried one load in this way, and were about to lift the second which they had already had measured out for them, when it was announced that Antony had been defeated. And this was what saved the city, for Antony's stewards and soldiers fled straight away and they divided up the grain amongst themselves" (68,6-8). How typical of Plutarch to record Greece's suffering in this personal anecdote, and how effectively timed to catch Antony's defeat.

[10] So C. Pelling, *Plutarch: Life of Antony*, Cambridge 1988, 209 on 33,6-34,1.
[11] *H.F.* 1250 Theseus: "Is much suffering Herakles really saying these things?".
[12] Note also 60,4, the ominous destruction of the Herakleion at Patrae.

In the context of his final military defeat at Alexandria Antony seems once again to turn to his Roman background in his last words (77,7, "a Roman, by a Roman Valiantly vanquish'd", as Shakespeare has it, *A. & C.* iv. XIII 57-58). Plutarch's real view was that Antony's flirtation with Egypt had gone further than Antony thought — he died not οὐκ ἀγεννῶς as here, but δειλῶς μὲν καὶ οἰκτρῶς καὶ ἀτίμως (*synkrisis* 6,4). After his death Octavian is prominent as a Roman very much of Roman ways. Set against the spontaneity of Antony he comes across as a cold figure and a calculating one (cf. 83,7) who, despite tears at Antony's death (78,2-3), is interested more in his own fame (78,4).

Antony demonstrates that cultural relations and contrasts are very much in the front of Plutarch's mind, even where he is not concerned with his hero's exposure to Greek culture specifically. In *Antony* Antony's departure from Roman standards comes from his involvement whith the Egyptian world. It is this cultural clash between the Roman and the Egyptian, with peninsular and Asian Greece catalytically sparking off now good, now bad in his character, that makes the Antony of Plutarch's pen so irresistible and compelling.

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