

# Authorial Statements, Narrative, and Character in Plutarch's *Agesilaus-Pompeius*

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**A**N IMPORTANT but largely overlooked aspect of Plutarch's characterization in the *Lives* is the juxtaposition of, and the interplay between, the narrative descriptions of the events that reveal his subject's character and the statements or comments inserted into the narrative at various points to achieve the same end. These authorial statements occur at important moments in the subject's life, at which the biographer pauses, steps back from the narrative of historical events, and makes interpretive comments that further reveal the character of the great man and its relationship to the history of his times. As the narrative once resumed bears out the authorial analysis and subsequent statements expand upon it, I would argue that Plutarch is not employing these statements merely to offer timely pointers, but uses them as a structural device to shape the narrative into a more complete portrait of his subject's character. Although many such passages appear throughout the *Lives* regardless of their date, length, and the depth and complexity of their analysis, a detailed examination of the authorial statements in the long and highly complex *Pompeius* will demonstrate their important rôle in the structure of Plutarch's portrait of Pompeius' character.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, examination of the *Agesilaus* will reveal their structural and thematic importance for the *Agesilaus-Pompeius* as a pair.

As some have regarded all such pauses in the narrative of events as digressions deserving censure, an answer to this

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. *Ant.* 4; 24.9–12; 27.3ff; *Alc.* 16, 23; *Mar.* 7, 28.1–7; 31.3; 32.3; *Caes.* 15.1–17.1; *Dem.* 13–14; *Demetr.* 19–20; *Luc.* 33.1–4; 36.5ff; 38.2–39.5; *Sert.* 10. Given the rather lengthy literary analysis of this paper, I must forego all historical analysis of the passages discussed.

criticism is first of all necessary.<sup>2</sup> Digression is defined as a “[d]eparture or deviation from the subject in discourse or writing.”<sup>3</sup> So, if the purpose of the *Lives* is the illumination of great men’s character, any authorial comments that reveal the character of a *Life*’s hero cannot justly be called digressions. That they retard the narrative of events might be a relevant criticism if Plutarch were writing history. For Plutarch, however, the events narrated are essentially a means of illuminating character, no differently than the authorial statements. To censure these statements as digressions is to mistake Plutarchan biography for history as οἱ τὰς διεξοδικὰς γράψαντες ἱστορίας write it (*Fab.* 16.6).<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere Plutarch rejects similar criticisms that confuse the differences between history and biography (*Alex.* 1.1–3), and we may reject this criticism here.

This is not to say that Plutarch never digresses; but true digressions, *i.e.*, passages that depart or deviate from the subject, differ significantly from authorial statements that focus on the character of the hero. Apparently sensing this difference, some scholars—among them J. R. Hamilton, C. D. Hamilton, and C. B. R. Pelling—recognize that Plutarch often employs what they call digressions to expand upon the character of the subject as already revealed in the narrative.<sup>5</sup> Pelling in fact takes an important step forward and calls these “characterizing

<sup>2</sup> See *e.g.* J. and W. Langhorne, *Plutarch’s Lives* (London 1902) xi: “We often wished to throw out of the text into the notes those most tedious and digressive comments that spoil the beauty and order of his narrative, mortify the expectation, frequently, when it is most essentially interested, and destroy the natural influence of the story, by turning the attention into a different channel. What, for instance can be more irksome and impertinent than a long dissertation on a point of natural philosophy starting up at the very crisis of some important action?”; A. E. Wardman, *Plutarch’s Lives* (Berkeley 1974) 174: “[Plutarch’s] mind did not have a dramatic cast and the pace is constantly slowed by digressions which admittedly instruct but often weaken one’s attention to the story as a whole.”

<sup>3</sup> *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford 1971) s.v. “digression (2).”

<sup>4</sup> Cf. A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides I* (Oxford 1945) 57: “We, however, desperately want history from [Plutarch], particularly chronology; and we look in vain, and often quite mistakenly criticize him for not doing what he did not set out to do.”

<sup>5</sup> J. R. Hamilton, *Plutarch, Alexander: A Historical Commentary* (Oxford 1969) xl; C. D. Hamilton, “Plutarch’s *Life of Agesilaus*,” *ANRW* II.33.6 (Berlin 1992) 4205, 4207; C. B. R. Pelling, *Plutarch, Life of Antony* (Cambridge 1988) 123, 181, 192, 232.

digressions.”<sup>6</sup> Besides the arguments advanced thus far, however, an investigation of both Plutarch’s use of “authorial statements” or “authorial comments” and what everyone, including Plutarch, would agree are digressions will justify abandoning the use of this term for passages in which Plutarch comments on the character of his subject.

If we first consider several passages that Plutarch explicitly regards as digressions, the distinction between these and authorial statements on character will become apparent. At *Alex.* 35.1–16 Plutarch begins a discussion of the so-called spring of naphtha at Ecbatana and its fiery properties, a topic introduced only for its wonder. Before returning to Alexander, Plutarch concludes (*Alex.* 35.16): τῶν μὲν οὖν τοιούτων παρεκβάσεων, ἂν μέτρον ἔχωσιν, ἦττον ἴσως οἱ δύσκολοι κατηγορήσουσιν. At *Dion* 21.6–9 the biographer unfavorably compares the behavior of Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, in marrying Dion’s wife to another man, to the behavior of his father when dealing with his sister Theste, the wife of his enemy Polyxenus. This comparison says much about the character of the elder Dionysius, his sister, and by implication the younger Dionysius, but nothing about Dion. The biographer admits as much by concluding the digression and returning to the story as follows (21.9): ταῦτα μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἄχρηστον ἔχει τὴν παρέκβασιν. At *Ti.* 13.8–15.11 Plutarch treats the misfortunes of the tyrant Dionysius after his removal from power through sayings and anecdotes that show how he endured his circumstances not ignobly (15.1). The digression concludes (15.11) in a vein similar to those cited above: ταῦτα μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἀλλότρια τῆς τῶν βίων ἀναγραφῆς οὐδὲ ἄχρηστα δόξειν οἰόμεθα μὴ σπεύδουσι μηδὲ ἀσχολουμένοις ἀκροαταῖς. In an introductory digression (*Mar.* 1.1–5) Plutarch takes issue with Posidonius concerning Roman names and ends thus (1.5): εἰς μὲν οὖν ταῦτα πολλὰς δίδωσιν ἐπιχειρήσεις ἢ τῆς συνηθείας ἀνωμαλία. Likewise at *Cor.* 11.2–6 Plutarch takes Gaius Marc’ receiving the name Coriolanus as the point of departure for a digression on Roman names, but at 11.6 he notes: ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ἑτέρῳ γένει γραφῆς προσήκει.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See Pelling (*supra* n.5) 123 *ad Ant.* 4; *cf. Ant.* 24.9–12; 27.3ff with nn. *ad locc.*

<sup>7</sup> He is perhaps referring to the lost *περὶ τῶν τριῶν ὀνομάτων τὸ κύριον* (*Lamp. Cat.* 100), clearly a work of a different γένος.

This brief sampling should make it clear that in true digressions Plutarch admittedly departs from the subject of each *Life* to edify or amaze the reader with information that in no way reveals the character of, for instance, Alexander, Dion, Timoleon, Marius, and Coriolanus. The subject of the digression may vary from natural phenomena to names to the general topic of nobility of character displayed in adverse situations. Nor does the biographer always signal the end of a digression as in these examples with a summary comment including a μέν or μὲν οὖν to be answered in the resumed narrative by δέ. At *Pomp.* 4.7–10 he concludes an explanation of the Roman wedding hymn, with οὗτος ὁ λόγος πιθανώτατός ἐστι τῶν περὶ τοῦ Ταλασίου λεγομένων; and at 25.13, after offering a brief opinion on how the sound of human voices could knock a bird from the air, he silently returns to the narrative (26.1; cf. *Flam.* 10.7f). Although true digressions may be amply illustrated from various *Lives*, only a detailed analysis of authorial statements in a single *Life* will clarify how closely related to the narrative they are and how integral to the portrayal of the subject's character. *Pomp.* 46.1–48.12 affords an example of authorial statements in conjunction with narrative that is highly complex and central to the portrait of Pompeius.

## I

Plutarch turns from the narrative (*Pomp.* 46.1) apparently to refute erroneous comparisons of the Roman's age to Alexander's at the time of his greatest achievements.<sup>8</sup> He is not, however, simply out to confound this inaccurate comparison. Rather, this statement is the first of three (46.1–4, 8f; 47.3f) that closely interlock with the surrounding and intervening narrative sections (46.5ff; 47.1f). Through them Plutarch moves beyond the crude propagandist's comparison to Alexander into a far more telling analysis of Pompeius, his character, and his career. Thus at 46.2ff he follows up the refutation begun at 46.1 with a stunning statement:

ὡς ὄνητό γ' ἂν ἐνταῦθα τοῦ βίου παυσάμενος, ἄχρι οὗ τὴν  
 Ἄλεξάνδρου τύχην ἔσχεν· ὁ δ' ἐπέκεινα χρόνος αὐτῷ τὰς μὲν  
 εὐτυχίας ἤνεγκεν ἐπιφθόνους, ἀνηκέστους δὲ τὰς δυστυχίας.

<sup>8</sup> The irony of course is that Plutarch himself has Pompeius' age wrong. Throughout the *Pompeius* Plutarch scorns the comparison with Alexander, a topic I hope to discuss elsewhere.

ἦν γὰρ ἐκ προσηκόντων αὐτὸς ἐκτήσατο δύναμιν ἐν τῇ πόλει, ταύτη χρώμενος ὑπὲρ ἄλλων οὐ δικαίως, ὅσον ἐκείνοις ἰσχύος προσετίθει, τῆς ἑαυτοῦ δόξης ἀφαιρῶν, ἔλαθε ῥώμη καὶ μεγέθει τῆς αὐτοῦ δυνάμεως καταλυθεῖς. καὶ καθάπερ τὰ καρτερώτατα μέρη καὶ χωρία τῶν πόλεων, ὅταν δέξηται πολεμίους, ἐκείνοις προστίθῃσι τὴν αὐτῶν ἰσχύν, οὕτως διὰ τῆς Πομπηίου δυνάμεως Καῖσαρ ἐξαρθεῖς ἐπὶ τὴν πόλιν, ᾧ κατὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἴσχυσε, τοῦτον ἀνέτριψε καὶ κατέβαλεν. ἐπράχθη δ' οὕτως.

For Pompeius the unjust use of power on behalf of ill-chosen associates nullifies what came before. Better had he died first. That Plutarch asserts this hard upon his narration of Pompeius' third triumph is surprising enough. Two days, as Plutarch takes great pains to tell, were far from sufficient for that triumph, which surpassed all previous in its length, scope, and splendor (*Pomp.* 45.1–5); Pompeius became the first Roman ever to celebrate triumphs over all three continents (45.6); indeed “it somehow seemed that the inhabited world had been subjugated by his three triumphs” (45.7). Even more astonishing, however, the biographer states this after devoting over a third of the entire *Life* (24.1–42.13; 672 of 1,967 Teubner lines) to the campaigns that merited this triumph; he had also capped that account with a chapter on Pompeius' glorious refusal to imitate Sulla, though he could have done so by popular support alone, even without recourse to arms (43.1–5). Finally, as Pompeius' third triumph represents the acme of his career, the rapid transition from the favorable assessment of ch. 45, from the glorious homecoming in 43, and from the lengthy narrative of his eastern exploits in 24–42, to the sudden, harsh reflections of 46 is all the more significant.<sup>9</sup> It clearly indicates to the reader not only by the powerful introductory words of 46, but also, and more importantly, by the very structure of the *Life*, that the second half of the *Pompeius* will be radically different from the first.

In all this, ch. 44 alone hints that trouble might await Pompeius. There Cato defeats his request for a postponement of the consular elections and spurns his attempts at political friend-

<sup>9</sup> On the third triumph as Pompeius' acme see B. X. de Wet, “Aspects of Plutarch's Portrayal of Pompey,” *AClass* 24 (1981) 128f. Although I would suggest that Plutarch's portrait of Pompeius up to ch. 46 is much more subtly negative than de Wet recognizes, he correctly sees the biography as written to stress the importance of this moment.

ship—or corruption, as he sees it—through a marriage alliance (44.1–6). Plutarch’s description of Cato’s behavior here (τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ τὸν τόνον, ᾧ μόνος ἐχρήτο φανερώς ὑπὲρ τῶν δικαίων, 44.2) forms an important contrast, as will emerge below, with that of Pompeius, who has asked that the laws be set aside for him (44.1), and with Plutarch’s later characterization of Pompeius (ἦν γὰρ ἐκ προσηκόντων αὐτὸς ἐκτήσατο δύναμιν ἐν τῇ πόλει, ταύτη χρώμενος [Πομπήιος] ὑπὲρ ἄλλων οὐ δικαίως, 46.3).<sup>10</sup> More immediate proof, however, of the sagacity of Cato’s judgment on Pompeius in ch. 44 is at hand: Cato said that all connected with Pompeius would have had a share in the disrepute he had brought on himself by purchasing the consulate for the unworthy Afranius: ἦς αὐτὸς [Πομπήιος] ἀρχῆς ἐφ’ οἷς κατώρθωσεν ὡς μεγίστης ἔτυχε, ταύτην ὄνιον ποιοῦντα τοῖς δι’ ἀρετὴν κτήσασθαι μὴ δυναμένοις (44.5). The women of Cato’s family, formerly in favor of the alliance, now saw that he had reckoned much better in the matter of τὸ πρέπον (44.6).

How different from the situation in the year 71 upon Pompeius’ return from Spain, when the Senate had exempted him from the *lex annalis* and a political alliance with him had been sought by the proud and powerful M. Crassus, who, though despising Pompeius, οὐκ ἐθάρρησεν ὑπατείαν μετιέναι πρότερον ἢ Πομπηίου δεηθῆναι (22.1f). With Crassus there is also a contrast, as he is now an enemy who has fled Italy at Pompeius’ approach (43.2).<sup>11</sup> The parallel dismissals of popular fears at 21.6ff and 43.1–5 reinforce the overall contrast between Pompeius’ success in 71 and his failure now—the first he has ever experienced.<sup>12</sup> Ominous indeed, but like most omens only so in hindsight. Following long triumphant campaigns abroad and his glorious homecoming, the hints of trouble in ch. 44 at first seem no more than minor matters, a troublous undercurrent of the φθόνος that all great men must face, especially as

<sup>10</sup> On Cato see 11f *infra*.

<sup>11</sup> Plutarch doubts whether Crassus truly fled from fear or did so to make the slander (διαβολή) that Pompeius would come as Sulla more believable (43.2). In either case their current enmity is clear, despite the awkward public reconciliation at 23.1f when Crassus was last seen, and it underscores the difference between 71 and 62.

<sup>12</sup> On the interrelationship between Plutarch’s account of 71–70 and this period, see T. P. HILLMAN, “Plutarch and the First Consulship of Pompeius and Crassus,” *Phoenix* 46 (1992: hereafter ‘Hillman’) 136f.

Plutarch recapitulates Pompeius' greatness in ch. 45.<sup>13</sup> Only in retrospect from the rapid sequence of authorial interpretation and narrative beginning with 46.1–4 does the importance of Cato and the seemingly minor events of ch. 44 really begin to emerge (see 265–68 *infra*).

The skillful use of authorial reflection has immediately focused the reader's attention on the magnitude of the process about to begin. Plutarch discerns a pattern of character in Pompeius' use of power in his relations with others. He then points to the evidence of the succeeding narrative: ἐπράχθη δ' οὕτως (46.4). This is all reminiscent of a statement found earlier at 23.4ff. There Pompeius' withdrawal from politics after his troubled first consulship gives an opportunity for reflection on the problems of generals in politics.<sup>14</sup> Accustomed to the simple autocracy of the camp, generals fail in the complex world of civilian democratic politics, even losing their former stature and power if they do not remain discreetly aloof. His concluding remark, ἐδήλωσε δ' αὐτὰ τὰ πράγματα μετ' ὀλίγον χρόνον (23.6), points to the succeeding narrative. There the biographer proceeds to show how Pompeius remained aloof from politics for a time and how, by allowing others more politically skilled to attain his political ends for him, he gained the commands against the pirates and Mithridates that raised him to the pinnacle he occupies at 45.6–46.1. The narrative from 24.1–45.7 thus constitutes a partial proof of Plutarch's comments at 23.4ff on 'men great from arms'. The full proof of the comments at 23.4ff must wait for the εὐτυχίαί ἐπίφθονοι and ἀνήκεστοι δυστυχίαί that Pompeius experiences after he returns from the East and no longer remains aloof from politics, as he had previously done with such great success.

Plutarch, moreover, has laid the foundation for these comments at 23.4ff and the proof that follows by an even earlier authorial statement at 13.10f. Here, on the occasion of Pompeius' receiving the cognomen Magnus for his military exploits in Sicily and Africa (13.7ff), he says that 'the Romans of old' rewarded actions of political ἀρετή with the far loftier cognomen Maximus, thus implying the inferiority of martial greatness to political greatness. There follows a narrative that shows how Pompeius' claim to his first consulship was strictly

<sup>13</sup> On φθόνος see Wardman (*supra* n.2) 70f; cf. Hillman 134f.

<sup>14</sup> See Hillman 128–31, 133; Wardman (*supra* n.2) 56.

military (14.1–21.8), how strife with his more politically adept colleague Crassus marred this consulship (22.1–4, 23.1ff), and how the greatest accomplishments of Pompeius' consulship were undertaken for purely selfish motives (21.7f) or were not really Pompeius' doing at all (22.4).<sup>15</sup> Thus Plutarch's method at 46.1–48.12—a statement that bears upon the character of his subject, followed by a narrative to illustrate how his subject's character accords with that statement—is paralleled by his earlier practice at 13.10f and 23.4ff. Let us now see how the facts and statements after 46.1–4 further elaborate the statements made there and also consider how they reveal Pompeius' character.

Plutarch's first narrative evidence of the statement at 46.1–4 is the successful resistance to the ratification of Pompeius' eastern *acta* (46.5f). Although the Senate's opposition is more politically motivated, entirely personal considerations drive Lucullus, Pompeius' *inimicus* whom the Senate urged to lead in this matter (46.5).<sup>16</sup> Pompeius had outrageously and intentionally insulted Lucullus when he superseded him in command of the Third Mithridatic War in 66, and Lucullus had returned from Asia to sink himself into wealth and luxury, to be roused only by this chance for revenge. Because Cato has previously opposed Pompeius with justice (44.1–6), as noted earlier, his support of Lucullus here adds probity to this vengeance. This attention to Lucullus' motives recalls Pompeius' unjust behavior towards him in 66, of which Plutarch gave a full and censorious narration as the most blatant example yet of what Pompeius was willing to do for δόξα and φιλοτιμία (30.6–31.13). As the struggle over ratification of his *acta* is also about δόξα (*cf.* 46.5), Pompeius is not about to relent now. Defeated in the Senate, he is thus ἠναγκάζετο δημαρχοῦσι προσφεύγειν καὶ προσαρτᾶσθαι μειρακίοις (46.7). At this point Plutarch launches directly into his second authorial statement, which like

<sup>15</sup> Plutarch portrays the restoration of the tribunate as Pompeius' work (22.4), undertaken for the χάρις he would win among the δῆμος and in order to prevent anyone else from winning it (21.8). On the reorganization of the law courts, Plutarch says (22.4) καὶ τὰς δίκας [Πομπήιος] περιεῖδεν αὐθις εἰς τοὺς ἰππέας μεταφερομένους, which clearly implies that Pompeius was not a prime mover of the law.

<sup>16</sup> Plutarch (*Pomp.* 20.2, 30.8) refers to their διαφορά, a word he commonly uses for ἔχθρα. *Cf. Luc.* 41.4. On these words see T. P. Hillman, "The Alleged *inimicitiae* of Pompeius and Lucullus: 78–74," *CP* 86 (1991) 316 with nn.8–10.



the first is bound to, but looks beyond, the events of the moment (46.8f):

ὧν ὁ βδελυρώτατος καὶ θρασύτατος Κλώδιος ἀναλαβὼν αὐτὸν ὑπέρριψε τῷ δήμῳ, καὶ παρ' ἀξίαν ἐν ἀγορᾷ κυλινδόμενον ἔχων καὶ περιφέρων, ἐχρήτο τῶν πρὸς χάριν ὄχλου καὶ κολακείαν γραφομένων καὶ λεγομένων βεβαιωτῆ, καὶ πρόσ-ετι μισθόν [ἦτει], ὡσπερ οὐ καταισχύνων, ἀλλ' εὐεργετῶν, ὕστερον ἔλαβε παρὰ Πομπηίου, προέσθαι Κικέρωνα, φίλον ὄντα καὶ πλείστα δὴ πεπολιτευόμενον. κινδυνεύοντι γὰρ καὶ δεομένῳ βοηθείας οὐδ' εἰς ὄψιν προήλθεν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἤκουσιν ἀποκλείσας τὴν αὐλειον, ἐτέραις θύραις ὤχετο ἀπίων. Κικέρων δὲ φοβηθεὶς τὴν κρίσιν ὑπεξῆλθε τῆς Ῥώμης.

The point of departure here is Pompeius' political failure when left to his own devices. This again reminds the reader of Pompeius' image as the general at a loss in politics that Plutarch has developed throughout his *Life*, and that the recent juxtapositions of military success and political failures have underscored (Hillman 128–31, 132f). Further, by ranging forward in time to show how Pompeius was disgraced and diminished by his association with Clodius, Plutarch provides a concrete example of the character of the “tribunes and boys” to whom Pompeius must turn, having failed against Lucullus, Cato, and the Senate.<sup>17</sup> This substantiates the prior general remarks on Pompeius' political maladroitness and how the unjust use of power for others would ruin him (46.1–4). In turn these two points converge with a third that Plutarch has labored to make throughout the *Life*, that Pompeius, when acting independently, forms political associations or friendships that are momentarily effective, but in the long run counterproductive (see Hillman 129, 133). All this anticipates the subsequent introduction of Caesar, his φίλος, who will exceed τὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἀξίωμα, καὶ τρόπον τινὰ δημαρχίαν τὴν ὑπατείαν καθιστάς (47.5). It explains how Pompeius was such an easy mark for Caesar.

That Plutarch chooses specifically to dwell on Pompeius' betrayal of Cicero is also significant, if one considers the emphasis just placed on the history between Pompeius and Lucullus (46.5f). Not only will Pompeius' φιλοτιμία and desire for δόξα encourage him unjustly and needlessly to outrage and

<sup>17</sup> μαιράκιον (“boy”) can be a term of contempt; cf. LSJ s.v. 2, citing Plut. *Phil.* 6.7.

humiliate his enemies, it will allow him to abandon and mistreat his friends. By thus pairing Lucullus and Cicero, Plutarch brackets the other details on Pompeius' failure and unjust use of power, which already resonate with information on his character, with key examples of his past and future behavior when friendship, enmity, and politics intersect. In this respect, too, Plutarch anticipates Pompeius' relations with Caesar in order to make them instantly intelligible. He thus integrates authorial comments with narrative in a manner that enhances the reader's grasp of the character and life of Pompeius.

With the arrival of Caesar at 47.1, the narrative resumes, and all the issues of politics, friendship, and enmity are in play. Returning from a military expedition, Caesar grasps that his political future depends upon reconciling the enemies Pompeius and Crassus. He immediately effects this and attains the consulship. This deed Plutarch characterizes as *πλείστην μὲν αὐτῷ χάριν ἐν τῷ πάροντι καὶ δύναμιν εἰσαύθις ἤνεγκε, μέγιστα δὲ Πομπήιον ἔβλαψε καὶ τὴν πόλιν* (47.1); it was also a *πρᾶγμα καλὸν μὲν ἄλλως καὶ πολιτικόν, αἰτία δὲ φαύλη καὶ μετὰ δεινότητος ὑπ' ἐκείνου συντεθὲν ἐπιβούλως* (47.2). The wicked finesse of Caesar, recently returned from an unimportant, untold war, stands in lucid contrast to the incompetence of Pompeius, the great general come home to domestic failure. This internal *σύγκρισις* with Caesar reveals the political defects of Pompeius' character that Plutarch has so far stressed: his clumsiness when independent and consequent need for others, his inability to form and maintain useful political friendships, and his alienation from the Senate and its workings.<sup>18</sup> At the same time the lessons of his moral defects, namely the selfish, unbridled pursuit of glory and ambition, subtly imply that the friendship, the *φιλία*, formed here will last only so long as it abets Pompeius'—and Caesar's—ambition and glory,<sup>19</sup> for Caesar's ambition and desire for glory, as well as his canny use of Pompeius as a means to those ends, have been evident since

<sup>18</sup> On internal *σύγκρισις* see D. A. Russell, "On Reading Plutarch's *Lives*," *G&R* 13 (1966) 139–54, esp. 150f; T. W. Hillard, "Plutarch's Late Republican Lives: Between the Lines," *Antichthon* 21 (1987) 34ff; Wardman (*supra* n.2) 27–36. Cf. *Pomp.* 1.1–4, 3.5, 4.1ff (contrasted with Strabo); 3.1, 4.3–9, 5.1–5 (with Cinna); 7.6, 8.5f (with Metellus Pius); 16.1–9 (with Catulus).

<sup>19</sup> On the misdirection of ambition from virtue to glory, cf. *Agis* 1.1–2.3 and *Pomp.* 29.1–7; 30.3ff, 8; 31.1–13. See also F. Frazier, "A propos de la *philotimia* dans les *Vies*. Quelques jalons dans l'histoire d'une notion," *RPhil* 62 (1988) 102–27; Wardman (*supra* n.2) 115–24.

his first appearance at *Pomp.* 25.8, where he is the lone named supporter of Pompeius' bid for the command against the pirates: οὗτος δὲ συνηγόρει τῷ νόμῳ, Πομπηίου μὲν ἐλάχιστα φροντίζων, ὑποδυόμενος δὲ τὸν δῆμον ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἑαυτῷ καὶ κτώμενος.

Let us turn to the last statement (47.3f):

ἢ γὰρ ὡσπερ ἐν σκάφει τὰς ἀποκλίσεις ἐπανισοῦσα τῆς πόλεως ἰσχὺς εἰς ἓν συνελθοῦσα καὶ γενομένη μία, τὴν πάντα πράγματα καταστασιάσασαν καὶ καταβαλοῦσαν ἀνανταγώνιστον ῥοπὴν ἐποίησεν. ὁ γοῦν Κάτων τοὺς λέγοντας ὑπὸ τῆς ὕστερον γενομένης πρὸς Καίσαρα Πομπηίῳ διαφορᾶς ἀνατραπῆναι τὴν πόλιν ἀμαρτάνειν ἔλεγεν, αἰτιωμένους τὸ τελευταῖον· οὐ γὰρ τὴν στάσιν οὐδὲ τὴν ἔχθραν, ἀλλὰ τὴν σύστασιν καὶ τὴν ὁμόνοιαν αὐτῶν τῇ πόλει κακὸν πρῶτον γενέσθαι καὶ μέγιστον.

Here again Plutarch uses the present to illuminate the future, as the illustration of Pompeius' failings gives way to a summation of their larger historical effects. The destruction of the Republic will come to pass (at least partially) because Pompeius' character, as revealed throughout the *Life*, but especially in these last few chapters, has led him to form the *φιλία* with Caesar. Cato saw it, having seen through and opposed Pompeius at 44.1–6 and 46.6. By inserting Cato's discovery of the long term public repercussions of Pompeius' alliance with Caesar in its beginning, the biographer serves two purposes.

First, he ties this statement firmly to the first at 46.1–4, although there the focus is more on the personal consequences of his friendship with Caesar. The second interpretive passage (46.8f), too, though it introduces more detailed public information, still attends more to what this information tells us about Pompeius, for even the remarks on the very public problems of Cicero are a tale told on Pompeius. The third of course attends wholly to the historical and political effects of this friendship with Caesar. By developing and expanding his focus in this way, Plutarch clarifies the close connection between character and public events, between *ἦθος* and *πράξεις*, and he signifies the importance of the *φιλία* of Pompeius and Caesar for understanding the rest of the *Life*.

Second, he provides the perspective necessary to appreciate the significance of Cato's emergence at ch. 44 as well as the sagacity of his judgment of Pompeius there. Like Caesar, Cato is mentioned only once before the return of Pompeius at 43.1.

Like Caesar, that mention adumbrates his character and future rôle in the *Life* (cf. 25.8), for in yet another authorial statement (*Pomp.* 40.2) Plutarch introduces him as ὁ φιλόσοφος ἔτι μὲν ὦν νέος, ἤδη δὲ μεγάλην ἔχων δόξαν καὶ μέγα φρονῶν. Like Caesar, he will remain a key figure in the *Pompeius*, and so the manner of his introduction is important.<sup>20</sup> At first Cato might seem only to contrast the insolence of Pompeius' uppish freedman, Demetrius, the friend μέγιστον δυνάμενος παρ' αὐτῷ (40.1). Yet Plutarch uses Cato to illustrate Pompeius' use of power for his friends and the advantage that they take of Pompeius' good nature (39.6):

μέγα γὰρ ἦν ὄνομα τῆς δυνάμεως, οὐκ ἔλαττον τῆς ἀρετῆς καὶ πραότητος· ᾧ καὶ τὰ πλείστα τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν ἀμαρτήματα φίλων καὶ συνήθων ἀπέκρυπτε, κωλύειν μὲν ἢ κολάζειν τοὺς πονηρευομένους οὐ πεφυκῶς, αὐτὸν δὲ παρέχων τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσι τοιοῦτον, ὥστε καὶ τὰς ἐκείνων πλεονεξίας καὶ βαρύτητας εὐκόλως ὑπομένειν.<sup>21</sup>

There follows the story of Demetrius in which Cato is introduced (40.1–5) and then further illustrations of Demetrius' presumption (40.6–9). Pompeius' susceptibility to his friends is all part of his character, of his nature (cf. πεφυκῶς, 39.6).<sup>22</sup> It is also the darker side of Pompeius' best characteristic, his "amena-

<sup>20</sup> Cato also appears at 40.2–5; 44.1–6; 46.6; 47.4–7; 48.2, 6, 9; 52.1ff; 54.4–9; 55.9; 56.3; 59.6; 60.7f; 61.1; 65.1; 67.3; 76.2.

<sup>21</sup> Plutarch introduces this authorial statement to explain the way foreign nations approached Pompeius to ask his intervention (39.5). He suggests that the nations requested Pompeius' friendship because they knew of his indulgence of his friends. Again, what is good and beneficial for the general and the state in the camp is not so at home, as the subsequent passage makes clear when viewed in the context of the *Life*.

<sup>22</sup> οὐ πεφυκῶς at 39.6 is quite significant. As nature is, obviously, innate, this characteristic must have been present in Pompeius from the beginning and must be implicit in the description at *Pomp.* 1.4. Cf. the abstract ἐντευξιν at 1.4 with the concrete τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσι at 39.6 and ἐντυχεῖν and ἐντεύξεσι at 23.4. For an important recent discussion of φύσις and ἦθος see C. Gill, "The Question of Character-development: Plutarch and Tacitus," *CQ* n.s. 33 (1983) 469–87, esp. 478–81. This study refutes the modern contention that the ancients saw character as immutable, as e.g. in A. Dihle, *Studien zur griechischen Biographie* (Göttingen 1956) 60ff; Hamilton (*supra* n.5) xxxviii–ix; F. Leo, *Die griechische-römische Biographie* (Leipzig 1901) 188ff; R. M. Ogilvie, *The Roman and their Gods* (London 1970) 18.

bility to approach" (‘εὐαρμοσσία πρὸς ἔντευξιν’, 1.4).<sup>23</sup> The *Pompeius* contains several earlier examples of this characteristic: he gives the courtesan Flora to his friend Geminus simply because Geminus asked for her (2.5–8); Pompeius spares the Sicilian city of Himera and the politician Sthenius when Sthenius asks to take sole responsibility for Himera’s anti-Sullan policy (10.11f); Pompeius gladly grants Crassus’ request for cooperation in their bid for the consulship of 70 (22.1f). Yet it is ambition that moves Pompeius to help Crassus, and his expectation that he will now have Crassus under obligation leads only to trouble (22.3f, 23.1f).<sup>24</sup> Here Pompeius’ readiness to grant requests first conjoins with the parallel theme of ambition that the biographer has also been developing. This conjunction will reappear after 46.1. Only then it will not be Geminus or the harmless fool Demetrius whom Pompeius must suffer, but the far more dangerous Clodius and the wily Caesar, whose ambition will encompass Pompeius’ destruction. Ironically, then, Pompeius’ best point, when combined with ruthless ambition and political incompetence, becomes a two-edged sword and the principal element in his downfall.<sup>25</sup>

When the narrative resumes at 47.5, the facts prove Plutarch’s interpretations substantial: Caesar’s and Pompeius’ friendship brings great evils upon the city, and Pompeius’ power supports Caesar to the detriment of his own reputation. I refer to Pompeius’ power here rather than Pompeius, because from 47.5 until Caesar’s departure for Gaul (48.9), Caesar, not Pompeius, wields Pompeius’ power (*cf. Caes.* 14.5). This is of course precisely what Plutarch said in his first statement (46.3f: διὰ τῆς Πομπηίου δυνάμεως) and illustrated—through Clodius—in the second (47.8f).<sup>26</sup> In alliance with Caesar Pompeius proves passive and reactive. Pompeius has in fact always been

<sup>23</sup> Of the characteristics Plutarch lists at 1.4 as responsible for winning Pompeius the love of the Roman people, εὐαρμοσσία πρὸς ἔντευξιν comes last, is represented as the quality that Pompeius possessed over and above the others, and is the only one that Plutarch sees fit to expand upon.

<sup>24</sup> *Pomp.* 22.2: καὶ μέντοι Πομπήιος ἠγάπησε, πάλαι δεόμενος χρείας τινὸς ὑπάρξαι καὶ φιλανθρωπίας πρὸς αὐτόν. *Cf. Crass.* 12.2ff; further discussion in Hillman 125ff, 130ff.

<sup>25</sup> It is not uncommon in Plutarch for a dominant characteristic to cut both ways: see C. B. R. Pelling, “Synkrisis in Plutarch’s *Lives*,” in F. E. Brenk and I. Gallo, edd., *Miscellanea Plutarchea* (= *QuadGFilFerr* 8 [1986]) 87f.

<sup>26</sup> Clodius of course, not Caesar, wields Pompeius’ power in the second digression. The relationship, however, is the same.

quite passive in domestic politics, *i.e.*, others have almost always gained his desired ends for him.<sup>27</sup> The years 70 and 62–60, when he attempts to act alone, are in this respect crucial anomalies that reveal his character and its connection to his historical rôle. They do so by their demonstration that, if he cannot successfully act alone, his passivity, political inexpertise, and inability to say no to his friends leave him and—thanks to his power—the republic decidedly vulnerable. Three brief examples will make these points clear.

At 47.6–9 Caesar gets Pompeius to state publicly that he will use violence to pass Caesar's agrarian legislation—a statement Pompeius' friends can only defend by claiming that ἐκφυγεῖν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ καιροῦ τὸ ῥῆμα. At 47.9f Pompeius' unexpected marriage to Julia, daughter of Caesar, is evidence of how Pompeius φανερός ἦν ἤδη παντάπασιν ἑαυτὸν τῷ Καίσαρι χρήσασθαι παραδεδωκώς. Thereafter (48.1–7) Pompeius, who had just won such glory by refusing to be like Sulla (43.1–5), uses soldiers and violence to drive off all who would oppose the legislation by which his and Caesar's political ends are attained. This ends only when Caesar's departure for Gaul is reported at 48.9. By then, however, Pompeius has already been seduced from politics by the love of Julia (48.8) and has become the butt of Clodius' demagogic abuses (48.8–12; *cf.* 46.8f).<sup>28</sup> This rapid transition back to Clodius further reinforces the connections between the authorial statements and the narrative and suggests that Pompeius will find no respite even with Caesar gone: other demagogues will take his place.<sup>29</sup> Throughout Cato has opposed and “as if inspired and possessed by Phoebus kept prophesying in the Senate what was in store for the city and Pompeius” (48.6).<sup>30</sup>

After this complex interweaving of narrative and authorial statement at 46.1–48.12, there follows another long narrative

<sup>27</sup> *Pomp.* 9.1f; 10.1f; 11.1; 13.1–7; 14.1–5, 8ff; 17.3f; 20.1f; 25.2–13; 26.3; 30.1–8; 46.8; 47.6f; 48.8–12; 49.10; 51.1, 6; 52.4; 53.6; 54.3; 58.4–10; 59.3f. On Pompeius' passivity in the second part of the *Life*, see C. B. R. Pelling, “Plutarch's Adaptation of His Source Material,” *JHS* 100 (1980) 133f.

<sup>28</sup> Pompeius was censured for his neglect of public affairs while attending to his wives: *Pomp.* 2.9f, 53.1–5, 55.1–5. At 2.9f concern for his δόξα also leads Pompeius to abuse a friendship to deflect criticism.

<sup>29</sup> See *Pomp.* 49.10; 51.1, 6; 52.4; 53.6; 54.3; 58.4–10; 59.3f.

<sup>30</sup> For τὰ μέλλοντα, *cf.* also *Pomp.* 47.1: πλείστην μὲν αὐτῷ χάριν ἐν τῷ παρόντι καὶ δύναμιν εἰσαῦθις ἤνεγκε, μέγιστα δὲ Πομπήιον ἔβλαψε καὶ τὴν πόλιν. Cato: 47.6; 48.2, 6, 9.

section (49.1–69.8) that, much like the narrative section (24.1–45.7) after the authorial statement at 23.4ff, further corroborates not only the analysis of 46.1–48.12, but also the comments at 23.4ff on the vulnerability of “men great from arms and out of proportion to civilian democratic equality” in the political world.<sup>31</sup> For Pompeius’ ambition and contentiousness, his lust for power and his political disabilities, his need for political friends and allies and his passivity towards them, all combine to undermine his strength, to bring on the civil war, and then to render him unable to prevent his political allies from interfering with his conduct of that war. Plutarch also employs two authorial statements to structure and reinforce the evidence of the narrative at critical moments. At 49.1–53.6 Plutarch delineates Pompeius’ political career down to the death of Julia in 54. During this time Pompeius experiences more of the εὐτυχίαί ἐπίφθονοι and δυστυχίαί ἀνήκεστοι predicted at 46.2 and initially illustrated in the analysis at 46.1–48.12; and Caesar, now grown militarily great from the power Pompeius had given him, continues to prove himself the abler politician despite his absence in Gaul (51.1ff).<sup>32</sup> In this Caesar succeeds so well that at the death of Julia he has won the greater share of τιμή, the object of φιλοτιμία, among the δῆμος (53.6), with whom Pompeius was traditionally strongest (*cf.* 1.4; Hillman 132f). At this moment Plutarch pauses to comment on the effect of Julia’s death in terms of character, for the city (he says) immediately began to seethe with political turmoil, ὡς ἡ πρότερον παρακαλύπτουσα μᾶλλον ἢ κατείργουσα τῶν ἀνδρῶν φιλαρχίαν οἰκειότης ἀνήρηται (53.7). He adds that Crassus’ death shortly thereafter removed the last obstacle to civil war (53.8f) and comments (53.10): οὕτως ἡ τύχη μικρόν ἐστι πρὸς τὴν φύσιν· οὐ γὰρ ἀποπίμπλησιν αὐτῆς τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν, ὅπου τοσοῦτον βάθος ἡγεμονίας καὶ εὐρυχωρίας δυοῖν

<sup>31</sup> The similarity of 49.1–69.8 to 24.1–45.7 is also reflected in their comparable lengths, 672 and 710 Teubner lines respectively; both also contain authorial statements (39.6–40.9, 53.7–10) directly related to Pompeius’ relations with friends.

<sup>32</sup> Successes and failures: 49.1ff, 6f (*cf.* 25.4–10, 30.1–4), 10; 51.1, 6ff; 52.1–53.5. The authorial statement at 53.7–10 does not mark the end of these successes and failures. Plutarch continues to set them forth thereafter. See *e.g.* 54.3–9, 55.1–56.3. It is worth noting that, with the exception of Pompeius’ success as *curator annonae* (50.1ff), Plutarch often mentions the occasions on which Pompeius succeeded by acting properly only in passing on to more detailed accounts of improper successes: 52.3f, 55.6–11.

ἀνδροῖν οὐκ + ἐπέσχευ, ἀλλ' ἑαυτοῖς οὐκ ἐνόμιζον ἀρκεῖν δυσὶν οὖσι τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχήν.<sup>33</sup>

Plutarch's comments again build on his previous remarks about Pompeius' character, expanding them to include Caesar's as well and relating it all to the coming of the civil war. His comments on the falseness of their friendship, their insatiable lust for power (φιλαρχία), and the insufficiency of the empire to contain them both also anticipate his comments in his next and last authorial statement at 70.1–7. When the narrative resumes, Pompeius almost immediately begins to seek the means of security against Caesar (54.2) and finds himself new political allies among Caesar's enemies in the Senate. Pompeius, however, has not fared well in the Senate since his first consulship, is distrusted, and lacks the political skills to dominate there.<sup>34</sup> As a result, Pompeius has an uncomfortable time with the Senate as his ally, even after he is chosen for the unprecedented honor of a sole consulship (54.3–56.4). The closer the civil war comes, moreover, the less prominent Pompeius becomes in the politics of the Senate and the less frequently is he present there; the political maneuvers before the civil war are largely transactions between the Senate and Caesar's minions, Curio and Antonius, towards whom the δῆμος is uniformly well-disposed.<sup>35</sup> Once the war comes, his political allies invade his general's tent and make it their Senate (84.[4].4). In so doing they undermine and eventually ruin Pompeius' ability to fight and win the war, because they will not allow him to put his plans into effect (61.4) and taunt him when he does not think it good strategy to fight Caesar at once (67.1–7). Pompeius, politically passive and inept, and dominated by his concern with what men think of him (δόξα, 67.7) and with his sense of shame towards his friends (αἰδώς, 67.7), is overwhelmed by these taunts and begins to prepare for the

<sup>33</sup> K. Ziegler, "Plutarchstudien," *RbM* 76 (1927) 48, places the dagger and suggests that a word such as φιλαρχία has fallen out of the text.

<sup>34</sup> On Plutarch's portrayal of Pompeius' relations with the Senate, see Hillman 132f.

<sup>35</sup> Contrast the failure of the Pompeian tribune, C. Lucilius Hirrus, to whom the δῆμος reacts negatively when he proposes to have Pompeius named dictator (54.3f) with the successes of Antonius and Curio (58.4, 59.3f). Hirrus' failure may also be contrasted with the success of the Pompeian tribunes Gabinius and Manilius in the years 67–66 (25.3–27.3, 30.1–5).



battle they demand (68.1–69.8). Plutarch then pauses to comment on character, nature, and history one last time (70.1f):

Ἦδη δὲ συνθήματος διδομένου παρ' ἀμφοτέρων ... ὀλίγοι δὲ Ῥωμαίων οἱ βέλτιστοι καὶ τινες Ἑλλήνων παρόντες ἔξω τῆς μάχης ... ἐλογίζοντο τὴν πλεονέξιαν καὶ φιλονικίαν ὅπου φέρουσα τὴν ἡγεμονίαν ἐξέθηκεν. ὄπλα γὰρ συγγενικὰ καὶ τάξεις ἀδελφαὶ καὶ κοινὰ σημεῖα καὶ μιᾶς πόλεως εὐανδρία τοσαύτη καὶ δύναμις αὐτὴ πρὸς ἑαυτὴν συνέπιπτεν, ἐπιδεικνυμένη τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φύσιν ὡς ἐν πάθει γενομένη τυφλὸν ἐστὶ καὶ μανιώδες.

Plutarch then picks up on his remarks at 53.10, arguing that if the empire as it was not big enough for two such men, all the rest of the barbarian world remained to be conquered, and concludes with a summary of Pompeius' and Caesar's false friendship that bears on their characters and recalls the remarks of Cato on this friendship that Plutarch quoted at 47.4.

Yet the authorial statement at 70.1–7 also plays a larger rôle in the context of the *Life*: it does not just put a period to 49.1–69.8 as the statements and narrative at 46.1–48.12 do to 24.1–45.7, but offers summary comment and proof for the rôle of character in history, for Plutarch firmly assigns the blame for the civil war and Pompeius' unfortunate decision to fight at Pharsalus to the very characteristics that Pompeius has displayed through the *Life*. Pompeius' φιλονικία first influenced events long ago when he refused to let Sulla have the last word about his first triumph (14.1–5); and πλεονεξία seems to compress his φιλοτιμία, his φιλαρχία (30.8, 53.7), and desire for δόξα into a single word that describes his characteristic drive to claim more of τιμή, δύναμις, and δόξα than his peers. Precisely these traits, first and foremost, led Pompeius to war, politics, and the need for political friendships; and precisely these traits made his political inability and personal amenability dangerous to himself and the Republic (Hillman 133–36).

Yet Plutarch's remarks on πλεονεξία and φιλοτιμία clearly also have a wider compass. They apply to Caesar, Pompeius' old false friend (70.3–7; cf. 53.6f), and to the Optimates in Pompeius' camp, his new false friends (67.1–10, 76.2), all of whom help bring on the war and this battle by their contentious and arrogant claims. One should note that in the only previous use of πλεονεξία in this *Life* (39.6, quoted *supra* 12), Plutarch says that Pompeius endured and abetted the misdeeds of his friends because it was not in his nature to stop them and because he

was the sort to put up with "their acts of arrogance and importunity." Now Pompeius' own *πλεονεξία* and *φιλονικία* combine with his inability to control theirs to destroy everything. This authorial statement also clearly recalls an authorial statement made early in the *Agesilaus* and thus indicates that Plutarch is also using these statement to bind these *Lives* together. At *Ages.* 5.5ff Plutarch first questions, then rejects the notion advanced by some that the *φιλοτιμία* and *φιλονικία* of the powerful are good for the state: αἱ γὰρ ὑπερβολαὶ τῶν φιλονικιῶν χαλεπαὶ ταῖς πόλεσι καὶ μεγάλους κινδύνους ἔχουσαι (5.7). Pharsalus bears final witness to this in the *Agesilaus-Pompeius*. Through careful use of authorial statement and narrative Plutarch has brought this argument full circle.

## II

As we have just seen in the *Pompeius*, Plutarch juxtaposes and interweaves narrative passages and authorial statements in order to present a more complete portrait of Pompeius' character and, importantly, of how Pompeius' rôle in, and effect upon, events is predicated upon his character. So far from being digressive, such statements bear directly upon his subject in the *Lives*, the indication of ἀρετή and κακία through a man's πράξεις, as clearly stated at *Alex.* 1.1ff and elsewhere.<sup>36</sup> Nor is the import of these statements in the *Pompeius* merely or strictly local, as they are linked in theme and structure to narrative passages and authorial statements throughout the *Life*. More than that, as the quotation from the *Agesilaus* clearly suggests, the biographer can use this technique to reinforce the parallel between two *Lives* and to emphasize the political and historical effects that traits of character shared by parallels can have. This point will more clearly emerge from an investigation of Plutarch's use of this technique in the *Agesilaus*.

In this *Life* Plutarch introduces and discusses Agesilaus' characteristic *φιλοτιμία* and *φιλονικία* more quickly and openly than he does in the *Pompeius*, where his stress on these

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Aem.* 1.1-6; *Dem.* 11.7; *Demetr.* 1.1-6; *Cim.* 2.3ff; *Per.* 1.2ff; *Pomp.* 8.6f. See also Gomme (*supra* n.4) I 54-57; J. R. Hamilton (*supra* n.5) 103ff.

characteristics is equally pervasive but more subtle.<sup>37</sup> After narrating Agesilaus' birth, education, and ascent to the throne (1.1–4.6), in which his φιλοτιμία (2.3, 3.5) and φιλονικία (2.2, 4.4) have already received attention, Plutarch pauses in a passage quite like those discussed in the *Pompeius* to comment upon Agesilaus' dealings in friendship and enmity with other citizens (5.1ff):<sup>38</sup>

ἐν δὲ ταῖς πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους πολίτας ὁμιλίαις ἐχθρὸς ἦν ἀμειπτότερος ἢ φίλος. τοὺς μὲν γὰρ ἐχθροὺς ἀδίκως οὐκ ἔβλαπτε, τοῖς δὲ φίλοις καὶ τὰ μὴ δίκαια συνέπραττε. καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἐχθροὺς ἠσχύνετο μὴ τιμᾶν κατορθούντας, τοὺς δὲ φίλους οὐκ ἠδύνατο ψέγειν ἀμαρτάνοντας, ἀλλὰ καὶ βοηθῶν ἠγάλλετο καὶ συνεξαμαρτάνων αὐτοῖς· οὐδὲν γὰρ ᾤετο τῶν φιλικῶν ὑπουργημάτων αἰσχρον εἶναι. τοῖς δ' αὖ διαφόροις καὶ πταίσασσι πρῶτος συναχθόμενος, καὶ δεηθεῖσι συμπράττων προθύμως, ἐδημαγῶγει καὶ προσήγετο πάντας.

So dangerous, however, did these winning ways seem to the ephors that they fined him, ὅτι τοὺς κοινούς πολίτας ἰδίους κτᾶται (5.4). Previously Plutarch had stressed Agesilaus' untraditional behavior as king in that he had courted the favor of the ephors and gerousia, rather than taking up the customary royal φιλονικία and διαφορά with them (4.4). Now, Plutarch makes clear, he is also acting contrary to tradition, for

<sup>37</sup> φιλονικία and its cognates occur eleven times in the *Agesilaus* (2.2; 4.4; 5.5, 7; 7.4; 11.6; 18.4; 23.11; 26.6; 33.2; 34.2.), four times in the *Pompeius* (14.2, 31.2, 35.1, 70.1); φιλοτιμία: *Ages.* 2.3; 3.2, 3; 5.5; 7.4; 8.5; 6 (*bis*); 11.5; 18.5; 20.9; 23.11; 33.2; *cf.* ὑπέκκαυμα: *Pomp.* 30.8; *Ages.* 5.5. In the *Pompeius* φιλοτιμία and its cognates do not occur in a reference to Pompeius before 29.4 and after that only four more times, although Plutarch makes it quite clear that his nature was ambitious: 30.8 (τῆς ἐμφύτου φιλοτιμίας), 38.1, 39.2, 49.14 (ἡ Πομπηίου ... φύσις, οὐκ ἔχουσα κακότηδες οὐδ' ἀνελεύθερον οὕτω τὸ φιλότιμον). That Plutarch is less direct in the *Pompeius* should cause no surprise, as the biographer will often introduce themes in the first *Life* of a pair that he elaborates in a more complete and allusive fashion in the second. For this progress in *Philopoemen-Flaminius*, *Demetrius-Antonius*, and *Lysander-Sulla*, see P. A. Stadter, "Paradoxical Paradigms: Lysander and Sulla," in Stadter, ed., *Plutarch and the Historical Tradition* (London 1992) 41–55; Pelling (*supra* n.25) 83–96.

<sup>38</sup> Just as for Pompeius in his *Life*, Agesilaus' dealings in friendship, whether they increase his own power, harm the state, or both, are prominent in his *Life*: *Ages.* 3.1–9, 5.1–6.5, 13.1–7, 20.3–9, 23.6–11, 24.4–26.1. Although Phoebeidas is not represented at *Ages.* 23.6–11 as a φίλος of Agesilaus, Plutarch clearly sees him as such (*Pomp.* 81.[1.]5f). On Agesilaus' treatment of Lysander see also *Pomp.* 81.[1.]3f.

ἔοικεν ὁ Λακωνικὸς νομοθέτης ὑπέκκαυμα τῆς ἀρετῆς ἐμβαλεῖν εἰς τὴν πολιτείαν τὸ φιλόνικον καὶ φιλότιμον, ἀεὶ τινα γίνεσθαι τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς διαφορὰν καὶ ἄμιλλαν εἶναι πρὸς ἀλλήλους βουλόμενος· τὴν γὰρ ἀνθυπεῖκουσαν τῷ ἀνελέγκτῳ χάριν, ἀργὴν καὶ ἀνανταγώνιστον οὖσαν, οὐκ ὀρθῶς ὁμόνοιαν λέγεσθαι (5.5).

Even though Plutarch admits that some may cite Homer to support the assertion that rivalry and enmity among the best men are a great good for the commonwealth (5.6), he rejects this assertion, seemingly out of hand, before he turns from these authorial statements back to the narrative: αἱ γὰρ ὑπερβολαὶ τῶν φιλονικιῶν χαλεπαὶ ταῖς πόλεσι καὶ μεγάλους κινδύνους ἔχουσαι (5.7).

With that, Plutarch commences the tale of Agesilaus' first expedition to Asia Minor. But like his return to the narrative at *Pomp.* 46.5, the facts of this narrative bear out his reflections at 5.1–7, for at 6.1–8.7 Plutarch explores the impact that great men's φιλοτιμία, φιλονικία, φιλία, and ἔχθρα can have upon the affairs of state: although the expedition to Asia Minor ostensibly responds to Persian plans to drive the Spartans from the region (6.1), Lysander, Agesilaus' φίλος (6.5), who has already been introduced as his boyhood ἐραστής (2.1), and as the man who most connived at his ascension (3.1–9), has motives of his own. He wishes to help his φίλοι in Asia Minor, whom he had left in power, but who have fallen κακῶς δὲ χρώμενοι καὶ βιαίως τοῖς πράγμασιν (6.2). To this end he instructed these φίλοι to request the dispatch of Agesilaus, whom he would accompany as the first of his advisors οὐ διὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ μόνον δόξαν καὶ δύναμιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν Ἀγησιλάου φίλιαν, ᾧ μείζον ἐδόκει τῆς βασιλείας ἀγαθὸν διαπεπρᾶχθαι τὴν στρατηγίαν ἐκείνην (6.5). Plutarch thereby relates the motivation of the expedition and the intrigues of its origins primarily to Agesilaus' friendship with Lysander and Lysander's with those whom he had left in power in Asia Minor. The injustice of these φίλοι, as well as the great good Agesilaus thinks that Lysander has done in procuring his command, corroborates the statements of 5.1ff on Agesilaus' blameworthy exultation in joining in the wrongdoing of his friends. At the same time it broadens the scope of these comments by showing them in operation in both domestic and foreign politics.

On this expedition, however, two events reveal more clearly Agesilaus' φιλοτιμία and φιλονικία and, with the authorial statements of 5.1–7, imply the danger of these characteristics to

Sparta. The first is his *διαφορά* with Lysander in Asia that led Lysander to plan the overthrow of the Spartan monarchy and that would have caused a great revolution, had he not died (8.4; *cf.* 20.3ff). The second is the Thebans' disruption of Agesilaus' sacrifice at Aulis in Boeotia before his departure for Asia (6.9ff). The importance of the second, easily overlooked because its effects are not immediate, only becomes apparent as the *Life* develops: from this initial encounter with the Thebans, who disappoint his ambition to emulate Agamemnon (6.6–10), Agesilaus develops a consuming, lifelong hatred that, as Plutarch repeatedly emphasizes, brings out the worst, most excessive aspects of his *φιλοτιμία* and *φιλονικία*.<sup>39</sup> Ultimately his hatred for Thebes, when combined with his ambition and contentiousness, has disastrous results for Sparta (27.4–28.8, 34.1–35.6). Plutarch's intended audience, of course, will have known this and he uses that knowledge to his purpose,<sup>40</sup> for by juxtaposing this narrative passage on Agesilaus' entry into the wider world of Hellenic and Persian politics with his rejection of the claim that ambition and contentiousness are good for a state internally, he has subtly prepared the reader to consider the good and the harm that these aspects of Agesilaus' character can and will do Sparta externally. Just as he previously broadened the scope of his remarks on Agesilaus' behavior regarding his friends, he now does the same for his characteristic *φιλοτιμία* and *φιλονικία*.

The perils of ambition and contentiousness, however, that Plutarch has hinted at in 5.1–7 and left implicit in the incident at Aulis, he brings out explicitly in Agesilaus' *διαφορά* with Lysander. No sooner do they arrive in Asia than Lysander's power (*δύναμις*) and reputation (*ἀξίωμα*) there prove offensive and burdensome to Agesilaus (7.1f):

ὥς ὄνομα μὲν καὶ σχῆμα τῆς στρατηγίας (περὶ) τὸν Ἀγησί-  
 λαον ὄντα διὰ τὸν νόμον, ἔργῳ δὲ κύριον ἀπάντων καὶ  
 δυνάμενον καὶ πράττοντα πάντα τὸν Λύσανδρον. οὐδεὶς γὰρ

<sup>39</sup> Although Plutarch says only that Agesilaus was enraged at the Thebans because of this action (*τοῖς τε Θεβαίοις διωργισμένος*, 6.11), his later statement that Agesilaus always hated them (22.2), and his later outrageous treatment of them, clearly indicates that Plutarch sees their behavior at 6.10f as the cause. Agesilaus' behavior towards Thebes: 18.4f, 22.1–8, 23.1–11, 26.1–9, 27.4–28.8, 34.1–35.6.

<sup>40</sup> On Plutarch's use of his audience's knowledge, *cf.* C. B. R. Pelling, "Plutarch and Thucydides," in Stadter (*supra* n.37) 17–21.

ἐνδοξότερος οὐδὲ φοβερώτερος ἐκείνου τῶν εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν ἀποσταλέντων ἐγένετο στρατηγῶν, οὐδὲ μείζονα τοὺς φίλους ἀνὴρ ἄλλος εὐεργέτησεν, οὐδὲ κακὰ τηλικαῦτα τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἐποίησεν.

Indeed the simplicity and slight stature of the king so contrasted with the familiar vehemence, gruffness, and laconic brevity of Lysander that all flocked to him (7.3; *cf.* 7.1). This was hard enough to bear for the rest of the Spartans, but for Agesilaus it was intolerable, because he was φιλότιμος and φιλόνικος (7.4): ἔπειτα δ' αὐτὸς ὁ Ἀγησίλαος, εἰ καὶ μὴ φθονερός ἦν μηδ' ἤχθετο τοῖς τιμωμένοις, ἀλλὰ φιλότιμος ὦν σφόδρα καὶ φιλόνικος, ἐφοβεῖτο μὴ κὰν ἐνέγκωσί τι λαμπρὸν αἰ πράξεις, τοῦτο τοῦ Λυσάνδρου γένηται διὰ τὴν δόξαν.

As a result, Agesilaus began to oppose all Lysander's counsels, to overturn his actions, to punish whom he had rewarded, and to reward whom he had punished (7.5ff; *cf.* *Pomp.* 31.1f). Although Agesilaus' intent was no mystery to Lysander, who directed his φίλοι to court Agesilaus' favor instead (7.8), this was not sufficient. Agesilaus appointed Lysander his meat-carver and publicly insulted him (8.1). When Lysander bitterly complained that the king clearly knew how to diminish his friends, Agesilaus responded that he did so only to those who wished to be greater than he (8.2). Lysander attempted to redeem himself in the field (8.2f), but he would not lay aside his anger at the treatment he had received at Agesilaus' hands and began to plot to overthrow Sparta's monarchy (8.4). Plutarch concludes (8.4–7):

καὶ ἐδόκει μεγάλην ἂν ἀπεργάσασθαι κίνησιν ἐκ ταύτης διαφορᾶς, εἰ μὴ πρότερον ἐτελεύτησεν [Λύσανδρος] εἰς Βοιωτίαν στρατεύσας. οὕτως αἱ φιλότιμοι φύσεις ἐν ταῖς πολιτείαις τὸ ἄγαν μὴ φυλαξάμεναι, τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μείζον τὸ κακὸν ἔχουσι. καὶ γὰρ εἰ Λύσανδρος ἦν φορτικός, ὥσπερ ἦν, ὑπερβάλλον τῇ φιλοτιμίᾳ τὸν καιρὸν, οὐκ ἠγνόει δῆπουθεν Ἀγησίλαος ἐτέραν ἀμεμπτοτέραν ἐπανόρθωσιν οὔσαν ἀνδρὸς ἐνδοξοῦ καὶ φιλοτίμου πλημμελοῦντος. ἀλλ' ἔοικε ταύτῳ πάθει μήτ' ἐκείνος ἄρχοντος ἐξουσίαν γῶναι, μήθ' οὗτος ἄγνοιαν ἐνεγκεῖν συνήθους.

If we recall that Plutarch ended his last authorial statement with a quite similar judgment (5.7), it will be clear that both authorial statements and the intervening narrative passage are arranged to comment on each other and to confirm the judgments at 5.7 and 8.5ff. By this means the biographer again, as

in the *Pompeius*, reveals the character of Agesilaus and its public effect more completely than either type of passage alone could have done. Although this integration of narrative and reflection is not as complex as at *Pomp.* 46.1–48.12, the method is the same.

When the narrative resumes, Agesilaus promptly directs his φιλοτιμία and φιλονικία outward to the war against the barbarians, winning glory for his victories and excellent qualities (9.1–12.9)—even befriending the son of his enemy Pharnabazus (13.1–4). The narrative thus affords proof of the good that ambition and contentiousness can do if directed to the proper object, as Plutarch's previous juxtaposition of narrative and authorial statement has implied (*supra* 21f). The biographer then pauses at 13.5ff to comment on Agesilaus' dealings in friendship, pointing out how he would countenance and even encourage injustice done by them or on their behalf (13.1–7). This statement, too, comes at a critical moment in Agesilaus' life, as he is about to be recalled to Greece precisely when he is most successful in Asia and planning to invade Persia (14.1–15.8). Returning to Greece as ordered, Agesilaus redirects his φιλοτιμία and φιλονικία into conflicts against other Greeks, conflicts in which he repeatedly indulges his enmity towards the Thebans—former friends on whom Agesilaus turns just as he did on Lysander—and repeatedly supports injustices of his φίλοι, especially when the injustice is to Thebes.<sup>41</sup> This change in the direction of his φιλοτιμία and φιλονικία will of course result first in the death of many Greeks, who, as Agesilaus says, “could have battled and defeated all the barbarians in the world” (16.6; *cf. Pomp.* 703ff), and ultimately in Sparta's defeat at the hands of the Thebans (27.4–28.8, 34.1–35.6).

Plutarch, moreover divides the narrative of Agesilaus' return to Greece and his subsequent conflicts there into two sections (14.1–19.4, 20.1–32.4) by inserting another authorial statement at 19.5–11, after Agesilaus' important victory at Coroneia. Here he describes how well Agesilaus still fits in at Sparta upon his return because he, unlike most Spartan generals, has remained unaffected by his time at war (*cf. Pomp.* 23.4ff). This harks back to the good relations Agesilaus had enjoyed with the ephors, gerousia, and people before his departure for Asia, and looks forward to his ability to influence Spartan policy, to protect his

<sup>41</sup> 18.4f; 22.1–8; 23.1–26.9; 27.4–28.8, 34.1–35.6; *Pomp.* 81.[1.]3–6.

friends from their misdeeds, and to save the Spartans from losing their city as well as their hegemony by stopping them from unwisely going out to fight the invading Thebans after Leuctra.<sup>42</sup> The latter action occasions another authorial statement at 33.1–4 in which Plutarch points out that Agesilaus was able to save Sparta because τῶν ἐμφύτων παθῶν φιλοτιμίας καὶ φιλονικίας ἀποστάς, ἐχρήσατο τοῖς πράγμασιν ἀσφαλῶς (33.2).

Thus, just as we have seen in the *Pompeius*, Plutarch here too weaves together narrative and authorial statement in such a way as to emphasize themes that are important throughout the *Life* and to deliver a more complete portrait of Agesilaus' character and its effect upon events than a straight narrative of events alone could have done. His attention to misdirected ambition and contentiousness and to friendship and enmity pursued in conjunction with them will continue into the *Pompeius* and find its final expression, as we have seen, in the authorial statement at *Pomp.* 70.1–7, where Plutarch points out that, if Pompeius and Caesar had joined together to direct their πλεονεξία, φιλονικία, and their armies against the barbarians rather than against each other, none could have withstood them. Plutarch's use of authorial statements and narrative to characterize Agesilaus also suggests, however, the difference between Agesilaus and Pompeius. Pompeius' time in the camp has left him unsuited for civilian politics (*Pomp.* 23.4ff) and thus prey to more politically adept friends (39.6, 46.2ff); unlike Agesilaus he evidently cannot lay aside his own ambition and contentiousness at need. Together these defects leave him unable to control his political friends and allies effectively or to resist their panic once the civil war begins (*Pomp.* 60.5–61.6), unable to refuse their desire to fight at Pharasalus when he knows better (67.1–10; cf. 76.2), and unable to act in a rational manner when the tide of the most critical battle of his life turns against him (72.1ff). The passions of πλεονεξία and φιλονικία leave him "blind and mad," as Plutarch implies at 70.2. Thus, although Agesilaus costs Sparta its hegemony over Greece, Agesilaus saves Sparta and preserves its freedom by refusing to fight the Thebans after Leuctra, despite extreme pressure to do so at Sparta; Pompeius, however, abandons Rome to Caesar, and then "all but allow[s] himself to be coerced into risking the empire and its freedom on a roll of

<sup>42</sup> 4.2–6, 5.2ff, 15.2, 17.1ff, 20.3–21.1, 23.1–26.9, 28.1–8, 30.1–33.4, 34.1–7, 35.1–6.



the dice” at Pharsalus because his friends were mocking him (84.[4].4). These differences Plutarch stresses again in the σύγκρισις that follows their *Lives* (84.[4.]1–10), where he severely censures Pompeius and compares him negatively to Agesilaus in this regard.

This analysis of Plutarch’s *Agesilaus-Pompeius* should make it clear that Plutarch’s authorial statements pertain directly to his subject and bear no resemblance to his true digressions that arise in some way from the narrative, but reveal nothing about the character of a man and its historical rôle (*supra* 256f). Rather he has labored to integrate these statements with the narrative in such a way that each comments on the other and together they give a more coherent and, therefore, more cogent structure to his portraits of Agesilaus and Pompeius, both separately and as a pair. One may of course discern the use of this technique in one *Life* of a pair without reference to the other, as I initially did in the *Pompeius*. Yet it is only when the two *Lives* are read together, as they were meant to be, that the full implications of this technique for the form and meaning of this pair may be appreciated: for without knowing that Plutarch, beginning at *Ages.* 5.1–7, has rejected the notion that the φιλοτιμία and φιλονικία of the powerful are good for the state, the reader of the *Pompeius* cannot fully grasp that Plutarch’s statement on πλεονεξία and φιλονικία at *Pomp.* 70.1–7 is part of an argument that includes the analysis of Pompeius’ character—and indeed reaches beyond it, in conjunction with the analysis of Agesilaus’ character, to illustrate the link between the character traits of great men and the events of history. In like manner the reader of the *Agesilaus* alone can also miss the full meaning of Plutarch’s statement at 5.7, because the *Agesilaus* presents only one part of his argument against the excesses of φιλοτιμία and φιλονικία. Despite all the harm that Agesilaus’ ambition and contentiousness cause Sparta, he can in the end lay them aside to save the state. Without reading the *Pompeius*, which shows the harm done when a man cannot act like Agesilaus, the other part of Plutarch’s argument is missing. Thus Plutarch’s use of authorial statements binds together the portraits of the *Lives* individually and as part of the larger argument of the pair. Without them, history and biography would differ less.

Given Plutarch’s pervasive use of this technique to such good effect in the *Agesilaus-Pompeius*, it would be quite surprising if he did not similarly employ the authorial statements found in *Lives* written earlier and later to strengthen the individual

portraits of these *Lives* and to bind them to their parallels through reinforcing the overall themes of the pair. Without further investigation one may certainly support this contention by adducing the complex juxtapositioning of narrative and authorial statements in the *Lucullus*, a very early *Life*, and the *Marius*, a very late *Life*, perhaps even the last.<sup>43</sup> Plutarch's practice would doubtless vary from *Life* to *Life* and pair to pair. Yet his employment of this technique in *Lives* written at different times strongly suggests that he will often employ authorial statements as an important, perhaps even an essential, element in a form of biography that is comprised, not of a series of narrative episodes whose progress is interrupted and retarded by moralistic and pedantic digressions, but of an interlocking series of narrative episodes and authorial statements; through these he structures his portrait of his subject in terms of character and historical rôle and repeatedly makes his voice heard by his audience, as he interprets his material and conducts the exposition of his argument about the rôle of character in life and history.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> See *Luc.* 33.1–39.5; *Mar.* 28.1–32.6. *Cimon-Lucullus* is not earlier than the second, nor later than the fourth pair written; *Agessilaus-Pompeius* clearly seems the fifteenth; and *Pyrrhus-Marius* may be the last. See C. P. Jones, "Towards a chronology of Plutarch's Works," *JRS* 56 (1966) 67ff; C. Carena, M. Manfredini, and L. Piccirilli, *Plutarco, Le vite di Cimone e di Lucullo* (Milan 1990) xxxv; M. van der Valk, "Notes on the Composition and Arrangement of the Biographies of Plutarch," in *Studi in onore di Aristide Colonna* (Perugia 1982) 301–37.

<sup>44</sup> In this respect he is, ironically, like Herodotus, whose voice is commonly and intentionally present in his narrative. See C. Dewald, "Narrative and Authorial Voice in Herodotus' *Histories*," *Arethusa* 20 (1987) 147–70.