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Citation for published version:

Cairns, D 2014, 'Roman Imperium, Greek Paideia: Plutarch's lives of Aemilius Paullus and Timoleon', *Horizons: Seoul journal of humanities*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 5-28.

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Published In:

Horizons: Seoul journal of humanities

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Roman *Imperium*, Greek *Paideia*: Plutarch's *Lives* of Aemilius Paullus and Timoleon

Douglas CAIRNS

This paper focuses on the theme of fortune (*tychē*) and its mutability in Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* of Aemilius Paullus and Timoleon, first at the level of individual biography and then as it applies to the progress of civilization and the rise and fall of great powers. The Greek *Life* (of Timoleon) makes greatest explicit use of the notion of historical destiny, yet in such a way as to provide a yardstick by which to bring out what is latent in its Roman counterpart, while the much more explicit deployment of traditional Greek cultural models at the individual level in the *Aemilius* also helps shape the interpretation of the *Timoleon*. Paradoxically, perhaps, it is the Roman *Life* that highlights, in thoroughly Greek terms, the vicissitudes of a single life, a central focus of traditional Greek thought on the nature and possibility of happiness, whereas the Greek *Life* exemplifies the notion of historical destiny that is so important for Rome and the Romans. The theme of vicissitude (what I call "the principle of alternation," i.e., the notion that no human life is free of misfortune and that the best one can hope for is a mixture of good and bad) interacts with that of historical destiny and informs both *Lives* in this pair. Reading each *Life* in the light of the other and both together as single artistic project offers insights that are lost if we treat each in isolation; this highlights, in particular, Plutarch's perspective on the enduring value of Greek culture under the military and political supremacy of the Romans.

The pair of *Lives* of Aemilius and Timoleon (in which the Roman, unusually, is the first) opens with one of Plutarch's strongest statements of the exemplary purpose of biography (*Aem.* 1. 1, 1. 5):¹

¹ Cf. Russell 1973, 100; Desideri 1989, 199–204, 212–15; Desideri 1992, 4473–75; Duff 1999, 34–36, 50, 53–54; Lamberton 2001, 72–74; Zadorojnyi 2010, 169–73, esp. on the

ἐμοὶ τῆς τῶν βίων ἄψασθαι μὲν γραφῆς συνέβη δι' ἑτέρους, ἐπιμένειν δὲ καὶ φιλοχωρεῖν ἤδη καὶ δι' ἑμαυτόν, ὥσπερ ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ τῇ ἱστορίᾳ πειρώμενον ἀμῶς γέ πως κοσμεῖν καὶ ἀφομοιοῦν πρὸς τὰς ἐκείνων ἀρετὰς τὸν βίον. . . .

ἡμεῖς δὲ τῇ περὶ τὴν ἱστορίαν διατριβῇ καὶ τῆς γραφῆς τῇ συνηθείᾳ παρασκευάζομεν ἑαυτούς, τὰς τῶν ἀρίστων καὶ δοκιμωτάτων μνήμας ὑποδεχομένους ἀεὶ ταῖς ψυχαῖς, εἴ τι φαῦλον ἢ κακότηδες ἢ ἀγεννῆς αἰ τῶν συνόντων ἐξ ἀνάγκης ὀμιλῆαι προσβάλλουσιν, ἐκκρούειν καὶ διωθεῖσθαι, πρὸς τὰ κάλλιστα τῶν παραδειγμάτων ἴλεω καὶ πρᾶειαν ἀποστρέφοντες τὴν διάνοιαν.

I find that, though I commenced the writing of my *Lives* for the benefit of others, I now persist and return with pleasure to the task for my own sake, too, attempting, as though in a mirror, to arrange my life and assimilate it to the virtues of my subjects by telling their stories. . . . In my own case, since my mind is always welcoming toward the remembrance of the best and most esteemed individuals, I am equipped by the study of history and the familiarity therewith that my writing produces to shun and reject anything base, malicious, or ignoble that enforced association with others may press upon me, diverting my thoughts calmly and dispassionately toward the fairest *paradeigmata* there are.

The introduction similarly emphasizes the role of good fortune (*agathai tychai, eupotmia*) in the success of each of the pair's subjects (*Aem.* 1. 6):²

ὦν ἐν τῷ παρόντι προκεχειρίσμεθά σοι τὸν Τιμολέοντος τοῦ Κορινθίου καὶ Αἰμιλίου Παύλου βίον, ἀνδρῶν οὐ μόνον ταῖς αἰρέσεσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς τύχαις ἀγαθαῖς ὁμοίως κεκρημένων ἐπὶ τὰ πράγματα, καὶ διαμφισβήτησιν παρεξόντων, πότερον εὐποτμία μᾶλλον ἢ φρονήσει τὰ μέγιστα τῶν πεπραγμένων κατάρθωσαν.

Among these are the *Lives* I have chosen for you now, of Timoleon the Corinthian and Aemilius Paullus, men who were alike not only in their principles but also in the good fortune that their careers manifested, making it a matter of debate whether their greatest successes were due to luck or to judgment.

mirror motif.

² On Plut.'s views on *tychē*, in philosophical and nonphilosophical works, see Swain 1989b, esp. 274–75: “In more serious thinking Plutarch has no time for *τύχη* but he does believe in *δαίμονες*.” Thus the usage of the *Lives* simply reflects contemporary idiom; cf. Tatum 2010a: 449. On *eupotmia* in *Aem.* 1. 6, cf. Swain 1989b, 300.

We shall return below to issues of parallelism and comparison, with particular reference to the role of fortune and its mutability in the lives of Aemilius and Timoleon and in the structure of the narratives which recount their careers. It is clear, however, that Plutarch did not invent the association between the subjects of this pair of biographies and *tychē* (fortune)—certainly not in the case of Aemilius,³ and very probably not in that of Timoleon, either. The role of *tychē*, for good or for ill, in the life and career of Aemilius and Aemilius' own circumspection with respect to *tychē*'s role in human affairs are clearly present in Polybius' fragmentary narrative of the Third Macedonian War,⁴ reflected in the adaptations of that account by Diodorus and Livy, and virtually proverbial by the time of Plutarch.⁵ Similarly, Plutarch may also have found an emphasis on *tychē* in Timaeus' account of Timoleon's campaigns in Sicily: Timaeus is cited at *Timoleon* 36. 2 for his use of a quotation from Sophocles in presenting Timoleon as a recipient of divine favor.⁶ But though the centrality of *tychē* to these two *Lives* is not a Plutarchan invention, it is instructive to explore the subtlety and artistry with which Plutarch has taken this theme and turned it into the *Leitmotiv* that structures each of the two narratives and guides the reader's appreciation of the relations between them.⁷

L. Aemilius Paullus had a long and distinguished career, but Plutarch's *Life* concentrates on a single campaign (his victory over Perseus of

³ Cf. Swain 1989c, 323: "Aemilius' association with fortune was one which Plutarch found in his sources." Cf. Geiger 1981, 103.

⁴ See Walbank 1957–79, iii. 378; Geiger 1981, 102–3; Swain 1989c, 317, 324–27; Tatum 2010a, 453–58.

⁵ With *Aem.* 24. 4–6, cf. Cic. *Nat. D.* 2. 6, Val. Max. 1. 8. 1, Pliny, *HN* 7. 86, Florus 1. 28. 14–15. With *Aem.* 27. 2–5, cf. Plb. 29. 20 (with Walbank 1957–79, iii. 392; Hau 2007, 141), Livy 45. 8. 6–7, D. S. 30. 23. 1–2, Florus 1. 28. 11. With *Aem.* 28. 4, cf. Plb. 30. 10, Livy 45. 27. 7. With *Aem.* 34. 8–38. 1, cf. Cic. *ad Fam.* 4. 6. 1, *Tusc.* 3. 70, Livy 45. 41, D. S. 31. 11, Vell. 1. 10. 3–5, Val. Max. 5. 10. 2, App. *Mac.* 19. Cf. also Plb. 29. 21 (Perseus' downfall prompts citation of Demetrius of Phalerum on mutability; cf. D. S. 31. 10, perhaps also Livy 45. 9. 2–7, with Walbank 1957–79, iii. 393); D. S. 31. 9. 4 (Aemilius once more—cf. 30. 23. 1–2—sees Perseus as an example of the mutability of fortune and the need for humility in triumph); Livy 44. 40. 3–10 (*fortuna* initiates the battle of Pydna; contrast *Aem.* 18. 1–3); Pliny, *HN* 34. 54 (Aemilius dedicates a Phidian statue of Athena in the temple of Fortuna Huiusce Diei).

⁶ See Fontana 1958, esp. 7–11; Geiger 1981, 101–3; Swain 1989c, 327; cf. Swain 1989b, 284 n. 42; Tatum 2010a, 452. On the "Herodotean" character of Timaeus' history, see now Baron 2012.

⁷ Cf. Geiger 1981, 103–4; Swain 1989c, 314, 327–29; Tatum 2010a, 449–50.

Macedonia, during his second consulship, at the age of around sixty, in 168 BCE). The introduction to this episode begins in chapter 8; the decisive battle occupies chapters 15–21; Aemilius’ triumph and the events that surround it are narrated in chapters 30–36; the narrative of the war is concluded in chapter 37; and the work ends in 39. Its climax is clearly the (three-day) triumph held in September 167, the height of Aemilius’ success. The triumph itself is narrated as a climactic tricolon:⁸ its first day occupies chapter 32. 4; the second, chapter 32. 5–9; and the third, chapters 33–34.

The climactic triumph, however, is postponed by a dramatic moment of crisis—the envy of Aemilius’ inferiors, masked as indignation,⁹ together with the political opportunism of his enemies, threatens the triumph, until (as in the epinician poetry of Pindar and Bacchylides) generous recognition of genuine merit and achievement prevail (30. 4–32. 1). In the midst of the victory celebrations, all eyes are on Aemilius, and he is admired by all good men (34. 7):

ἔδαφνηφόρει δὲ καὶ σύμπας ὁ στρατός, τῷ μὲν ἄρματι τοῦ στρατηγοῦ κατὰ λόχους καὶ τάξεις ἐπόμενος, ἄδων δὲ τὰ μὲν ᾠδὰς τινὰς πατρίους ἀναμειγμένας γέλωτι, τὰ δὲ παιᾶνας ἐπινικίους καὶ τῶν διαπεπραγμένων ἐπαίνους εἰς τὸν Αἰμίλιον, περιβλεπτον ὄντα καὶ ζηλωτὸν ὑπὸ πάντων, οὐδενὶ δὲ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπίφθονον. . . .

The whole army also carried laurel, following the chariot of their general by companies and divisions, and singing, partly certain traditional songs with a comic element, as the ancient custom was, and partly victory paeans and encomia addressed to Aemilius, the object of everyone’s attention and admiration, begrudged by no one that was good.

But Aemilius’ success is immediately undercut by adversity: no decent human being wishes him ill, but there is some force that sees to it that no prosperity is unmixed with evil (34. 8):¹⁰

⁸ Cf. Swain 1989c, 325.

⁹ For the issues here, see Cairns 2003 (with further lit.).

¹⁰ Plut. certainly seems to believe in the phenomenon to which this passage refers, but his subsequent references to Tyche and her *nemesis* (cf. below) present it in a traditional idiom to whose implications he presumably does not subscribe (Swain 1989b, 300). At *Mar.* 23. 1 the force which leaves no great success *akratos* (unmixed) and *katharos* (pure) is indifferently “*tychē*, *nemesis*, or the necessary nature of affairs” (ἡ δὲ μηθὲν ἔωσα τῶν μεγάλων εὐτυχημάτων ἄκρατον εἰς ἡδονὴν καὶ καθαρὸν, ἀλλὰ μείζει κακῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν

πλὴν εἴ τι δαιμόνιον ἄρα τῶν μεγάλων καὶ ὑπερόγκων εἴληγεν εὐτυχιῶν ἀπαρύτειν καὶ μειγνύναι τὸν ἀνθρώπινον βίον, ὅπως μηδενὶ κακῶν ἄκρατος εἴη καὶ καθαρὸς . . .

Unless it is true that some divine force has been allotted the task of detracting from exceedingly great good fortune and of making a mixture of human existence, in order that no one's life should be unsullied or without admixture of trouble. . . .

Two of Aemilius' sons (aged 14 and 12) died, one five days before the triumph and the other three days after it. The Roman people see this as an illustration of the mutability of fortune (35. 3):

ὥστε μηδένα γενέσθαι Ῥωμαίων τοῦ πάθους ἀνάλητον, ἀλλὰ φρίξει τὴν ὁμότητα τῆς τύχης ἅπαντας, ὡς οὐκ ἠδέσατο πένθος τοσοῦτον εἰς οἰκίαν ζήλου καὶ χαρᾶς καὶ θυσῶν γέμουσαν εἰσάγουσα, καὶ καταμειγνύουσα θρήνους καὶ δάκρυα παιᾶσιν ἐπινικίοις καὶ θριάμβοις.

The result was that there was no Roman unaffected by his suffering; rather, they all shuddered at the cruelty of Fortune, as she felt no compunction at bringing such great grief into a house that was full of admiration, joy, and sacrifices, or at mixing up laments and tears with paeans of victory and triumphs.¹¹

Aemilius agrees, and gives a speech in which he reflects that, in this case, this universal rule applies only to his own fortunes rather than to those of the Roman state (36. 3–9). This speech is the longest of three that Aemilius makes on the same subject, and it contains several themes that occur in earlier passages of the *Life* and play a significant role in the structure of the narrative. First, Aemilius notes that, although his campaign against Perseus had been attended by good fortune from start to finish, he himself had

ποικίλουσα τὸν ἀνθρώπινον βίον, ἢ τύχη τις ἢ νέμεσις ἢ πραγμάτων ἀναγκαία φύσις). On *nemesis*' shift from "righteous indignation" in Homer to something more like *phthonos* (malice, begrudgery) in later authors, see Konstan 2003.

¹¹ Cf. the reversal (within single hour) in the fortunes of the cities and people of Epirus, with the result that "all men shuddered at the outcome of the war, that a whole nation could be chopped up and shared out with so little profit or gain for each individual" (φρίξει δὲ πάντας ἀνθρώπους τὸ τοῦ πολέμου τέλος, εἰς μικρὸν οὕτω τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον λῆμμα καὶ κέρδος ἔθνους ὅλου κατακερματισθέντος, 29. 5). On this passage, cf. below, with Pelling 2005a, 209.

never taken this for granted, but had always been afraid of some reversal (36. 3, 5–6):

ἔφη γάρ, ὅτι τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων οὐδὲν οὐδέποτε δείσας, τῶν δὲ θεῶν ὡς ἀπιστότατον καὶ ποικιλότατον πρᾶγμα τὴν Τύχην ἀεὶ φοβηθεῖς, μάλιστα περὶ τοῦτον αὐτῆς τὸν πόλεμον ὥσπερ πνεύματος λαμπροῦ ταῖς πράξεσι παρούσης, διατελοῖη μεταβολὴν τινα καὶ παλίρροιαν προσδεχόμενος.

“ἀπιστῶν δὲ τῇ Τύχῃ διὰ τὴν εὐροίαν τῶν πραγμάτων, ὡς ἄδεια πολλὴ καὶ κίνδυνος οὐδεὶς ἦν ἀπὸ τῶν πολεμίων, μάλιστα κατὰ πλοῦν ἐδεδίδειν τὴν μεταβολὴν τοῦ δαίμονος ἐπ’ εὐτυχία <τοσαύτη>, τοσοῦτον στρατὸν νενικηκότα καὶ λάφυρα καὶ βασιλεῖς αἰχμαλώτους κομίζων. οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ σωθεὶς πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ τὴν πόλιν ὀρῶν εὐφροσύνης καὶ ζήλου καὶ θυσιῶν γέμουσαν, ἔτι τὴν Τύχην δι’ ὑποψίας εἶχον, εἰδὼς οὐδὲν εἰλικρινὲς οὐδ’ ἀνεμέσητον ἀνθρώποις τῶν μεγάλων χαριζομένην.”

He said that he had never been afraid of any human power, but among divine powers he had always feared Fortune, regarding her as a most untrustworthy and variable thing; and since in this war in particular she had been present in his actions like a favorable wind, he had never ceased to expect some change or reversal.

“Since I distrusted Tyche because things were going so well, now that there was nothing to fear and no danger from the enemy, during my voyage home, in particular, I feared the *daimōn*’s change after such good fortune, since I was bringing home a victorious army of such size, with spoils and royal prisoners. Indeed, even when I had got safely back to you, and saw the city full of festive joy and admiration and sacrifices, I was still suspicious of Tyche, because I knew that she grants human beings no great favor that is straightforward or free of *nemesis*.”

Second, he draws the conclusion that the vanquished Perseus and the victorious Aemilius are both equally good *paradeigmata* of human vulnerability (36. 9):

“ἵκανῶς γὰρ ἔμοι καὶ τοῖς ἔμοις κακοῖς εἰς τὴν τῶν κατορθωμένων ἀποκέχρηται νέμεσιν, οὐκ ἀφανέστερον ἔχουσα παράδειγμα τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἀσθενείας τοῦ θριαμβευομένου τὸν θριαμβεύοντα· πλὴν ὅτι Περσεὺς μὲν ἔχει καὶ νενικημένος τοὺς παῖδας, Αἰμίλιος δὲ τοὺς αὐτοῦ νικήσας ἀπέβαλεν.”

“For she [sc. Tyche] has made sufficient use of me and my afflictions to

satisfy her *nemesis* at our successes,¹² since she has as clear an example of human frailty in the hero of the triumph as in its victim; except that Perseus, even though defeated, keeps his children, while Aemilius, the victor, has lost his.”

Both these points punctuate the work as it builds toward its climax: there are repeated references to Aemilius’ exceptional good fortune (or divine protection);¹³ portents presage Aemilius’ success and Perseus’ defeat;¹⁴ and the contrast between the noble Aemilius and the avaricious, cowardly, and possibly base-born Perseus, especially in their reactions to good or ill fortune, recurs.¹⁵ Whereas Perseus’ faults and misjudgments contribute to Aemilius’ luck and Perseus’ own downfall, Aemilius himself is careful throughout to avoid tempting fate, remaining cautious when things go well and constantly reminding others, especially the less experienced, of the dangers of becoming carried away by success.¹⁶ These dangers are exemplified by his own son, Scipio Aemilianus (22. 2–9): Aemilius fears that the seventeen-year-old Scipio has become elated by victory and perished, but he lives to become the destroyer of Carthage and Numantia, while Tyche merely defers the effects of her *nemesis* at Aemilius’ success until another day (22. 9):

Αἰμιλίῳ μὲν οὖν τὴν τοῦ κατορθώματος νέμεσιν εἰς ἕτερον ἢ Τύχῃ καιρὸν ὑπερβαλλομένη, τότε παντελῆ τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀπεδίδου τῆς νίκης.

So Tyche deferred her *nemesis* at Aemilius’ success for another occasion, and for the moment gave him back in its entirety his pleasure in his victory.

This is not just the general idea that good fortune is inherently unstable

¹² For the thought that one’s sufferings to date should be enough to satisfy divine resentment, cf. Nicias at Thuc. 7. 77. 3. Nicias speaks of *phthonos*, but Aemilius of *nemesis*; cf. note 10 above.

¹³ 12. 1, 19. 6, 24. 2–6.

¹⁴ 10. 6–8, 17. 7–11, 24. 4–6.

¹⁵ 12. 3–6, 12. 12, 19. 4–6, 23. 1–24. 1, 26. 4–12, 27. 4–5, 33. 6–8, 37. 2. For Perseus as a foil, cf. Swain 1989c: 325 (cf. 321–22 on Hicetas as foil for Timoleon in *Tim.*). On the presentation of Perseus, see further Scuderi 2004/5.

¹⁶ 17. 3–4, 17. 10–13, 27. 1–6.

and that vicissitude is inevitable,¹⁷ an idea that might, given its prominence in archaic poetry, Attic tragedy, and historiography, simply be regarded as the common currency of Greek popular thought,¹⁸ for in this case there is a specific model: the climax of the *Life's* narrative, the reversal which occurs at the height of Aemilius' success, is introduced as follows (34. 8): ὅπως μηδενὶ κακῶν ἄκρατος εἶη καὶ καθαρός, ἀλλὰ καθ' Ὅμηρον ἄριστα δοκῶσι πρᾶττειν, οἷς αἱ τύχαι ῥοπήν ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρω τῶν πραγμάτων ἔχουσιν ("in order that no one's life should be unsullied or without admixture of trouble, but that, as Homer says, those may be regarded as best off whose fortunes shift in the balance, now this way, now that").¹⁹ This is a direct allusion to a seminal passage of Homer's *Iliad* (24. 525–35):

“ὥς γὰρ ἐπεκλώσαντο θεοὶ δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι
ζῶειν ἀχνυμένοις· αὐτοὶ δὲ τ' ἀκηδέες εἰσί.
δοιοὶ γάρ τε πίθοι κατακείαται ἐν Διὸς οὔδει
δώρων οἷα δίδωσι κακῶν, ἕτερος δὲ ἑάων·
ᾧ μὲν κ' ἀμμίξας δῶη Ζεὺς τερπικέρανος,
ἄλλοτε μὲν τε κακῶ ὅ γε κύρεται, ἄλλοτε δ' ἐσθλῶ·
ᾧ δὲ κε τῶν λυγρῶν δῶη, λωβητὸν ἔθηκε,
καὶ ἐκακῆ βουβρωστὶς ἐπὶ χθόνα διὰν ἐλαύνει,
φοιτᾷ δ' οὔτε θεοῖσι τετιμένος οὔτε βροτοῖσιν.
ὥς μὲν καὶ Πηλεΐη θεοὶ δόσαν ἀγλαὰ δῶρα
ἐκ γενετῆς” (κτλ.)

¹⁷ On the mutability of fortune in the *Lives* in general, see Russell 1973, 115; Duff 1999, 41–42; Pelling 1986, 93–95 (= Pelling 2002, 356–58).

¹⁸ On the prominence of the theme in these genres, from Homer to the fifth century, see Krause 1976. On (esp. fourth century and Hellenistic) historiography, see Hau 2007; cf. Hau 2009 (on Diodorus) and Hau 2011 (on Polybius). On the continuity between Plutarch's *Lives* and his predecessors among the historians in their use of what one might regard as “tragic” themes, cf. Pelling 2002, esp. 97–98, 106, 111 n. 27; cf. 117–41 (esp. 120–21, 130–31); cf. Pelling 2005a, 280–83. And on Homeric and tragic patterns in the *Lives* in general, see Mossman 1988; Zadorojniy 1997; D'Ippolito, 2004.

¹⁹ Plut. cites or alludes to the passage also at *Aud. poet.* 20E (*Il.* 24. 525–26), 22B (24. 525–26), 24A (24. 527–28); *Cons. Apoll.* 105C–D (24. 522–33); *Is. et Os.* 369C (24. 527–28); *Tranq. an.* 473B (24. 527–28); *Exil.* 600C (24. 527–28). Cf. the quotation of *Il.* 24. 560–61, 569–70, and 584–86 at *Aud. poet.* 31A–C. The versions of 24. 527–28 used in 24B and 600D are influenced by the variant cited by Plato at *Resp.* 379d (Díaz Lavado 2010, 277; Hunter and Russell 2011, 135). On Plut.'s use of the parable in the *Moralia*, see D'Ippolito 2004, 28–30; Díaz Lavado 2010, 276–80. On his use of Homer in general in the *Moralia*, see Bréchet 2004/5; D'Ippolito 2004 (cf. D'Ippolito 2007); Díaz Lavado 2010.

“For thus have the gods spun the thread for wretched mortals, that they should live in pain; but they themselves are without care. For there are two jars placed on the floor of Zeus of gifts that he gives, the one of ills, the other of blessings. If Zeus who delights in the thunderbolt gives a man a mixed lot, that man meets now with evil, now with good; but if he gives only from the evils, he ruins a man, and evil hunger drives him over the divine earth, and he wanders honored by neither gods nor mortals. Just so the gods gave splendid gifts to Peleus from birth. . . .”

This is a fundamental formulation of a characteristic Greek attitude toward the nature and possibility of happiness. It represents a distinctive worldview, one that rests on the gulf between human and god and emphasizes the place of human beings in a universe that cannot be bent to their will and that imposes limits on human aspiration. The image of the jars specifies conditions that apply to all, but these general conditions are emphasized by paradigmatic application. Priam wants to stress the similarity but also the difference between himself and Peleus; Achilles uses his knowledge of his own fate to restate the similarity and present his own father as an *exemplum*; he uses the further *exemplum* of Niobe, a paradigm of suffering (599–620), to underline the central point that others suffer as we do, yet persevere, as we must. This is a moral that has validity not just for the immediate context in *Iliad* 24, but for the entire *Iliad*. What Achilles tells Priam, using the *exempla* of Peleus, Niobe, and Priam himself, is simultaneously what the stories of both Priam and Achilles tell us. The exemplary force of the narrative is highlighted by the use of the exemplary mode in the narrative. The *Iliad* employs this mode at some of its most crucial junctures; such passages underline the exemplary force of the poem itself.²⁰

Achilles’ consolation of Priam and the pity he feels for Priam focus on the same fact—that suffering is common to all; Achilles sees his own father in Priam, and Priam, in turn, is encouraged to recognize that his fate is not unique. The particular circumstances in which these conclusions are drawn (in which a man returns his worst enemy’s body for burial), the emotional power of the episode, the narrative salience of the context, and the exemplary force both of the passage itself and of the poem that

²⁰ See, above all, Howie (1995) 2012. For a definition of exemplarity, as part of a splendid account of its importance in Roman culture, see Roller 2004.

this passage brings to a close all contribute to the inestimable significance of this ethical and narrative model in Greek literary and intellectual culture. George Steiner was only mildly exaggerating when he wrote that “The more one experiences ancient Greek literature and civilization, the more insistent the suggestion that Hellas is rooted in the twenty-fourth Book of the *Iliad*.”²¹ I have discussed elsewhere the Greek tradition’s later manifestations of this Iliadic motif.²² Here, one salient example shall suffice. The principle of alternation not only is the traditional basis that underlies Aristotle’s emphasis on profound changes in fortune in the *Poetics*, but also informs his opening discussion of the nature of *eudaimonia* (happiness) in the first Book of the *Ethics*, where his preference for the classic plot type discussed in the *Poetics* is matched by the serious consideration that he gives its archaic ethical underpinnings.²³ It is true, at least in a sense, that one should count no man happy until he is dead;²⁴ *eudaimonia* is a quality of a whole life, and lives as wholes are vulnerable to the kinds of vicissitude that feature in the representations of the downfall of exemplary figures from the heroic past in epic and tragedy. In conceding something to traditional wisdom, Aristotle tellingly makes his point by means of a traditional *exemplum*—that of Priam (*EN* 1100a4–9, 1101a6–13).

Plutarch is thus following a long and culturally salient Greek tradition. But his reference to Homer by name is not the only indication of his debt to *Iliad* 24. We are alerted to the relevance of Achilles’ encounter with Priam in the very first chapter of *Aemilius-Timoleon*, when Plutarch, presenting his research on his biographical subjects as a kind of personal acquaintance, quotes *Il.* 24. 630 (Priam admires Achilles’ “stature and appearance,” ὄσσοσ ἔην οἷός τε). The influence goes further: the captured Perseus supplicates (26. 9), as does Priam, and Aemilius accepts his supplication, and not only the acceptance but also the language in which it is described recall the Iliadic scene: with *Aem.* 27. 1 (τοῦτον μὲν ἀναστήσας καὶ δεξιωσάμενος Τουβέρωνι παρέδωκεν, “he raised Perseus up, gave him his hand, and entrusted him to Tubero”) we should compare *Il.* 24. 515–16 (γέροντα δὲ

²¹ Steiner 1984, 242. Cf. Krause 1976, 50 on *Il.* 24. 525ff. as the “Vergleichsbasis für alle späteren Entwicklungen” (of the principle of alternation).

²² See Cairns 2014; cf. Cairns 2006; 2011.

²³ See esp. *EN* 1100a4–11, 1101a6–13.

²⁴ As in Sim. 521 *PMG* = 244 Poltera; A. Ag. 928–29; E. *Andr.* 100–102, *Hclid.* 865–66, *Tro.* 509–10; Hdt. 1.32.7.

χειρὸς ἀνίστη οἰκτίρων πολλῶν τε κάρη πολλῶν τε γένειον, “he raised the old man by his hand, pitying his hoary head and hoary beard”). The difference is that, whereas Achilles pities his enemy (a feature of the *Iliad* passage whose cultural significance can scarcely be overestimated),²⁵ Aemilius is deprived of the opportunity to pity Perseus by the latter’s ignoble behavior: he at first takes Perseus to be “a great man brought low by the anger of the gods and the hostility of fortune” (ὡς ἀνδρὶ μεγάλῳ πεπτωκότῳ πτώμα νεμεσητὸν καὶ δυστυχέος) and comes to meet him with tears in his eyes (ἐξαναστὰς προϋπήντα μετὰ τῶν φίλων δεδακρυμένος, 26. 8), but Perseus’ abject behavior leads him to believe that it is the latter’s prosperity, not his misfortune, that is undeserved (26. 10). Defeat of such an unworthy opponent detracts from Aemilius’ success (26. 11), and Perseus is devoid of the *aretē* (excellence) that attracts *aidōs* (respect),²⁶ even for a defeated enemy (26. 12):

“τί τῆς τύχης” εἶπεν “ὦ ταλαίπωρε τὸ μέγιστον ἀφαιρεῖς τῶν ἐγκλημάτων, ταῦτα πράττων ἀφ’ ὧν δόξεις οὐ παρ’ ἀξίαν ἀτυχεῖν, οὐδὲ τοῦ νῦν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ πάλαι δαίμονος ἀνάξιος γεγονέναι; τί δέ μου καταβάλλεις τὴν νίκην καὶ τὸ κατόρθωμα ποιεῖς μικρόν, ἐπιδεικνύμενος ἑαυτὸν οὐ γενναῖον οὐδὲ πρόποντα Ῥωμαίοις ἀνταγωνιστήν; ἀρετὴ τοι δυστυχοῦσι μεγάλην ἔχει μοῖραν αἰδοῦς καὶ παρὰ πολεμίοις, δειλία δὲ Ῥωμαίοις κἂν εὐποτητὴ πάντων ἀτιμότατον.”

“You wretch,” he said, “Why do you free *tychē* from the strongest charge you could make, by behaving in ways that will make people think that you deserve your misfortunes, and that it is not your present lot but your previous one that was undeserved? And why do you undermine my victory and diminish my success, by showing that you are not a noble or even a fitting antagonist for Romans? *Aretē* in the unfortunate brings great *aidōs* even in the eyes of their enemies, but, for Romans, cowardice, even if it prospers, is the most dishonorable thing of all.”

Plut. *Aem.* 26. 10–12

²⁵ Cf. esp. S. *Aj.* 121–26. The notion that an enemy’s defeat underlines the mutability to which all are subject, and should therefore appeal to the humanity of the victor, is common in the Hellenistic and later historiography on which Plutarch draws. See esp. Plb. 29. 20–21, on Aemilius and Perseus, and cf. Plb. 15. 17. 4, 38. 21; D. S. 13. 20–27, 28–32, 17. 38. 4–7, 27. 6. 1, 31. 3. 1–3 (with Hau 2007, 37–43, 139, 141).

²⁶ Another feature of the source context in Homer: see *Il.* 24. 503.

Clearly, then, the presentation of the theme of the mutability of fortune in the *Aemilius* draws explicitly on the classic articulation and presentation of that theme in the *Iliad*. As in the *Iliad*, the principle of alternation not only structures the narrative but is also voiced authoritatively at an important point in that narrative. Also as in the *Iliad*, the ethical and emotional implications of the theme for the external audience are drawn out by means of the focalization of internal audiences—as Achilles pities Priam, so the Romans shudder at the misfortune that strikes Aemilius at the height of his success (35. 3).²⁷ And, again as in the *Iliad*, the theme is used to articulate the vulnerability that unites all human beings, friend and foe, winner and loser: as the Romans shudder at the fate of Aemilius, so “everyone” shudders at the outcome of the war, that the wealth of an entire nation should amount to so little once divided in the hands of its conquerors (29. 5); and the counterpart of Aemilius’ success is the downfall of Perseus, a reminder of that vulnerability that is realized in the personal tragedy that strikes at the height of Aemilius’ success.

Already, in this respect, the *Life of Aemilius* exhibits a pronounced comparative aspect: the careers of Aemilius and Perseus engage the capacities of comparison and contrast that underlie the entire project of parallel biography.²⁸ Accordingly, to get the most out of this pair of *Lives*, and their meditations on the mutability of fortune, we need to read each in the light of the other. *Tychē* is not only the *Leitmotiv* of the *Aemilius* but also the theme that unites *Aemilius-Timoleon* as a pair.²⁹ In that respect, the two biographies present similar careers with different emphases, but what is explicit and salient in the one is often implicit in the other.³⁰ First, the motif of *tychē* not only links but also distinguishes the two *Lives* as sections of a single book, as the first *Life*’s movement to a climax in which good fortune is immediately mixed with bad is followed by the second’s progress

²⁷ Cf. Pelling 2005a, 282–83.

²⁸ For the comparison of Aemilius and Perseus as a reflection of Plut.’s project, see Tatum 2010b, 7–8.

²⁹ Cf. note 7 above.

³⁰ For general points on the interrelations between the *Lives* in each pair and the need to read each via the other, see Erbse (1956) 1979; Stadter 1975; Pelling 1986; 2002; 2005b; Desideri 1992; Duff 1999; cf. the contributions to Humble 2010, esp. Tatum 2010b, 1–8; cf. Tatum 2010a, 452. Specifically on *Aem.-Tim.*, see Geiger 1981, 99–104; Desideri 1989; Swain 1989c, esp. 314; Tatum 2010a.

from early misfortune (Timoleon's part in the killing of his brother, 4. 4–7. 1) to prodigious success.³¹ The *Aemilius*, moreover, unfolds in a simple diachronic sequence in which, as we saw, the triumph and the events that surround it form a clear climax; the structure of *Timoleon*, by contrast, is more complex, beginning with a reference to its main event (Timoleon's expedition to Sicily, 1. 1) before going back in time, relating first the state of the island at that point (1. 2–2. 4) and then Timoleon's early career as a soldier (3. 5–7.2), culminating in his part in his brother's murder (4. 5–8), a part he played only when all alternatives failed and because his patriotism, sense of honor and justice, and hatred of tyrants and villains (3. 5, 5. 1) proved stronger than familial solidarity. The opprobrium that this brought him, together with his mother's anger, then drives Timoleon from public life, for a period of almost twenty years (5. 2–4, 7. 1);³² it is at the end of that period that he is chosen general for the expedition to Sicily (7. 2), an enterprise that then occupies the *Life* in chronological sequence until Sicily is free of tyrants and the Carthaginians banished to their own part of the island (to 34. 7). The honor and popularity that Timoleon thereafter enjoys and the honors he receives on death then bring the biography to a close (chapters 35–39). Thus the sequence of the main narrative (success and its rewards) demonstrates the function of the inset, early years narrative (misfortune and opprobrium) as a contrasting *mise en abyme*.

Within these differences of structure, however, the two narratives exhibit many similarities of theme. In both, the mutability of fortune is a factor that affects all, winners and losers, hero and foil, virtuous and vicious: not only Aemilius and Timoleon but also their negative counterparts (Perseus in the former case, Hicetas and especially Dionysius in the latter) serve as paradigms of vicissitude.³³ The failure of these

³¹ For Geiger, it is this sequence that explains why *Aem.* comes first (1981, 104); Swain 1989c, 314, rightly suspects that the importance of the theme runs more deeply than that.

³² Aemilius also has his “wilderness years”: *Aem.* 6. 8–10, 10. 1.

³³ For Perseus in *Aem.*, see above. In *Tim.*, the hero's *eutychia* and *aretē* are clearly mirrored in the contrasting presentation of his opponents, and Hicetas is a central aspect of this antithesis; but it is the career of Dionysius that is in particular singled out for moralizing on the mutability of fortune—his surrender represents “unexpected *eutychia*” for Timoleon (13. 3), but also occasions reflections on the extremes of vicissitude to which a single human life can be subject (13. 8–10), his fall from tyrant to wastrel a “work of *tychē*” (14. 3) that evokes mockery and rejoicing among those who see him

negative paradigms to respond to their circumstances with dignity thus highlights the *aretē* that characterizes both Aemilius and Timoleon in their attitudes to vicissitude.³⁴ This is a theme that is signaled in the prologue to both *Lives* (whether their success was due to luck or judgment, *eupotmia* or *phronēsis*, *Aem.* 1. 6, quoted above) and one to which Plutarch returns in the *synkrisis* (2. 10–12),³⁵ where Aemilius' strength of character in dealing with the loss of his sons (*Aem.* 26. 1–27. 1) is contrasted favorably with Timoleon's utter dejection following the killing of his brother (*Tim.* 5. 2–4, 7. 1, with moralizing commentary in 6. 1–7).³⁶ But though the interaction of *aretē* and *tychē* is indeed a theme of both *Lives*, highlighted especially in the “bravery and confidence,” the “great and noble expression of a sincere and honest character” with which Aemilius is said to face up to *tychē* at 36. 1 and 37. 1,³⁷ the expression of the antithesis as such is perhaps more explicit and salient in *Timoleon*.³⁸ In the end, however, Aemilius and Timoleon are alike; the way that they themselves emphasize the role of *tychē* in their success illustrates the *aretē* of which the narrative gives ample testimony (*Aem.* 27. 2–6, *Tim.* 36. 5–6).³⁹

“overthrown by *tychē*,” but sympathy in those for whom his *metabolē* represents the vulnerability of all human beings to “the power of invisible, divine causation” (14. 2). For Dionysius' *dystychia* as the explicit complement of Timoleon's *eutychia*, see 16. 1.

³⁴ Perseus: see esp. 26. 8–12, 34. 1–4 (discussed above); Dionysius, see *Tim.* 15, esp. Dionysius' remark at 15. 4: “Don't you think that the way I bear my change of *tychē* shows how I profited from association with Plato?”

³⁵ On the Plutarchan prologue as an introduction to both *Lives* in a pair, see Duff 2011.

³⁶ On the *aretē-tychē* antithesis in Plut., see Swain 1989d on *De fort. Rom.*; cf. Lambertson 2001, 98–99.

³⁷ Cf. the combination of *aretē* and *eutychia* in the history of Aemilius' family at *Aem.* 2. 3; the references to or illustrations of Aemilius' *aretai* at 2. 6, 4. 3–5, 5. 8, 10. 1, 13. 6, 18. 1, 28. 1–11, 30. 1, 31. 4, 39. 9; and (esp.) the proleptic verdict on the respective roles of *tychē* and divine favor versus virtue in the victory over Perseus at 12. 1–3. On the presence of the theme in both *Lives*, see Desideri 1989, 204–13; Swain 1989c, 324, 330–31. On his response to misfortune as a mark of Aemilius' *aretē*, cf. Desideri 1989, 208–9; Swain 1989b, 275; on *tychē* as a test of character in general, cf. Swain 1989a, 64–65, 67–68. For the same theme in Polybius and for the relevance of the Polybian belief in *Aem.*, cf. Tatum 2010a, 454–58, 460. The theme emerges programmatically at Plb. 1. 1. 2, and is restated with reference to Aemilius himself at 29. 20 (Tatum 2010a, 454–55; cf. Hau 2007, 141); cf., for example, 18. 33. 4–8, on Philip V.

³⁸ Explicitly at 19. 1, 21. 4–5, 36. 4–5, 37. 5; implicit in 6. 1–7.2, 15. 1–4 (Dionysius), 26. 3, 38. 1; cf. Swain 1989c, 330–31.

³⁹ As Tatum remarks, Timoleon's words at 36. 5–6 represent “a gesture Plutarch elsewhere records as an elegant example of self-praise (*de laud. ipsius* 542E)” (2010a,

The way that a theme can be salient and explicit in one of the pair, less salient but still significant in the other, is further illustrated by the presentation of our central topic, the mutability of fortune and the impossibility of unmixed *eudaimonia*. In the *Aemilius*, disaster strikes at the height of Aemilius' success, whereas Timoleon puts his early misfortunes behind him and ends his days secure in the honor and esteem in which he is held by the recipients of his benefactions.⁴⁰ But Timoleon's felicity is not entirely unmixed: by remaining in Sicily rather than returning to Corinth, he avoids the malicious resentment of one's fellow citizens (πολιτικός φθόνος) that typically attends the successful (and ambitious) general (36. 8), though not even he can escape *phthonos* entirely. Attacked by Syracusan demagogues, he uses their very freedom to attack him as a token of the benefactions that are properly appreciated by the vast majority of their fellows (37. 1–3). Even then, however, Timoleon's retirement is not entirely free of setbacks: he gradually loses his sight, eventually becoming completely blind (37. 7–10). Though Plutarch is at pains to emphasize that this is an affliction that runs in his family rather than an arbitrary "insult" on the part of Tyche (οὔτε παροινηθεῖς ὑπὸ τῆς Τύχης, 37. 7), it is nonetheless a misfortune, a *symphora* (that brings out both his own strength of character and the esteem in which he is held by the Syracusans, 38. 1–3). In this way—in a minor key and in the midst of a much more pronounced emphasis on Timoleon's felicity—the pattern that we see first in the *phthonos* that threatens Aemilius' triumph (*Aem.* 30. 4–32. 1), then in the misfortune that strikes at the height of his success (demonstrating the truth of the *gnōmē*, supported by the Iliadic parable of the jars, that "no one's life is entirely free of misfortune," *Aem.* 34. 8), and finally in the fortitude and wisdom with which Aemilius bears his misfortune (*Aem.* 36. 1–37. 1) is replicated in the case of Timoleon. The principle of alternation, though explicitly enunciated and explicitly related to its emblematic statement in the *Iliad* only in the *Aemilius*, recurs as an organizing principle, an ethical norm, and a template that structures audience response also in the *Timoleon*.⁴¹

452).

⁴⁰ *Tim.* 36. 1–39. 7, the length of this section in itself attesting to the emphasis on Timoleon's *eudaimonia*; the equivalent section in *Aem.* is two chapters to *Tim.*'s four.

⁴¹ Cf. Pelling 1986, 94 (= Pelling 2002, 357).

Both *Lives* thus manifest the whole-life perspective that is characteristic of traditional Greek thought on the nature of *eudaimonia*. In both, the vicissitudes of fortune play a substantial role in the subject's career. And in both, the subject's overall felicity, emphasized particularly in the concluding sections with reference to the esteem in which he is held by peers and posterity, is attained not just by an alliance of *eutychia* and *aretē*, but by the kind of *aretē* that proves itself when *tychē* is most testing. Both *Lives* emphasize personal qualities, personal vicissitudes. Undeniably, however, the *Timoleon* (as Simon Swain has pointed out) places much greater and more explicit emphasis on the interplay of individual *tychē* and divine providence. Throughout, Timoleon's affairs are apparently guided by an unseen supernatural force whose aims coincide with his own—the freedom of the Greeks in Sicily from tyrannical rule and barbarian domination.⁴²

On the apparent contrast between the two *Lives* in this respect, Swain observes:

Plutarch might have developed these ideas about providence in *Aem. too*. He chose not to. He doubtless felt that the events in which Aemilius was involved were not after all stupendous and were for the most part explicable in human terms alone.⁴³

A priori, this explanation seems unlikely. But it is not just that, as Swain himself emphasizes, Plutarch elsewhere shows himself to be a believer in the providential rise of Rome (and in the political and military decline of Greece that is its counterpart).⁴⁴ Nor is it merely that Plutarch also identifies Aemilius Paullus as a figure whose own good fortune contributed

⁴² See *Tim.* 3. 1–3, 13. 4, 8. 1–8, 12. 3, 12. 9, 13. 1, 14. 2–3, 16. 1, 16. 10–12, 19. 1, 20. 1, 20. 11, 21. 5, 21. 7, 26. 1–6, 27. 9, 28. 2, 30. 3, 30. 6–7, 30. 10, 36. 2, 36. 5, 37. 5, 37. 7. For this as a project of providence, cf. *Dion.* 4. 3–4, 50. 4, with Swain 1989c, 329.

⁴³ Swain 1989c, 334; cf. “Aemilius’ campaign did not produce really great changes in the world” (1989b, 275).

⁴⁴ On the rise of Rome, see *Fab.* 27. 2, *De fort. Rom.* 317F–318A (Rome as Tyche’s final destination), 342B–D, with Swain 1989b, 286–98; 1989c, 327 n. 48; 1989d; cf. Tatum 2010a, 450 n. 4; for Greece’s destined decline, see *Dem.* 19. 1, *Phoc.* 28. 2–3, *Phil.* 17. 2, *Flam.* 12. 10 (with Swain 1989b, 281–85, 293). In the last two passages cited, the point is that Rome’s rise is Greece’s fall.

to that rise.⁴⁵ It is not even that, as Tatum persuasively argues, Plutarch's emphasis on the role of *tychē* in Aemilius' career strongly suggests engagement with Polybius, whose presentation of Aemilius exemplifies his programmatic views on the moral purpose of historiography and for whom Aemilius' defeat of the last king of Macedonia is the event that decisively confirms the decline of Greece's fortunes and the rise of Rome's.⁴⁶ All of these things are relevant; but the crucial point is that the providential interpretation of Aemilius' part in the rise of Rome is not in fact absent from the pairing of *Aemilius* and *Timoleon*.

First, the *synkrisis* presents the achievements of both in parallel terms: while Timoleon "removed all the tyrannies from Sicily and freed the island," Aemilius "took Macedonia and ended the line of succession that began with Antigonus in the reign of its seventh king" (*Comp.* 1. 2; cf. 2. 8). The end of the Macedonian dynasty is by no means a negligible stage in the rise of Rome: this is emphasized by Aemilius' observation that the fall of "the succession of Alexander" suggests the instability of all success,⁴⁷ a point that recalls Polybius' assessment at 29. 21, where the defeat of Perseus prompts the historian's reminiscence of the similar conclusions drawn by Demetrius of Phalerum about Alexander's conquest of Persia and the rise and fall of great powers. Nor is the fall of Macedon, in *Aemilius*, an achievement that is won without supernatural guidance: if the omens and the like recounted in the *Timoleon* (three in chapter 8 alone, at the beginning of his enterprise, others in 12. 9, 26, 31. 6–7) indicate the plans of providence, the *Aemilius* also has its fair share; the explicit point of those that are related in *Aem.* 24. 2–6 is to demonstrate that there was something

⁴⁵ See *De fort. Rom.* 4, 318B–C, where Aemilius is an example of the Roman leaders whose *tychē* (which must encompass his success against Perseus) has contributed to that of Rome in general; cf. Swain 1989d, 508–9.

⁴⁶ See Tatum 2010a, 454–56 on Plb. 1. 4. 1, 1. 4. 4–5, with 29. 20, where Aemilius himself "reprises Polybius' own views on the purpose of history" (Tatum 2010a, 455); cf. Plb. 29. 21. 1–9—it is significant that Plb. located this digression on Demetrius of Phalerum's views on *tychē* at this point (Tatum 2010a, 456). On Plb. 1. 4. 1, 4–5, cf. Hau 2011, 187–89, 196. Hau 2011 in general makes substantial progress over earlier scholarship in seeing the underlying schema to which all senses of *tychē* in Plb. might be related.

⁴⁷ This is a point that is kept before us by the references to Alexander and the Macedonian dynasty to which Perseus belongs at 8. 1ff., 12. 9–11, 23. 9, and esp. 31. 5 (Aemilius' triumph entails the display of "the king of Macedon taken alive and the glory of Alexander and Philip led as booty under Roman arms").

supernatural (*daimonion*, 24. 3) or divine (θειότητι ... καὶ τύχῃ, 24. 4) about Aemilius' *eutychia*. The notion of divine favor, as we saw above, punctuates the narrative.⁴⁸ Similarly, Swain is surely wrong that, unlike Livy at 45. 41. 2, "Plutarch does not choose to contrast Rome's permanent public fortune with Aemilius' private disaster," but rather (in his speech to the populace following the death of his sons) "has Aemilius contrast his own public fortune in the campaign with his personal misfortune at home":⁴⁹ in fact, Aemilius is quite explicit both about his relief that tragedy has marred only his own personal fortunes rather than "the future of the state" (36. 7) and about his confidence that *tychē* will remain constant in favoring Rome and her people ("you," 36. 8).

These, to be sure, are slight indications, but it is much more likely that they are to be understood in the light not only of widely shared assumptions about Rome's destiny, but also of the explicit reflections of the providential guidance of the world in *Timoleon*; the second *Life* offers a way of reading the first that makes explicit and salient what would otherwise remain in the background.⁵⁰ The two narratives, as a pair, concern the mutability of fortune as it affects states as well as individuals (a historiographical topos that goes back all the way to the very beginning of Herodotus' *Histories*).⁵¹ Though Plutarch's appreciation of Timoleon's providential mission in ridding Sicily of tyrants and keeping the Carthaginians at bay is no doubt genuine,⁵² the fact that his narrative

⁴⁸ See the references cited in notes 13–14 above, and cf. Tatum 2010a, 453. I see no basis for Swain's assertion that "there is nothing comparable in *Aem.*" to the omens of *Tim.* 8, 12, and 26 (1989c, 332).

⁴⁹ Swain 1989c, 326–27.

⁵⁰ So "in Plutarch, the providential forces that so conspicuously propel Timoleon's liberation of the Greeks of Sicily recall, for the reader of this pairing, the world historical impulse that brought Rome to greatness by way of the career of Aemilius Paullus. The freedom of the Greeks and the rise of Rome are results borne [*sic*] of the same providence" (Tatum 2010a, 460).

⁵¹ See Hdt. 1. 5. 3–4, with Krause 1976, 221–22; Harrison 2000, 31–33, 62–63; Raaflaub 2002, 177; Van Wees 2002, 328–36; Hau 2007, 84.

⁵² Swain 1989c, 329, 333–34; cf. Swain 1989b, 283–84. For Tatum, Plutarch's emphasis on this point constitutes a correction of Polybius' attack on Timaeus (Plb. 12. 23. 4–6) for magnifying events that were of only limited significance compared to the rise of Rome (2010a, 459–60). On Timoleon as the only great figure of his generation who succeeded in the Isocratean project of making war only on barbarians and tyrants, rather than on other Greek states, see *Tim.* 37. 4.

of these events is preceded by that of a crucial stage in Rome's providential rise implies the temporal limitations of Timoleon's achievement;⁵³ the destiny of free Greek states, in Sicily and elsewhere, makes way for that of Rome. Yet Timoleon's achievements had their legitimate place in the providential scheme of things. The *Lives* of Aemilius and Timoleon, taken together as a single book, are saying something about the place of Greek and Roman civilization in world history.

If it is the *Timoleon* that emphasizes the broader questions of the rise and fall of states and cultures, it is the *Aemilius* that establishes, for this pair of *Lives*, the relevance of the classic model of the principle of alternation. As we see not least from their presence in Livy, these ideas were in Plutarch's day common coin of Roman as well as Greek thought.⁵⁴ But Plutarch reemphasizes their Greekness. He does so partly in his presentation of Aemilius as an untypically philosophical Roman, allegedly descended from Pythagoras, the *nomen* of his *gens* etymologized in Greek (2. 2), who practiced virtue, not forensic oratory (2. 6), and who sees the value of Greek education (6. 8–9), so that his sons became devoted to literature (28. 11).⁵⁵ But above all Plutarch re-Hellenizes the theme of the mutability of fortune by situating it firmly in the Greek poetic tradition.⁵⁶ Though the *Timoleon* also underscores its emphasis on the theme of *tychē*

⁵³ As Swain notes, Timoleon's successes "were of limited duration (as Plutarch must have known)" (1989b, 292–93).

⁵⁴ For the appeal of classic Greek formulations of the principle of alternation at Rome, cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 3. 24. 59–25. 60, quoting E. *Hyps.* 921–27 (in translation). At a very general level, we may even be dealing with a narrative universal, in so far as "the narrative mode . . . deals in human or human-like intention and action and the vicissitudes and consequences that mark their course" (Bruner 1986, 13; cf. Bruner 1986, 16–18, 88; Oatley 2012, 23, 45, 191).

⁵⁵ Cf. 3. 3: Aemilius' augurship is not just a step on the *cursus honorum*, but manifests a genuine, quasi-philosophical religiosity. As Swain notes, Aemilius' "unusual and Hellenic sounding education (2. 6), which Plutarch has probably fabricated, prefigures his philhellenism (28) and moral courage (36)" (1989c, 316); cf. Swain 1990, 132–33. Tatum (2013) sees Plutarch's project of emphasizing Aemilius' quasi-Hellenic virtues also in the account of Aemilius' decision to dig wells in the vicinity of Mount Olympus at *Aem.* 14.

⁵⁶ Cf., for example, Dionysius of Halicarnassus' presentation (via extensive evocation of the speech of Phoenix and the allegory of the Litai, *Il.* 9. 496–514) of Coriolanus as a second Achilles at *Ant. Rom.* 8. 50. 3–4 (with Davies 2005). Várhelyi 2012, 124–28 usefully situates this presentation in the context of the development of *synkrisis* as practiced by Plutarch.

by the deployment of literary quotation,⁵⁷ it is the relation of the *Aemilius* to *Iliad* 24 (by means of two quotations and one clear allusion) that really sets the tone, for that *Life* and for the pair. In making the life of Aemilius, in particular, conform to a pattern established in a salient passage of Greek civilization's most exemplary artistic production, and by making Aemilius himself—the man who finally ended the Macedonian monarchy and thus completed a crucial step in Rome's rise to hegemony—a prototype of Roman philhellenism, Plutarch underlines the claims of a Greek literary and intellectual culture that survives Greece's political and military subordination to Rome.⁵⁸

Central to Plutarch's narrative in *Aemilius* is the Iliadic idea that good fortune is a fragile thing, because suffering is intrinsic to the human condition, whether one is good or bad, careful or reckless, great or insignificant. These are traditional ideas about the nature of happiness that bring with them traditional ways of feeling, traditional ways of responding to the texts that embody these ways of feeling, and texts that exemplify traditional values by associating them with exemplary narratives of the lives of exemplary figures. The Greekness of the *Life of Aemilius Paullus* (and thus of the pair of *Lives* to which it belongs) lies not only in the way that its narrative structure, its exemplary moral purpose, and its intellectual and emotional content are all inextricably linked, but also in the way that, like other texts that engage with the same ideas, it returns explicitly to the source of these narrative and cultural models in the most seminal and authoritative works of Greek literature.⁵⁹

The principle of alternation is not unique as traditional wisdom or as narrative theme,⁶⁰ nor is the tradition that recurs to that principle uniquely Greek in intellectual, affective, or aesthetic terms. Yet the principle has, for the Greeks themselves, a special place in Greek culture. It is a normative pattern to which Greek artists and audiences repeatedly turn as a means of making sense of and giving form to experience. This they do in forms

⁵⁷ Sophocles at 1. 3; Euripides, as quoted by Euthymus at 32. 3; Timaeus' quotation of Sophocles at 36. 2.

⁵⁸ For Rome's philhellenism as a factor in her providential rise to dominance, see *Flam.* 12. 1–10, with Swain 1989b, 293.

⁵⁹ On the importance in Plutarch's biographical project of the characteristic norms and paradigms of traditional Greek thought, cf. Desideri 1992, 4481–86.

⁶⁰ See Cairns 2014 for parallels in other (related and unrelated) traditions.

as minimal as a single aphorism and as extensive as the *Iliad*, but at either end of the spectrum the principle of alternation is a pattern that cries out for exemplification in narratives of the doings and sufferings of specific individuals. As a universal phenomenon in the lives of individuals it also readily becomes, from the very beginnings of Greek historiography, a world-historical pattern in the rise and fall of great powers. The tendency to encapsulate the pattern of vicissitude, with its attendant normative and emotional associations, in traditional narratives of an exemplary character is a salient and typical feature of the Greek literary tradition, found in some of its most authoritative and influential manifestations. The recurrence of this pattern in Plutarch's *Parallel Lives of Aemilius Paullus and Timoleon* underlines what Plutarch clearly sees as the abiding value of Greek popular ethics, literary culture, and civilization during a period long after the Greek states had succumbed to Roman military and political hegemony.

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KEYWORDS | Plutarch, Greek biography, Aemilius Paullus, Timoleon, Roman imperialism, Fate and fortune in literature, Imperial Greek literature

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