

Chapter 5

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The Last of the Greeks, and Good Riddance: Historical Commentary in Plutarch’s *Philopoemen-Flaminius*

All the stories have been told of kings in days of old, but there’s no England now.
 All the wars that were won or lost somehow don’t seem to matter very much
 anymore.

Dave Davies, “Living on a Thin Line” (1984)¹

Plutarch’s *Philopoemen-Flaminius* is well known as the only book of *Parallel Lives* to feature two contemporary figures whose careers intersected.² Despite this unique situation, many studies have approached this pairing as typical, tracing syncretism between the *Lives* and uncovering themes that run through the book.³ Among other insights, these studies succeed in highlighting the thematic significance of liberty and in sketching the interplay between Philopoemen’s contentiousness (φιλονικία) and Flaminius’s love of honour (φιλοτιμία).⁴

1 I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Chandra Giroux for organizing and inviting me to the conference where I presented an early version of this chapter, to Hans Beck for welcoming us so warmly in Münster, and to all the participants for their camaraderie and invaluable conversations over several days. I owe thanks also to Craig Gibson and Noreen Humble for their insightful and constructive criticism as I was preparing the final version.

2 For the temporal and geographic differences that are typical of paired *Lives*, see the discussion of Tatum 2010: 4.

3 E.g., Pelling 1986, 1989, 1997; Swain 1988, 1996: 145–150; García Moreno 1995; Scuderi 1996; Walsh 1992. Swain (1988: 343) defends the typical approach: “Sufficient work has been done in recent years to make it clear that Plutarch envisages a common base between his heroes and demonstrably incorporates common themes in either half of the paired *Lives*. There is no cause to see *Phil.-Flam.* as exceptional in this respect”.

4 Some editions print φιλονεικία for φιλονικία. The latter is certainly the correct reading, but the two words have essentially the same meaning in Plutarch; see Stadter 2011: 238–241 (= 2015: 271–273).

The readings are on the whole convincing: there can be no doubt that Plutarch meant his readers to compare the virtues and vices of these two men as in an ordinary pair of *Lives*.

At the same time, scholars have recognized that Plutarch appears to have been equally interested in using this book to explore a pivotal moment in Greco-Roman history, the moment when Roman intervention began to calm centuries of intra-Greek fighting through the defeat of Philip V and the declaration of freedom for the Greek cities. This interest certainly affected his deployment of syncrisis and articulation of themes across the *Lives*, as illustrated by his handling of φιλονικία. Plutarch quite plainly ascribes this quality to Philopoemen in sketching his character (*Phil.* 3.1), but in the actual narrative he does not include many examples of its effects.⁵ In fact, φιλονικία is just as important for explaining the historical moment as for characterizing Philopoemen as an individual or comparing him to Flamininus. *Philopoemen* as a whole, with its numerous descriptions of intra-Greek warfare, serves as a demonstration of the sort of contentiousness that plagued the Greeks and prevented them from achieving freedom on their own. Philopoemen's entire career involved him in conflict with other Greeks, especially Spartans: he established his reputation fighting against King Cleomenes and serving in Crete;⁶ in Achaëa, his greatest victories came against Machanidas and Nabis, tyrants of Sparta; he died on campaign against the Messenians. Now the victories over tyrants, at least, may be read (narrowly) as connected to the book's theme of liberty.⁷ But from the (wider) perspective of the early empire and the *pax Romana*, that is, from Plutarch's own contemporary perspective, all Philopoemen's wars are just as easily read as examples of Greek military might directed, as usual, against fellow Greeks.

By writing in the first *Life* about the wars in the Peloponnesus that both preceded and coincided with Flamininus's activity in Greece, Plutarch establishes the context for understanding the Roman general's achievement. From this angle, Philopoemen's military victories, though admirable within his *Life* and the narrow context of the Achaëan League, were essentially, as Pelling writes, a demonstration of "that contentiousness that had always been the norm in Greek history, which had doomed his efforts to failure".⁸ In Plutarch's

5 See Pelling 1986: 85 (= 2002: 350).

6 Philopoemen served in Crete twice, though Plutarch does not provide many details. Errington (1969: 27–48) argues that he was supporting the interests of Macedon, and so involved in the same sort of conflict that was happening in the Peloponnesus. On both occasions, according to Plutarch, his reputation preceded him back to Achaëa, so that upon his return he immediately assumed positions of leadership (*Phil.* 7.1–4; 14.1).

7 Cf. Pelling 1986: 85 (= 2002: 350).

8 Pelling 1997: 94 (my translation from Italian).

rendering, therefore, Philopoemen is both an individual and a metaphor; he is his own man and at the same time embodies the deficiencies of all Greeks, past and present, while Flamininus becomes their saviour. Philopoemen's defining characteristic, φιλονικία, is the apparently congenital defect that caused even the greatest Greek leaders of the Classical past (Plutarch calls them "Agesilauses, Lysanders, Nicias, and Alcibiades") to deploy their celebrated military prowess against their fellow Greeks (*Flam.* 11.5–6). This contentiousness, in turn, ensured that Greece could never enjoy freedom if left to its own devices; it had to wait for a foreign power to bestow liberty as a gift. This outlook, Pelling continues, "makes this pair something more than the story of two individuals".⁹

Despite a general recognition of the complexity of this book's aims, prior studies have overlooked some important aspects of the pairing and structure of these *Lives*. In this chapter, I will show that while *Philopoemen* and *Flamininus* are indeed parallel and that a typical syncritic reading does emphasise the character of each man as well as the Roman achievement, the book's content is also so arranged that Philopoemen's story is largely subordinate to Flamininus's, serving almost as a prologue and setting up a climactic moment around the midpoint of the second *Life* (*Flam.* 10). This is Flamininus's famous declaration of freedom for the Greeks, made at the Isthmian Games in 196 BC. This event sparks a discussion among characters in the *Life* about the Greeks' failure to achieve freedom on their own. This discussion in turn provides an interpretive framework for the whole book up to that point; that is, for the whole of *Philopoemen* and the first half of *Flamininus*.

The chapter is divided into three parts. First, I explore Plutarch's decision to match Philopoemen and Flamininus in this book. I suggest that the pairing was inspired by Polybius and other literary and non-literary sources, and that it is a consequence of how the history of this period was being narrated even before Plutarch's time. In the second section I argue that Plutarch believed his Greco-Roman present to be better and more peaceful than the celebrated Greek past. This belief pervades his narrative, so that the Roman hero comes across as naturally superior to the Greek. Finally, I turn to the structure of *Philopoemen*, to show how the *Life* is written so as to represent its hero's career as circumscribed by Greek weakness and Roman power.

⁹ Ibid.

The Inspiration for the Pairing

Titus Flamininus, a Roman consul and censor, is at home among the other heroes of the *Parallel Lives*, if only for his liberation of the Greek cities, an accomplishment that became a central theme in his *Life* and would still have resonated in Plutarch's day.¹⁰ Plutarch writes in the book's syncretism that freedom was an incomparable gift, one that neither Philopoemen nor even "better Greek men than he was" could rival (*Comp. Phil.-Flam.* 1.1-3). So how did Philopoemen, a general of the Achaean League who fought "small border wars" (*Flam.* 13.3; cf. *Phil.* 15.1-2) and whom one historian has called "a bit player",¹¹ earn his place alongside such a champion? Geiger has suggested that Plutarch selected Philopoemen as a match for Flamininus while reading Polybius.¹² Philopoemen may have caught Plutarch's eye because of the favourable treatment he received in Polybius's works. Polybius's lost encomium of the Achaean general would have presented Philopoemen in the best light and was likely known to Plutarch;¹³ and in the *Histories*, Polybius describes Philopoemen's deeds and character in highly favourable terms.¹⁴ Thus, Polybius's Philopoemen may simply have presented himself as a worthy biographical subject. Frazier suggests more specifically that the theme of liberty prompted the pairing, with Philopoemen freeing Achaeans from Spartan and Macedonian influence, and even holding off Rome's domination, and Flamininus delivering a more general freedom to all Greeks.¹⁵ Walsh, conversely, interprets *Philopoemen* as a negative *Life* and, focusing on the laudable qualities prominent in the Roman hero, suggests that Plutarch selected Philopoemen as a foil to Flamininus.¹⁶

10 On the personal qualities of Flamininus that would also have attracted Plutarch, see Pelling 1997: 88-90. Flamininus's activity in Greece and the aftermath of his victory over Philip are more complex than Plutarch allows; see Eckstein 2008: 283-302, with further bibliography. But Plutarch seems to have been aware of the reality of Roman intervention even after the declaration of freedom; see the discussion of Swain 1996: 148-150.

11 Walsh 1992: 222.

12 Geiger 1981: 90; see also García Moreno 1995: 130; Scuderi 1996: 65-66. In the transition between *Lives*, Plutarch appears to imply that he started with the Greek and then selected the Roman. Geiger is right to suggest that we not read too much into that statement, which serves primarily to introduce the hero of the second *Life*.

13 Polybius describes the work in the *Histories* as an "encomium that required a summarized and amplified account of [Philopoemen's] deeds" (10.21.8). On its nature, see Farrington 2011; Alexiou 2018. Pelling (1997: 100) suggests that Plutarch, despite the encomium's amplification, could still have used the material judiciously.

14 See Hau 2016: 38, who records that Polybius praises Philopoemen "in no fewer than four evaluative digressions" (*Histories* 10.21-24, 11.10, 21.32c, 23.12).

15 Frazier 1987: 70-71; cf. Pelling 1989: 210, and the discussion of Nikolaidis 2005: 300-301.

16 Walsh 1992: 217-218: "How could he have better demonstrated the destructiveness of Greek contentiousness and anger than by juxtaposing a Greek hero with those characteristics with a Roman of the opposite character when Greece was in decline?" For comment on Walsh's argument, and discussion of negative *Lives* in general, see Duff 1999: 56.

An implicit assumption of this sort of analysis is that Plutarch, since he used Polybius as a source, also turned to him in search of content for the *Parallel Lives* and there “found” Philopoemen or Flamininus, or both.¹⁷ In fact, though Polybius was not one of the canonical historians taught in the schools, Plutarch had almost certainly read the *Histories* well before he began work on his biographical project. His ideas about the Greek and Roman past, moreover, would also have been influenced by other sources, both literary and non-literary.¹⁸ If we grant that he was interested in this pivotal moment in history, then we may suppose that when he came to write about it in the *Parallel Lives*, he started with preconceived ideas of its significance and its framing.¹⁹ These ideas would have affected his selection of the heroes themselves, as well as the book’s content, themes, and structure. In what follows I argue that Plutarch had reason to conceive of Philopoemen and Flamininus as a natural and rather obvious pair, perhaps long before he decided to write their *bioi*.

In Polybius, Plutarch would have found the two men’s stories already intertwined, and the achievements of the Greek *strategos* evaluated through syncrisis with the Roman consul.²⁰ A real, historically documented rivalry between the two men appears to have arisen out of the joint Achaean and Roman conflict with Nabis of Sparta. The record of the two men’s animosity (which might not have been mutual) goes back to Polybius and appears to have been rooted in the Achaeans’ decision not to follow Flamininus’s direction.²¹ While modern historians rightly seek the political and diplomatic context for this rivalry, Plutarch, in his quest to study character, focused on the personal aspects. These may also have been present in Polybius. Only bits of that narrative have survived, though we can read it indirectly in Livy’s account, as well as in Plutarch. This, briefly, is the background. Following Nabis’s capture of Messene, Philopoemen, acting as a private citizen, led an army from Megalopolis and freed the city (Poly. *Hist.* 16.13, 16.16–17.7; Plut. *Phil.* 12.4–6). Then he left the Peloponnesus for a second spell in Crete (200–194 BC). In his absence, Flamininus defeated

17 See, for example, García Moreno 1995: 130: “Y parece probable que el de Queronea se acercase a la gran obra del megalopolitano para buscar personajes y datos para sus biografías de romanos”.

18 For Plutarch’s life of reading, see the discussion of Stadter 2015: 124–125, with further bibliography; on reading Polybius, see Pelling 1979: 74 (= 2002: 1). Stadter observes (2015: 124) that the *Moralia* reveal “a broad and deep acquaintance with Greek historical and antiquarian literature of all periods”. Frost (1980: 47–48) describes the various ways that a Greek youth would learn history “long before he looked into his first roll of papyrus”.

19 Plutarch is likely to have composed *Phil.-Flam.* early in the series of *Parallel Lives*, perhaps indicating a special interest in this period of history; on the dating see Jones 1966; Nikolaidis 2005.

20 Polybius also employs a three-fold syncrisis between Philopoemen, Hannibal, and Scipio Africanus (23.12); see Foulon 1993.

21 See Errington 1969: 90–115; Gruen 1984: 465; Raeymaekers 1996.

Nabis (195 BC) and negotiated a truce that left him in power (Livy 34.29–40). The seeds of the rivalry were sown when Philopoemen returned to the mainland to find the Achaeans at war again with Sparta (Livy 35.25–30; Plut. *Phil.* 14–15, *Flam.* 13.1–4).²² He was quickly elected *strategos* of the Achaean League and moved against Nabis before the Romans arrived. After a disastrous attempt to fight a sea battle, Philopoemen attacked by land, and his forces were nearly trapped in mountainous terrain before he cunningly turned the tables and routed Nabis’s army. He then followed up this success by killing many of the Spartans as they made their way disorganized back to the city.²³

Both men, then, had a go at Nabis, and this appears to have led naturally to a contemporaneous comparison between them. Thus, Livy reports that “the Achaeans were judging [Philopoemen] equal to the Roman commander in the glory of his accomplishments, and for what he had done in the war with Sparta, they thought he even surpassed him”²⁴ (*aequantibus eum gloria rerum Achaeis imperatori Romano, et quod ad Laconum bellum attineret, praeferentibus etiam*, 35.30.13). The scope of the comparison as reported by Livy, and so probably as found in Polybius, might have been limited to the men’s actions in the two recent wars with Sparta, or the Achaeans might have been comparing Philopoemen’s victory over Nabis with Flamininus’s accomplishments in general, including his victory over Philip and declaration of freedom.²⁵ Plutarch, however, when he reports the praise of Philopoemen, does not say that the Achaeans compared him with Flamininus at all. Instead, he imagines that Flamininus made this connection himself and, further, took insult at the magnitude of his new rival’s glory. His response was to transfer their competition to a larger context and invoke his superior accomplishment:

ἐπὶ τούτοις ἀγαπώμενος καὶ τιμώμενος ἐκπρεπῶς ὑπὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις, φιλότιμον ὄντα τὸν Τίτον ἡσυχῇ παρελύπει. καὶ γὰρ ὡς Ῥωμαίων ὑπάτος ἀνδρὸς Ἀρκάδος ἡξίου θαυμάζεσθαι μᾶλλον ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀχαιῶν, καὶ ταῖς εὐεργεσίαις ὑπερβάλλειν οὐ παρὰ μικρὸν ἠγεῖτο, δι’ ἐνὸς κηρύγματος ἐλευθερώσας τὴν Ἑλλάδα πᾶσαν, ὅση Φιλίππῳ καὶ Μακεδόσιν ἐδούλευσεν.

22 Here I follow Plutarch, who condenses considerably, since the details are not as important to him as the outcome. On the form of his account and comparison with Livy, see Pelling 1997: 218 n. 290.

23 In a third conflict with Sparta, after Nabis’s death, Philopoemen intervened as a private citizen to resolve the dispute and pre-empted Flamininus’s attack on the city (*Phil.* 16.1–3).

24 All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

25 The former seems more likely to me; Briscoe 1981: 189 assumes the latter.

As a result of his victory, Philopoemen was beloved and prominently honoured by the Greeks in their theatres, which secretly annoyed Flamininus because of his love of honour. For as a Roman consul, he believed that he should be admired more by the Achaeans than a man from Arcadia, and he believed that he had in no small way outdone Philopoemen in his benefactions, since through a single proclamation he had freed all parts of Greece that had been enslaved to Philip and the Macedonians (*Phil.* 15.1-2; cf. *Flam.* 13.1-3).

Plutarch is demonstrating the Roman's φιλοτιμία, one of his defining characteristics, but to do so, he must emphasise Flamininus's annoyance at the attention paid to Philopoemen. This, too, he may have gleaned from his source. Though not overtly reported in Livy, there must have been hard feelings between the men, since later, as Errington shows, the Aetolians will attempt to exploit their mutual animosity to disrupt cooperation between the Achaeans and Romans.²⁶ Though Livy does not connect this animosity to a rivalry, Polybius might have done so, or Plutarch might have read a personal rivalry into the political circumstances. Either way, there was a ready-made pairing to be found in Polybius's reporting of contemporary syncretism between Philopoemen and Flamininus.²⁷

But the influence on Plutarch's choice was likely more than literary. His conception of this period of history would have been reinforced and expanded through a lifetime of intellectual activity, including the observation of the monuments he encountered at Delphi, where the rivalry of Philopoemen and Flamininus was still being played out in his own day. Delphi was Plutarch's "second home"²⁸ and was filled with dedications that recalled the Greek past. We know from Plutarch's own testimony that these dedications were a major attraction, and that the narratives behind the objects were retold during both private and professional tours of the sanctuary.²⁹ That Philopoemen was represented among them is clear from the *Life*. Plutarch cites a statue commemorating his slaying of Machanidas, which portrays him in the very act (τοῦτ' ἔχων τὸ σχῆμα, *Phil.* 10.13), and he claims that the Achaean was not

²⁶ Errington 1969: 99, citing Livy 35.47.4.

²⁷ Justin's epitome of Pompeius Trogus, also relies on syncretism: "He displayed such great excellence in that war [against Nabis] that everyone thought he was the equal of Flamininus, the Roman commander" (*cuius in eo bello tanta virtus enituit, ut opinione omnium Flaminino, Romano imperatori, compararetur*, 31.3.4). Yardley 2018: 87 n. 108, in the Loeb translation of Livy, takes *compararetur* to mean that Philopoemen "merited comparison" with Flamininus and sees Plutarch as taking up the challenge. Pausanias, conversely, says simply that Philopoemen "was elevated to even greater glory among the Greeks" (δόξης ἔτι ἐς πλέον παρὰ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἦρθη, 8.50.9) but makes no mention of a comparison to Flamininus.

²⁸ Stadter 2004: 19 (= 2015: 70).

²⁹ See *Oracles at Delphi no longer given in Verse* 394d, 395a, with Buckler 1992: 4808-4814; M. Dillon 1997: 81-82.

as homely as some think, “for we see the likeness of him that still remains at Delphi” (εἰκόνα γὰρ αὐτοῦ διαμένουσιν ἐν Δελφοῖς ὀρώμεν, *Phil.* 2.1).³⁰ I do not want to read too much into Plutarch’s grammar; however, the present tense of ὀρώμεν suggests to me an active appreciation of the visual evidence.

These visual reminders of the Greek past, moreover, were also in dialogue with the Roman present. “With the conquest of Greece,” Stadter explains, “the sanctuary of Delphi became a display site for Roman power rather than a source of wisdom”.³¹ In this respect, Flamininus was typical of his class, and Plutarch also knew and cited the visual evidence that he had put on display.

καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ μέγιστον ἐφρόνησεν ἐπὶ τῇ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἐλευθερώσει. ἀνατιθεὶς γὰρ εἰς Δελφοὺς ἀσπίδας ἀργυρᾶς καὶ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ θυρεόν, ἐπέγραψε ἀνέθηκε δὲ καὶ χρυσοῦν τῶ Ἀπόλλωνι στέφανον, ἐπιγράψας

But he himself took greatest pride in the freedom he bestowed on Greece. For he dedicated at Delphi silver shields and his own *scutum*, with the inscription, And he also dedicated a golden crown to Apollo, with this inscription (*Flam.* 12.11-12).

These dedications get to the heart of the matter. Flamininus was proudest of, and wished to be remembered for, his great benefaction to the Greeks. I have elided the inscriptions to emphasise this point, but the first is significant for this discussion, since it might be interpreted as showing the Roman consul nursing a grudge against the exalted Achaean, and so prolonging their rivalry into Plutarch’s own time:

Ζηνὸς ἰὼ κραιπναῖσι γεγαθότες ἵπποσύναισι
κοῦροι, ἰὼ Σπάρτας Τυνδαρίδαι βασιλεῖς,
Αἰνεάδας Τίτος ὑμῖν ὑπέρτατον ὤπασε δῶρον,
Ἑλλάνων τεύξας παισὶν ἐλευθερίαν.

³⁰ Pausanias, who could have seen the same statue but does not mention it in his account of Delphi, repeats the common opinion about Philopoemen’s appearance that Plutarch sought to correct: τὸ δὲ εἶδος ἦν τοῦ προσώπου κακός (8.49.3).
³¹ Stadter 2005: 206 (= 2015: 90).

Io, you young men, sons of Zeus, who rejoice in the swift-running horses; io, you descendants of Tyndareus, kings of Sparta: Titus, a descendant of Aeneas, granted you the finest gift when he brought about freedom for the children of the Greeks (*Flam.* 12.11).

The young men invoked here are the Dioscuri, who represent the mythical royal line at Sparta. Flamininus is claiming descent from Aeneas, a hero of the same generation as the Dioscuri. Thus, this dedication elevates the Roman's ancestry and demonstrates Sparta's obligation to him as grantor of "the finest gift."³²

Flamininus's aim in addressing Sparta is obscured because we do not know when or why he made this dedication.³³ But Plutarch might not have known that detail either. Reading the inscription centuries later, therefore, with Polybius's syncrisis in the back of his mind, or perhaps picking up Polybius second after having read this inscription as a boy or young man, Plutarch could have formed an early impression of Flamininus as a man who jealously protected his legacy, with glory in the conflict with Sparta having been an especially prickly subject. Plutarch, in fact, conflates the two wars against Nabis into one in *Flamininus* (13), thus demonstrating his interest in the conflict primarily as a flashpoint for his heroes' rivalry.³⁴ Moreover, an inscription read by Pausanias at Tegea can give us a sense of what, in Plutarch's mind at least, provoked this jealous response. The Tegeans honoured Philopoemen with a statue in their theatre, the place where Plutarch reports honours being dedicated to him by various Greek cities. This dedication may or may not have been part of that movement, but the inscription attached to its base nonetheless communicates a message that would have annoyed the honour-loving Roman. The first lines extol Philopoemen's virtue and glory and commend his accomplishments in war before concluding with these couplets:

μανύει δὲ τρόπαια τετυγμένα διςσὰ τυράνων
Σπάρτας· αὐξομέναν δ' ἄρατο δουλοσύναν.
ὦν ἔνεκεν Τεγέα μεγαλόφρονα Κραύγιδος υἱόν
στᾶσεν, ἀμωμήτου κράντορ' ἐλευθερίας.

32 Erskine (2001: 41–42) raises the possibility that Flamininus dedicated his shield but did not write the inscription. He does not doubt, however, that Plutarch believed he was reading Flamininus's words.

33 See Pelling 1997: 386 n. 123.

34 Gruen (1984: 465 n. 161) characterises Plutarch's account of the wars as "demonstrably inaccurate" and speaks of confusion rather than conflation.

A pair of trophies for his victories over Spartan tyrants make known [his accomplishments], for he checked the Spartans' expansion of enslavement. On this account Tegea has set here the magnanimous son of Craugis, the creator of unblemished freedom. (8.52.6)

The trophies commemorate victory over Machanidas and Nabis, and so “freedom” here is obviously freedom from Spartan domination. It is, therefore, local in scope and ripe for disparaging from a wider perspective. If this sort of praise was reaching Flamininus's ear, the subtext of his inscription at Delphi becomes clear: “I gave you real freedom.” Plutarch communicates just this message on Flamininus's behalf in *Philopoemen*, in the passage that I quoted above about the aftermath of the wars with Nabis. There Plutarch is clearly referencing the proclamation at the Isthmus, making Flamininus invoke his universal benefaction to counter Philopoemen's local glory. In the briefer account found in *Flamininus*, Plutarch is more general, claiming only that Flamininus was jealous because he, “a Roman consul fighting on behalf of Greece” (Ῥωμαίων ὑπάτωρ προπολεμοῦντι τῆς Ἑλλάδος), was made the equal of a man who “held command in small border wars” (μικρῶν καὶ ὁμόρων πολέμων στρατηγόν, *Flam.* 13.3). In both passages, however, the rivalry with Philopoemen is central, and the message in Plutarch is consistent with the inscription from Delphi: Flamininus was a true benefactor, and the Greeks should not forget that. As with Philopoemen's statue, the evidence of the dedications is suggestive but not conclusive. I propose, however, that as Plutarch walked through Delphi, perhaps giving a tour to visiting friends and explaining the sights, the claims to greatness of both Philopoemen and Flamininus would have been revived, and thus their rivalry perpetuated.

The Conception of the Lives

We must be aware, however, that Plutarch, did not see the two men's claims as equal. There is an outright rejection of equality in the opening sentences of the syncritic epilogue, which I referred to above but quote in full here:

μεγέθει μὲν οὖν τῶν εἰς τοὺς Ἕλληνας εὐεργεσιῶν οὔτε Φιλοποίμενα τίτω παραβάλλειν οὔτε πάνυ πολλοὺς τῶν Φιλοποίμενος ἀμεινόνων ἀνδρῶν ἄξιόν ἐστι· τοῖς μὲν γὰρ Ἕλλησι πρὸς Ἕλληνας οἱ πόλεμοι, τῷ δ' οὐχ Ἕλληνι καὶ ὑπὲρ Ἑλλήνων· καὶ ὅτε Φιλοποίμην ἀμηχανῶν τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ πολίταις ἀμύνειν

πολεμουμένοις εἰς Κρήτην ἀπῆρε, τότε νικήσας Τίτος ἐν μέσῃ τῇ Ἑλλάδι Φίλιππον, ἠλευθέρου καὶ τὰ ἔθνη καὶ <τὰς> πόλεις ἀπάσας.

In the magnitude of their benefactions to the Greeks, neither Philopoemen nor the multitude of better men can worthily be compared to Titus. For they made war against Greeks, while he, though not a Greek, fought on behalf of Greeks. And when Philopoemen had gone off to Crete and could not defend his fellow citizens when they were under attack, then Titus defeated Philip in the very heart of Greece and set free all its people and cities (*Comp. Phil.-Flam.* 1.1-2).

Plutarch will in fact find bases on which to compare the two men, and he manages to end the formal syncrisis by claiming that the difference between them is “difficult to see” (δυσθεώρητος, 3.5). But this is only after setting aside Flamininus’s great achievement.³⁵ Moreover, although Plutarch leads into this discussion by citing the magnitude of that achievement, he quickly clarifies that its greatness also depends on whom these generals were fighting. Philopoemen could not have equalled Flamininus because he waged his wars against his fellow Greeks rather than in defence of them; moreover, he was not even available to defend Megalopolis while Flamininus was securing victory over Philip.

This is Philopoemen’s defect, but also Plutarch’s basis for seeing him as a metaphor. The point made in the syncrisis comes directly from the *Lives*, where Plutarch generalizes the Arcadian’s deficiency by ascribing it to Greece as a whole. This occurs after Flamininus’s declaration of liberty for the Greek cities, which meant freedom from both Macedonian domination and direct Roman control. The declaration (*Flam.* 10) inspires great celebration (*Flam.* 11), in the midst of which the Greeks turn to “reasoning and conversing about Greece herself” (ἐπήει λογιζεσθαι καὶ διαλέγεσθαι περὶ τῆς Ἑλλάδος, 11.3). Greece is personified as long-suffering and ineffective: “Though she had fought so many wars on account of freedom,” Plutarch makes the Greeks observe, “she had not ever obtained a freedom more stable or pleasing than this one, for which outsiders led the struggle while she herself, essentially without blood or grief, carried off the most beautiful and fought-over prize” (ὄσους πολεμήσασα πολέμους διὰ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν, οὐπω τύχοι βεβαιότερον οὐδ’ ἥδιον αὐτῆς, ἐτέρων προαγωνισαμένων ὀλίγου δεῖν ἀναίμακτος αὐτὴ καὶ ἀπευθῆς φερομένη τὸ

35 Cf. Isocrates’ syncrisis of Evagoras and Cyrus the Great, in which Evagoras can be superior “if anybody should wish to judge not the magnitude of the outcomes but the virtue of each man” (εἴ τινες βούλοιντο μὴ τὸ μέγεθος τῶν συμβάντων ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀρετὴν τὴν ἐκατέρου κρίνειν, *Evag.* 38).

κάλλιστον καὶ περιμαχητότατον ἄθλον, 11.3). The Greeks go on to consider how the most famous leaders of their joint history—men such as Agesilaus, Lysander, Nicias, Alcibiades—had won many wars but had not known how to use their victories “to grant a noble favour or bring about what is truly good” (πρὸς χάριν εὐγενῆ καὶ τὸ καλόν, 11.5). With only a few exceptions, “Greece has fought every battle against herself for her own enslavement, and each trophy marks her misfortune and stands as a reproach, for she was toppled by the depravity and contentiousness of her leaders” (πάσας τὰς μάχας ἢ Ἑλλάς ἐπὶ δουλείᾳ μεμάχεται πρὸς αὐτήν, καὶ πᾶν τρόπαιον αὐτῆς συμφορὰ καὶ ὄνειδος ἔστηκε, τὰ πλεῖστα κακία καὶ φιλονικία τῶν ἡγουμένων περιτραπίσης, 11.6). How strange, then, that outsiders, with hardly any share of the Greeks’ “ancient ancestry” (παλαιοῦ γένους, 11.7) would be the ones to bring real freedom.

Though the Greeks are made to contemplate the significance of Flamininus’s declaration in both Polybius (18.44–46) and Livy (33.5–7), in neither instance do they reflect upon the Greek heroes of the past.³⁶ The reasoning expressed in *Flamininus*, then, almost certainly reflects Plutarch’s own.³⁷ We can, moreover, detect the same reasoning in some of his other writings. We find it expressed briefly in *Agesilaus*, when Plutarch bemoans the Spartan general’s recall from Asia, which left the conquest of Persia for Alexander to accomplish. Agesilaus’s generation, he asserts, “squandered the contemporary generals of the Greeks on Leuctra, Coronea, Corinth, and Arcadia” (τότε τοὺς τῶν Ἑλλήνων στρατηγούς περὶ Λεῦκτρα καὶ Κορώνειαν καὶ Κόρινθον καὶ Ἀρκαδίαν κατανήλωσαν, *Ages.* 15.3). We find it also in *Pericles*, in the words of Cimon’s sister Elpinice, who accosts Pericles after his victory over Samos. She charges that he has “wasted many of our brave citizens, not while making war against Phoenicians or Medes, as my brother Cimon did, but while overthrowing an allied and kindred city” (ἡμῖν πολλοὺς καὶ ἀγαθοὺς ἀπώλεσας πολίτας, οὐ Φοῖνιξι πολεμῶν οὐδὲ Μήδοις, ὥσπερ οὐμὸς ἀδελφὸς Κίμων, ἀλλὰ σύμμαχον καὶ συγγενῆ πόλιν καταστρεφόμενος, 28.6).³⁸ Making war against the Persian empire rather than Greek cities, in fact, appears to be a litmus test for good versus bad conduct. And so, in the reflection following Flamininus’s proclamation, the Greeks decide that only the land battles at

36 See Pelling 1989: 210: “Polybius and Livy concentrate on the Romans—their greatness of spirit, their clemency, their altruism”. Pausanias (8.52), writing after Plutarch, includes a critical digression on intra-Greek warfare, but speaks in his own voice.

37 On Plutarch expressing his own judgement through the words or thoughts of onlookers, see Duff 1999: 55, 120.

38 According to Stadter (1989: 261), Plutarch’s source for Elpinice’s confrontation of Pericles is unknown. Perhaps Plutarch gave her the words that he thought she should use, or he recalled this anecdote from a source now lost because it matched his own outlook.

Marathon, Plataea, and Thermopylae, the sea battle off Salamis, and Cimon’s successes at the Eurymedon and around Cyprus were victories worth celebrating (*Flam.* 11.6).

We find similar criticism in Plutarch’s dialogue *Oracles at Delphi no longer given in Verse* (401a-d), in a discussion that occurs amidst one of those famous tours of the monuments at Delphi. When some members of the party condemn the golden statue of the courtesan Phryne, agreeing with Crates who had called it a “trophy to the licentiousness of the Greeks” (τῆς τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀκρασίας τρόπαιον), another member, Theon, draws a moral equivalence between the courtesan and the more distinguished generals also represented among the dedications. It is wrong to criticise Phryne, Theon counters, when his interlocutors have no problem “looking upon the god surrounded by offerings and tithes that come from murders, wars, and acts of plundering, and seeing the temple filled with spoils and booty taken from Greeks” (φόνων δὲ καὶ πολέμων καὶ λεηλασιῶν ἀπαρχαῖς καὶ δεκάταις κύκλω περιεχόμενον τὸν θεὸν ὄρων καὶ τὸν νεῶν σκύλων Ἑλληνικῶν ἀνάπλεων καὶ λαφύρων). Theon believes they should instead feel pity for the Greeks when they read “the most shameful inscriptions on the beautiful monuments” (ἐπὶ τῶν καλῶν ἀναθημάτων αἰσχίστας ἀναγιγνώσκων ἐπιγραφάς). These inscriptions, which Theon appears to be reading as he cites them, all boast of victories won by Greeks over Greeks: “Brasidas and the Acanthians from the Athenians,” “The Athenians from the Corinthians,” and so on.

Theon, then, adduces the same interpretive framing that was imputed to the Greeks present at the Isthmian games in *Flamininus*. He will go on to express his preference for the present moment in history based largely on the absence of the sorts of evils that sprang from regular intra-Greek conflict:

τὰ δὲ νῦν πράγματα καθεστῶτα, ... ἀγαπῶ μὲν ἔγωγε καὶ ἀσπάζομαι· πολλὴ γὰρ εἰρήνη καὶ ἡσυχία, πέπαυται δὲ πόλεμος, καὶ πλάναι καὶ στάσεις οὐκ εἰσὶν οὐδὲ τυραννίδες, οὐδ’ ἄλλα νοσήματα καὶ κακὰ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὥσπερ πολυφαρμάκων δυνάμεων χρήζοντα καὶ περιττῶν.

As for the conditions that prevail now, ... I myself am happy with them, and I welcome them. For there is widespread peace and calm, and war has ceased; there are no migrations, civil disturbances, or tyrannies; and Greece no longer suffers diseases and troubles that require complex and extreme treatments (*De Pyth. or.* 408b).

Theon’s argument is connected to the central question of this dialogue, which is why the Pythia no longer responds in verse. The answer in brief is that better, more peaceful times allow for simpler answers.³⁹ If we accept the usual dating of *Oracles at Delphi no longer given in Verse* and *Philopoemen-Flamininus*, both works were written after 95 CE and so belong to the same stage of Plutarch’s life, his mature years when he launched his biographical project. Both works express a similar view of Greek history, which includes an acceptance of — even a preference for — the Roman period and a resistance to the over-glorification of the Classical past. This view, then, was larger than *Philopoemen-Flamininus*, and I suggest that the pair was subsumed within it. Philopoemen did indeed fight for freedom, but his ambitions were constrained by his limited view of what was possible. He imagined freedom from the tyrants of Sparta and, his biggest aspiration, from the dominance of the Macedonian king. But he was fighting for Achaea against other Greeks. From the perspective of the early empire, this narrow conception of freedom becomes not only provincial, but even worthy of reproach. And Plutarch delivers this reproach in the words of the Greeks themselves at *Flam.* 11.

The Structure of *Philopoemen*

In this final section, I will show that even as Plutarch sets Philopoemen’s accomplishments in a positive light, he nonetheless conveys his assessment of their inferiority through the structure of the *Life* and the form of his narrative. He disagrees, I suggest, with the Achaeans’ view that Philopoemen had surpassed Flamininus, mainly because, perhaps like Flamininus himself, Plutarch cannot ignore the larger context in his comparison of the two men.

Philopoemen-Flamininus lacks a prologue to justify its contents, and the reader is not formally alerted to the pairing until the first sentence of the second *Life*.⁴⁰ The absence of a formal prologue is of course not unique to this book.⁴¹ In this instance, however, Plutarch’s silence about the pairing is surely deliberate, since Flamininus appears as early as the proemial opening to *Philopoemen* (2.5) and in several other chapters. Plutarch could easily have

39 See J. Dillon 1997; Whitmarsh 2001: 27 n. 123; Kim 2017, who discuss the complexities of this argument.

40 “That is the story of Philopoemen. The person that I have set parallel to him, Titus Quintius Flamininus ...” (ταῦτα περὶ Φιλοποίμενος, ὃν δὲ παραβάλλομεν αὐτῷ, Τίτος Κοῖντίος Φλαμινῖνος, *Phil.* 21.12–*Flam.* 1.1). As does Polybius, Plutarch writes “Quintius” for “Quinctius”.

41 At least seven other books lack a formal prologue; see further Duff 2014.

identified him as the subject of the second *Life* during the narration of the first. In fact, withholding this information allows Plutarch to treat this exceptional pairing as ordinary, as though the second *Life* were, historically speaking, entirely separate from the first. This distancing, in turn, allows for the development of syncrisis between the *Lives*. Even so, Plutarch could hardly have expected his readers to be uninformed about the pairing, either from the title (if one was present), through informal communication (“Here’s my book about Philopoemen and Flamininus”), or by reading the book more than once.⁴² And so in the proemial opening to the first *Life*, he includes allusions to the second *Life* that colour our interpretation of the first, playing off his own and his reader’s knowledge of events. In this way, he begins to build towards the climactic moment in *Flam.* 11, where he challenges the glory of Philopoemen’s achievement and elevates that of Flamininus. Thus, he lays the foundation for the integration of the two *Lives* into a unitary study of this moment in history.

Plutarch commences *Philopoemen* with a description of how friends of the hero’s father took responsibility for his son’s education after his death, concluding with the observation that the tutors took great pride in what they had done, not just for Philopoemen but for all Greece. Though he begins by discussing the boy’s childhood in Megalopolis, Plutarch swiftly widens his scope to include Greece as a whole, and thus, from the very start, sets Philopoemen’s life into a larger context. This larger context, of course, allows Plutarch to compare a man from a relatively small Greek city with his Roman counterpart and so is essential to the pairing. But Plutarch also alludes to an even broader context:

αὐτοί γε μὴν ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἔργοις καὶ τὴν Φιλοποίμενος ἐποιοῦντο παιδευσιν, ὡς κοινὸν ὄφελος τῇ Ἑλλάδι τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον ὑπὸ φιλοσοφίας ἀπεργασάμενοι. καὶ γὰρ ὡσπερ ὀψίγονον ἐν γήρᾳ ταῖς τῶν παλαιῶν ἡγεμόνων ἐπιτεκοῦσα τοῦτον ἀρεταῖς ἢ Ἑλλὰς ἡγάπησε διαφερόντως καὶ συνηύξησε τῇ δόξῃ τὴν δύναμιν. Ῥωμαίων δέ τις ἐπαινῶν ἔσχατον αὐτὸν Ἑλλήνων προσεῖπεν, ὡς οὐδένα μέγαν μετὰ τοῦτον ἔτι τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἄνδρα γειναμένης οὐδ’ αὐτῆς ἄξιον.

These men indeed counted the education of Philopoemen as one of their accomplishments, believing that they had turned the man into a common benefit

⁴² We do not know if the original book began with a title that declared its contents; see Duff 2011: 264 n. 232.

to Greece through their philosophical training. For as though she had given birth to him in old age, a late-born child and successor to the virtues of the ancient leaders, Greece adored him especially and increased his power in proportion to his reputation. And a certain Roman praised him by calling him “the last of the Greeks” because after him Greece bore no other man who was great or worthy of her (*Phil.* 1.5-7).

In addition to widening the narrative scope of the first *Life*, Plutarch appears also to have in mind the crowning achievement of the second when he introduces the unnamed Roman to declare that Philopoemen marks the last great child born to Mother Greece. Philopoemen was indeed the last, but it was not a question of desire or fertility. The Romans, with their defeat of Macedon and dominating presence, make themselves the next generation of great leaders in Greece, and fittingly one of them declared (προσεῖπεν) that the last of the Greeks had come and gone, just as a Roman herald declared (ἀνεῖπεν) freedom at the Isthmian games (in *Flam.* 11). Plutarch’s own *Parallel Lives* confirm the anonymous Roman’s conclusion: no book features a Greek hero who lived later than Philopoemen.

Moreover, Plutarch proceeds from this opening to a physical description, a common element in his proemial openings but put to special use here. Following discussion of Plutarch’s own opinion (based on the statue at Delphi mentioned above) and an anecdote about Philopoemen’s reputation for being ugly, yet another Roman is given the final word. In this instance, none other than Flamininus concludes the section. Commenting ostensibly on Philopoemen’s slender waist, he says: “You have such fine arms and legs, Philopoemen, but you have no stomach” (ὦ Φιλοποίμην, ὡς καλὰς χεῖρας ἔχεις καὶ σκέλη· γαστέρα δ’ οὐκ ἔχεις, 2.5). Plutarch explains that Philopoemen’s army, though powerful, often lacked funding, which is the deeper meaning of this remark.⁴³ And so twice in the proemial opening, two Romans, one of them the subject of the second *Life*, are introduced to pronounce a verdict on Philopoemen. Even without knowing the subject of the second *Life*, readers can surely detect the strong Roman presence in the opening of the first. Plutarch, then, over the course of a dozen or so sentences, has drastically widened the scope of this *Life*, to take in first Megalopolis, then all of Greece, and finally Greece under the sway of

⁴³ The anecdote also appears in *Reg. et imp. apophth.* 197c-d.

Rome. These are the three contexts in which we are to understand Philopoemen's life, and the presence of the third prevents us from thinking too highly of his provincial success.

After the proemial opening, Philopoemen operates primarily in that middle, Greek context, rising to power in the Achaean league and achieving military success in Crete and against Sparta. Plutarch, after reminding us of Rome's looming presence, keeps it at bay until the *Life's* first climactic moment, the celebration of Philopoemen's victory over Machanidas. Read in the Greek context, this is a great and joyous moment, but themes established in the proemial opening recur here, encouraging a consideration of the larger, Roman context and casting a shadow over the celebration. The scene is set when, after defeating the tyrant (10), Philopoemen brings his army to the festival at Nemea (11). This is, significantly, a Panhellenic festival, and Plutarch mentions Greece and the Greeks repeatedly to ensure that the reader understands the scope of the celebration. Here Philopoemen displays his troops to the assembled spectators and puts them through their manoeuvres. Then he brings his young soldiers, dressed in their military finery, into the theatre, and it just so happens (κατὰ τύχην) that as he enters, a kitharode is singing this verse: “[He], fashioning for Greece the widely renowned ornament of freedom” (κλεινὸν ἐλευθερίας τεύχων μέγαν Ἑλλάδι κόσμον, 11.3). All eyes turn toward Philopoemen and the crowd erupts in applause to express its joy, “since in their hopes the Greeks were recovering their ancient worthiness, and in their courage, they were coming very close to the high spirit of those times” (τῶν Ἑλλήνων τὸ παλαιὸν ἀξίωμα ταῖς ἐλπίσιν ἀναλαμβάνοντων καὶ τοῦ τότε φρονήματος ἔγγιστα τῷ θαρρεῖν γινομένων, 11.4). This appearance at Nemea seems to fulfil, and even to extend, the promise of the proemial opening: the “ancient worthiness” and “high spirit of those [ancient] times” echo the proem's “virtues of the ancient leaders” and its claim that Philopoemen was “worthy” of Greece.

But there is more here, for hanging over this scene is the kitharode's statement about freedom for the Greeks, something not mentioned in the proem. In this context freedom can be of two types. First, as the Achaean league was expanding, several cities were freed from rule by tyrants and became members of the league (8.1–3), and indeed the victory over the tyrant Machanidas immediately precedes the display at Nemea.⁴⁴ Second, there is the anticipation that Greek cities will be rid of Macedonian interference, for one of Philopoemen's accomplishments was to make the Achaeans strong enough not to require

44 Cf. Pelling 1997: 208 n. 255. Though the battle and the festival are consecutive in the narrative, as a matter of history they occurred two years apart.

Macedonian military support (8.4-7). And in the chapter that immediately follows, Philip attempts to assassinate Philopoemen precisely because the Macedonian king wants to return the Achaeans to their subservient position (12.1-2).⁴⁵ The threat to Philopoemen is reported as a threat to all, since once Philip's intrigue became known, it "made him thoroughly hated and discredited among the Greeks" (παντάπασιν ἐξεμισήθη καὶ διεβλήθη πρὸς τοὺς Ἑλληνας). The spectacle at Nemea, then, causes the assembled Greeks to recall a time before the Macedonian kings came to dominate the independent Greek cities, and to nurture hopes of that time returning.

This puts Philopoemen in an excellent light in the context of Greek affairs, but the larger, Roman context makes the situation more complex. In *Flamininus*, the Greeks themselves will be made to realize that a victory over Sparta is really a misfortune and a reproach. But even in this *Life*, the defeat of Machanidas is not the end of the story, for the wars with Nabis are still to come. The even greater glory that Philopoemen wins there will nonetheless be undermined when Flamininus is made to trump the Achaean's success by invoking his greater benefaction. The hope for freedom from Macedon will in fact be realized, but not by Philopoemen. He was indeed successful in reforming the Achaean cavalry and infantry (7-9), but Philip will be removed as a threat by Flamininus at Cynoscephalae. And the reader does not have to wait until the second *Life* to understand this. Certainly, the history of this period was known to Plutarch's readers, just as I have argued it was well known to Plutarch himself. He makes this clear a few chapters later, when he reports without elaboration that Philopoemen returned from his second stint in Crete and "found that Titus had subdued Philip and that the Achaeans and Romans were making war against Nabis" (εὔρε τὸν μὲν Φίλιππον ὑπὸ τοῦ Τίτου καταπεπολεμημένον, τὸν δὲ Νάβιν ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀχαιῶν καὶ τῶν Ῥωμαίων πολεμούμενον, 14.1). Philopoemen shines in the Greek context, but the Roman context cannot be kept at bay for very long.

In the latter part of the *Life*, the inevitability of Roman domination becomes thematic. Despite the declaration at the Isthmus, the Greeks in fact were not allowed as much independence as Flamininus seemed to have promised. Plutarch devotes a chapter (*Phil.* 17) to Philopoemen's disposition, which was always opposed to the powers that sought to deprive the Achaeans of their freedom (οὕτως εἶχε τι πρὸς τὰς ἐξουσίας ὑπὸ φρονήματος δύσερι καὶ φιλόνηκον). Though he could bow to necessity and yield to the reality of the times

45 Cf. Errington 1969: 76: "The popular encouragement shown by this ostentatiously patriotic reception could only serve to confirm Philopoemen in his claim to Achaean independence from Macedonian hegemony".

(τὰ μὲν ἐνδιδόναι καὶ παρέικειν ἠναγκάζετο τοῖς καιροῖς), he nonetheless continued to oppose Rome's encroachment into Greek affairs. But Plutarch makes Philopoemen himself acknowledge the futility of this struggle. When one of his fellow citizens was holding office and urging compliance with the Romans, Philopoemen cried out in angry exasperation: “Why, man, are you so eager to see the fulfilment of Greece's fate?” (“ὦ ἄνθρωπε, τί σπεύδεις τὴν πεπρωμένην τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἐπιδεῖν;”). Philopoemen was indeed a local hero, but his attitude and actions were nonetheless impeding the better reality that Plutarch knew was coming.

The multi-layered context laid out in the proemial opening is in fact so significant to this *Life* that Plutarch returns to it in the conclusion. In the penultimate chapter (20), Plutarch describes Philopoemen's death in Messenia (ca. 182 BC); and in the final chapter, he reports that Philopoemen's remains were ceremoniously returned to Megalopolis and buried there (21.1-9). Then he flashes forward to the fall of Corinth (in 146 BC) to report that Greek cities in the meantime had voted to erect many statues and honours to Philopoemen, and that stirred a debate. An unnamed Roman undertook to have the memorials removed, on the ground that during his lifetime, Philopoemen had been an enemy of Rome (21.10). There was discussion (in which Polybius spoke in Philopoemen's defence), followed by a decision:

οὔθ' ὁ Μόμμιος οὔθ' οἱ πρέσβεις ὑπέμειναν ἀνδρὸς ἐνδόξου τιμᾶς ἀφανίσαι, καίπερ οὐκ ὀλίγα τοῖς περὶ Τίτον καὶ Μάνιον ἐναντιωθέντος, ἀλλὰ τῆς χρείας τὴν ἀρετὴν ἐκεῖνοι καὶ τὸ καλὸν ὡς ἔοικε τοῦ λυσιτελοῦς διώριζον, ὀρθῶς καὶ προσηκόντως τοῖς μὲν ὠφελοῦσι μισθὸν καὶ χάριν παρὰ τῶν εὔπαθόντων, τοῖς δ' ἀγαθοῖς τιμὴν ὀφείλεσθαι παρὰ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀεὶ νομίζοντες.

Neither Mummius nor the representatives of Rome would abide the removal of honours paid to such a glorious man, even though he had offered stiff opposition to Titus [Flamininus] and Manius [Glabrio]. But as it seems, they distinguished virtue from necessity, and what is noble from what is advantageous, believing rightly and appropriately that those who receive a benefit owe payment and gratitude to those who provide it, while good people always owe honour to those who are good (*Phil.* 21.11-12).

In the closing sentences of the *Life*, Plutarch reiterates the levels of context in which we must interpret Philopoemen's career, in the same order as they appear in the opening. Starting with the burial in Megalopolis, he widens the scope to include all of Greece (or at least Achaëa) by reference to the memorials erected by the cities. But once again the Greek context is eclipsed by an enveloping Roman one when another anonymous Roman (Ῥωμαῖος ἀνὴρ, 21.10; cf. Ῥωμαίων τις, 1.7) articulates his assessment of Philopoemen. Though negative and ultimately rejected, it has the same effect as the more positive "last of the Greeks" in that it gives the Romans final say. A Greek, Polybius, argues the case, but it is Mummius and his fellow Romans who decide that memorials to Philopoemen may remain. And significant as well, Plutarch mentions Flamininus by name, just as he did in the opening. The *Life* of Philopoemen is quite literally circumscribed by Flamininus and Rome.

This circumscription is, I believe, a product of Plutarch's general view of the arc of history. He certainly valued the Greek past, as evidenced by the *Parallel Lives* themselves. Though faulting the greatest heroes for their myopia in *Flamininus*, he could also find plenty to admire as he wrote their biographies. Similarly, he recognized the distinctiveness of both Philopoemen and Flamininus, evaluating them according to their character as *philonikos* and *philotimos* and in the formal syncrisis judging them to be essentially equal in virtue. But he also understood the present reality of the imperial era and could read Roman intervention into Greece as the start of a new and better age. The title "the last of the Greeks," therefore, is both an honorific and a sigh of relief.

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