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Chapter 6

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Building Cultural Bridges to Statesmen of the Past: Plutarch's Heroes as Guides to City Leaders

The conduct of political leaders — whether acting as representatives of the Emperor or managing public affairs in Rome or cities in the provinces — is a form of cultural practice when examined from the perspective of Plutarch's political essays in the *Moralia*[1] and his *Lives* of statesmen in the *Parallel Lives*. In both works, Plutarch's guidance on how best to meet the challenges of the public arena was illustrated with the actions, successes, and failures of heroes of the Greek city states and the Roman Republic, statesmen who were thereby transformed into role models for leaders in provincial cities of the Empire. In effect, Plutarch integrated the practice of leadership in the Greek and Roman past with the challenges facing leaders in the Imperial era, when a statesman's role was circumscribed by the Roman overlord and lay primarily in administering internal city affairs, managing relations with other cities and interacting with imperial authorities.[2]

In practical terms, the cultural heritage of the educated elite in Plutarch's day incorporated two key components: the Roman imperial structure and Greek *paideia*.[3] As noted by Wallace-Hadrill, the imperial apparatus provided the avenues for social and political

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1 The main political essays include *Precepts of Statecraft*; *Whether an Old Man Should Engage in Public Affairs*; *How to Profit by one's Enemies*; *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively*; *On Compliancy*; *To the Uneducated Ruler*; *A Philosopher Ought to Converse Especially with Men in Power*.
2 See Jones 1940: 172, 247 for common liturgies and administrative positions.
3 Stadter (2015: 2) describes this environment as a 'middle ground' between distinct identities and total fusion, a milieu in which "the Greek and Roman threads were still distinct but interwoven so as to form one cloth".

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advancement, while Greek *paideia* established one's status as a 'learned man'.[4] Plutarch's political essays and the *Lives* were designed to integrate these two perspectives in narratives that presented the Greek and Roman heroes solving political challenges that paralleled those faced by readers and thereby provided role models for the educated elites now active as city administrators, envoys to other cities on provincial matters, and ambassadors to the Emperor.

In the analysis below, I examine how Plutarch forged inter-cultural connections between present-day political practices and the varied array of individual political constitutions and cultural heritages in the city-states and regions that were now united under the Roman Empire. After briefly reviewing the functions performed and challenges faced by leaders in provincial cities — including those reflected in Dio's *City Speeches* and Pliny's *Letters* — I discuss how Plutarch, in *Precepts of Statecraft* (the most comprehensive of his political essays), employs historical statesmen to illustrate how to deal with such challenges. Then, drawing on *Solon-Publicola*, *Aristides-Cato Maior*, and *Phocion-Cato Minor* (pairs spanning the pre-Imperial period from its earliest to final days) I demonstrate how the *Lives* depict heroes confronting the same problems as Plutarch's contemporaries, including (1) managing relations with the populace to maintain harmony; (2) managing rivalries in one's city and among cities in one's province; and (3) engaging with an over-lord to serve the city's interests. Plutarch's intention to provide paradigms for contemporary leaders is reflected in his careful modifications of the historical record to amplify the parallels between the past and present.[5] In the process, Plutarch creates mirrors that give provincial city leaders a deep sense of cultural continuity and connection with the heroes that populated the cultural and political heritage of the Roman Empire.[6]

Challenges Facing Leaders in Provincial Cities: Insights from Dio and Pliny

Within the limits set by Rome, provincial cities enjoyed some scope for independent action in three areas: administering internal affairs of their cities, working with other cities to expand economic opportunities, and interacting directly with imperial authorities to increase the privileges enjoyed by their city. After meeting Rome's expectations for tax

4 Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 3-7.
5 Pelling (1980) describes a range of modifications of source material commonly found in the *Lives*.
6 The imagery of mirrors is central to creating cross-cultural ties as readers see themselves in the portrayals of historical heroes. See Stadter 2010, 2015. On the mirror image in Plutarch, see Duff 1999: 32-34; Stadter 2000, 2015; Frazier 2011.

revenues, support for Roman armies, and maintaining public order, provincial cities could largely administer their internal and local affairs without Roman supervision.[7] Within this structure, the educated elite performed a variety of administrative and diplomatic functions, the practical dynamics of which are brought into sharper focus in Dio's *City Orations*[8] and Pliny's *Letters*.[9] Euergetism also played a role, since wealthy citizens were expected to finance major events and projects, as well as to provide funds to deliver the services tied to various public offices.[10]

Administering Internal Affairs in Provincial Cities

In administering internal affairs, the primary concerns of city leaders, after tax collection, were the provision of city services, law and order, city finances, and building projects.[11] The highest civic positions were the archonship – generally held for one year – and membership on the city council, charged with selecting city officials and formulating rules and regulations that were ratified by the assembly.[12] Administrative positions paralleled the functions of the aediles, quaestors, praetors, and consuls in Rome, but were unpaid.[13] Key magistracies in the city were those overseeing the market (*agoranomi*) and food supply (*sitonae*), the gymnasium (*gymnasiarch*), and games (*agonothete*), and, as noted above, the magistrate was expected to cover the shortfalls in funds for provisions in his department.[14]

Dio brings these functions into focus in his *City Orations*. In *Oration* 40, for instance, Dio describes the problems he faces in financing and completing a project he had initiated on behalf of Prusa (*Or*. 40.5–7), while in *Oration* 46 he discusses the best way to respond to poor supervision of the market (*Or*. 46.24). Issues concerning employment and prosperity are raised in *Oration* 7 (104–232), where Dio addresses the problems confronting poor people in the city who could find no 'useful' employment (7.124) and states that the study of

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7 See Braund 1988: 1 and Campbell 2002: 86.
8 On Dio's *City Orations*, see Jones 1978; Swain 1996: 206–241; Desideri 2000: 103–107, 2011: 91–94; Salmeri 2000; Trapp 2007: 185–200.
9 On Pliny's *Letters*, see Radice 1969a, 1969b; Sherwin-White 1969: ix–xi; Griffin 2005: 551–555.
10 On euergetism, see Zuiderhoeck 2009. On offices needing funding support, see Jones 1940: 247.
11 Building projects often required approval from the governor, but once approved, were executed by the city (Pliny *Ep*. 10.23, 39).
12 See Jones 1940: 162 and Reynolds 1988: 25.
13 See Reynolds 1988: 31–33 and Talbert 1996.
14 For instance, funds might be needed to cover shortages of food or oil and to furnish athletes for games.

employment and trades is worthy of careful research (7.127). In a similar vein, *Oration* 35 details the economic benefits flowing from holding assize courts in one's city (35.15). Pliny's *Letters*, in turn, mention a variety of contexts in which cities needed the Emperor's approval on new projects, such as a public bath in Prusa (*Ep.* 10.23.1), a fire department in Nicomedia (10.34), a theater and gymnasium in Nicaea (10.39), or an aqueduct in Nicomedia (10.37-39).[15]

Relations with other cities

Managing relations with other cities was important both for creating economic opportunities and for coordinating the celebrations honoring the Emperor.[16] Because cities had different statuses, conflicts often arose between the more powerful cities (a capital city, metropolis, or first city) and the smaller cities in their orbit. Since being chosen as the site of the assize courts or as a center for the imperial cult brought many economic benefits, there was much competition among cities for these privileges.[17]

Dio's *City Speeches* reveal a variety of challenges associated with managing relations with other cities. *Oration* 38, for instance, discusses competition between Nicomedia and Nicaea for the title of 'first city' in the province. Elsewhere, Dio advises powerful cities to be gracious and slow to take offense when dealing with smaller cities that resisted authority (*Or.* 34.10-15) or violated their rights (*Or.* 40.20-22). The objectives for cities, as rulers of others, were the same as for the Emperor or provincial governor: behave mildly and considerately, without hostility and hatred, to elicit willing acceptance of one's leadership (*Or.* 34.47).

Relations with Rome

The third area of concern for city leaders was managing relations with the provincial governor and Emperor. Leaders acting as envoys and ambassadors were generally tasked

15 Similarly, approval was needed to change laws in particular areas, such as those governing prisons (*Ep.* 10.19), foundlings (10.65) or entrance requirements for provincial senates (10.79-80).

16 See Reynolds (1988). The provincial council served a variety of purposes, including communicating messages from the governor, proposing honors, and overseeing ceremonies and games tied to the imperial cult.

17 Reynolds (1988: 25). Competition among cities for these privileges was often intense.

with persuading Rome to make investments in the city, to grant immunity from taxes or to grant privileges that would enhance the influence and prosperity of the city.[18] The Emperor could also grant approval to hold games or religious festivals, as well as permission to establish temples or cults to the Emperor. Friendly relations had to be maintained with the provincial governor, procurators, and financial procurators if a city were to retain or enhance its privileges.

Pliny and Dio address the dynamics of relations between cities and the Emperor from opposite sides. Pliny cites a city's dignity (*Ep*. 10.23) and absence of disturbances (*Ep.* 10.34.9)[19] as considerations in granting or refusing specific requests. Dio's *City Speeches*, in turn, emphasize the need for cities to cultivate a reputation as stable and well-disposed to Rome. For instance, Dio advises Tarsus not to acquire a name as a city that brings malicious prosecutions (*Or*. 34.9) and warns Prusa that no activities — and especially rioting or discord — go unnoticed by the proconsuls (*Or*. 46.14).

Maintaining Harmony Within and Between Cities

Efficient administration of cities and provinces, as well as constructive relations with Rome, required maintenance of public order and stability. A bad reputation as an oppressive and unruly city or a disorderly province could result not only in a denial of new privileges, but also the direct intervention of Rome and loss of independence. For this reason, a common theme in Dio's *City Orations* (especially *Or.* 34-51) is the importance of dispelling discord within a city and between cities.[20] In *Orations* 44-46, Dio addresses harmonious relations within a city: between wealthy citizens and the council, between the council and the people, and amongst the people themselves.[21] The importance of concord between cities is highlighted in *Orations* 34 and 38, where Dio states that rivalry with other cities diminishes

18 Dio addresses diplomacy in *Or.*45 and 46, where he describes his embassy to Trajan — when he won assize courts for Prusa — and in *Or.* 47.12-19, where he discusses suspicions that can arise from cozy relations with Rome.

19 For instance, Nicomedia's request for the fire department, mentioned above, was rejected because such departments had been the source of political disturbances in the past (*Ep*. 10.34.9).

20 Pragmatic advice is prominent in *Oration* 34 (to Tarsus), 38 (to Nicomedia), 39 (to Nicaea), 40 (to Prusa), 41 (to Apameia), and 44-51 (to Prusa).

21 *Or.* 44 discusses how internal concord can help Prusa earn status as an independent city, while *Or.* 46 advises Prusa to resolve the dispute about the markets by choosing new supervisors (wealthy men who have not performed liturgies) rather than rioting over the price of grain and drawing the attention of Rome (*Or*. 46.24).

the city's reputation with the Emperor (*Or*. 34.9-10; 38.33-34).[22] Tarsus is also advised to do nothing against cities resisting its authority since even false charges could give it the reputation of being 'odious and oppressive' (ἐπαχθῆ καὶ βαρεῖαν; *Or*. 34.10-15). Prusa, in turn, is told not to be 'too precise in defending its rights' (σφόδρα ἀκριβῶς περιέχεσθαι τῶν δικαίων) against Apameia (*Or*. 40.20-22). As in the case of larger athletes competing against smaller men, rules are more strictly enforced against powerful cities (*Or*. 34.13). Tarsus is further instructed to be willing at times to concede and yield to the complaints of smaller cities and even occasionally to submit to wrong rather than leave quarrels unresolved (*Or*. 34.40-45).

Plutarch's *Precepts of Statecraft*: Attributes and Skills Needed by City Leaders

To perform their administrative and diplomatic roles, city leaders required a variety of practical skills, powers of persuasion, and good critical judgment about how to solve problems. While each magistracy called for specific skills and managerial insights (as reflected in the details of managing the water supply in Frontinus' *De Aquis*[23]), the city leader also had to be able to effectively work with many different groups: the people, colleagues, subordinates, opponents, leaders of other cities, imperial representatives, and the Emperor. The range of skills needed to be successful in leadership are discussed in Plutarch's *Precepts of Statecraft*,[24] which was addressed to Menemachus, a young man about to enter the political arena in a provincial city.[25] This essay details the actions Menemachus should take to prepare himself for a political career and the principles that should guide his conduct after he enters the arena. The principles and actions recommended are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Key Principles of Effective Leadership in *Precepts of Statecraft (Prae. ger. reip.)*

1. Cultivating moral character and reputation: 799a-801b

22 Dio further argues that rivalry between cities is harmful because a city then incurs costs without any real prize (*Or*. 34.48; 38.21, 26-31), while giving tyrannical power to the smaller cities at the center of the squabble (*Or*. 38.36-37, 50). Athens and Sparta exemplify how rivalry leads to ruin (*Or*. 34.49-51; 38.25; *Or*. 38.39-42).

23 Frontinus describes his motive for writing this work as a desire to help those who held the position after him avoid the disgrace of having to conduct his office according to the instructions of assistants (*De Aquis* 1.2).

24 On the purpose and content of *Precepts of Statecraft*, see Swain 1996: 161-183; De Blois 2004; Trapp 2004.

25 See Jones 1971: 110-111, 116-117 for details on Menemachus.

• Make a reasoned choice to enter public life; it can be dangerous (799a)
• Study character of the people and play to it until the you attain power (799b)
• Cultivate moral character and reduce vices as much as possible (800b)
• Live as if on an open stage – people are suspicious of leaders (800b-f)

2. Skills of persuasion: 801c-804c
   • After virtue is in order, work on persuasiveness of speech (801c)
   • Political oratory, much more than that in a court of law, admits maxims, historical and mythical tales and metaphors used sparingly and at right moment (803a)
   • Use derision and ridicule only for the right reasons and at the right moment (803c)
   • Keep speech nimble and use apt rejoinders (803f-804a)

3. Entrance into public life: 804d-806f
   • Quick and conspicuous riskier; Under mentor is slower and safer (804d-805b)
   • Options for quick entry are: lawsuits, embassies to Emperor, taking neglected problem or established evil practice or evil man in the city (805b)
   • Slow route – teaches man to rightly obey before he takes command (806f)

4. Managing friendships: 807a-809a
   • Choose friends who share your convictions (807d)
   • Be on guard not to share in wrongdoing of friends (807d-e)
   • Help friends only after public interests are served (808b-808c)
   • Share credit with friends (808d)
   • Reject inappropriate requests gently, not harshly (808d)

5. Managing enmities and rivalries: 809b-811a
   • Set aside enmities when outside city boundaries (809b-d)
   • Do not resent honors received by rivals (809e)
   • Mix praise with blame so that blame will appear justified (809f-810d)
   • Don't descend into abusive language, use effective retorts (810e-811a)

6. Accepting magistracies: 811b-812b
   • Perform any magistracies to highest standards (811b-811d)
   • Do not provoke envy or resentment by seeking office too often (811e-812b)

7. Sharing power with others: 812c-813d
   • Share power to reduce weight of hatred (812c)
   • Improve efficiency by uniting with others with complementary talents (812d-813a)
   • Employ "mock" disagreements and resolutions to engineer support (813b-813d)

8. Managing relations with the overlord: 813e-815f
   • Do not go beyond the degree of liberty in rhythms and meters permitted (813f)

- Have friend among the men of high station (814c)
- Make state obedient to overlord, but resolve internal disputes alone (814f–815c)
- Defend one's state to resolve disputes with overlord (815d–f)

9. Cooperating with colleagues and office holders: 816a–817f
    - Do not be disputatious with equals, envy superiors or despise inferiors (816b)
    - Conciliate superiors, honor equals, add prestige to inferiors (816b)
    - Share credit with others (816c)
    - Rule and be ruled; Obey those who hold offices (816d–817b)
    - Allow those in power to use (and take credit for) your best ideas (817d)
    - Continue to offer best ideas from orators' platform when out of office (817e)

10. Relations with the people: 818a–819d
    - Give way in small things so you can stubbornly resist in great matters (818a–b)
    - Do not redistribute property or distribute funds to appease the people (818c)
    - Use public funds moderately to release tensions or satisfy desires (818d–e)
    - Use indirect means to divert people from harmful to useful things (818f–819b)
    - In difficult matters, unite with other people with other talents (819b–d)

11. Discarding love of money and of honors: 819e–820f
    - Think of making money from public office like robbing sanctuaries (819e)
    - Do not pursue honors, refuse them if offered or accept very little (820b–c)

12. Cultivating goodwill through virtue and useful public spending: 821a–823e
    - Foster goodwill through your actions, not via spending (821a–f)
    - Spend money in beneficial ways, not as bribery (822a–b)
    - Do not spend money beyond your means (822d–822f)
    - Be affable, accessible, solicitous, live simply, share joys and griefs (823a–b)

13. Mediating between disputants and dispelling discord: 823f–825d
    - Converse with both parties and join neither (824b)
    - Prevent discord in advance (824c)
    - Intervene in quarrels among friends (824d)
    - Try to mollify both parties, explain virtue of ignoring wrongs (824e)
    - Instruct individually and collectively, note weakness of Greece, prizes trivial (824f)
    - Pay attention to both private and public quarrels (825a–d)

As shown in Table 1, cultivating one's moral character is only the first step on the road to effective leadership. Indeed, in the political arena, it is one's *reputation* for virtue that is

critical, while vices that cannot be eliminated should be reduced as much as possible (*Prae. ger. reip.* 800b). The bulk of *Precepts of Statecraft* is devoted to considerations and challenges of a more practical nature. The areas that receive extensive attention (and illustration in the *Parallel Lives*) include: developing skills of persuasion for interacting with the people (801c-804c); managing friendships (807a-809a), rivalries (809b-811a), and relations with colleagues (812c-813d); managing relations with the overlord (813e-815f); cooperating with colleagues and office holders (816a-817f); and controlling the people by engaging in give-and-take (818a-819d). Two themes are woven through these principles: leaders must know how to rule and be ruled, and must be skilled at mediating disputes and dispelling discord.[26]

Developing skills of persuasion with the populace involved two dimensions: first, using the style of speech likely to have the greatest impact (803a, 803c), and second, designing an appeal suited to the character of the people (799b) — broad principles that covered the need to use theatrics at times to win support.[27] Winning the approval of the people also required mastery of the art of give-and-take — indulging some desires through constructive and controlled spending, but standing firm against demands that would harm the state (818a-819d). However, steering policy in the city depended even more critically on a leader's ability to employ his friends to best effect (807a-809a), to outmaneuver rivals without harming the city (809b-811a), and to work with colleagues, superiors, and inferiors to generate goodwill and win them over to one's side (816b).[28] Plutarch's guidance on working with others would apply as well to a city's relations with other cities in the province. Finally, the principles for managing relations with the overlord are spelled out: make the state readily obedient to Roman authorities, hide internal disputes and then resolve them without calling in Rome, and maintain order to avoid attracting unwanted interference by Rome (813e-815f).[29]

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26 Leaders simultaneously ruled as administrators in their cities, but were also ruled as Roman subjects and citizens when out of office. A city may dominate ('rule') other cities or be subordinate ('ruled') within a province.
27 Such as living 'as if on an open stage' (ὥσπερ ἐν θεάτρῳ τὸ λοιπὸν ἀναπεπταμένῳ βιωσόμενος; 800b). Policy making can involve theatrics: leaders are advised to feign differences during debates and then feign newly-acquired agreement to deflate suspicion (813b-813d).
28 In this case, the leader was to conciliate superiors, honor equals and add prestige to inferiors (816b).
29 Plutarch also instructs Menemachus to avert envy by sharing power with others (808d; 812c-d), not seeking high office too often (811e-812b), and giving credit to others (816c). When out of office, he was to obey men in office (816f), offer his best ideas even though others would get the credit (817d), and to stay engaged (817e).

The contemporary resonance of Plutarch's subject matter in *Precepts of Statecraft* is evident in the overlap with topics covered by Dio in his *City Orations*, where he presents himself serving as an ambassador to the Emperor (*Or*. 45), as a man trying to calm internal unrest associated with bread riots (*Or*. 46), and as a man attempting to resolve squabbles between cities in his province (*Or*. 34, 40). Dio echoes Plutarch's principles about managing relations with the overlord when he explains that Prusa needs to resolve internal differences to avoid attracting the attention of Rome (*Or*. 46.14) and that cities competing for prizes granted by Rome are competing for prizes that are trivial (*Or*. 34.48, 38.21, 38.26–31). Moreover, when Dio counsels Apameia not to insist on avenging wrongs (*Or*. 40.20–22) or Tarsus not to challenge every burdensome action (*Or*. 34.9), he promotes the same principle as Plutarch when he suggests that disputing parties be told that those who ignore wrongs are superior to those who insist on winning (824e) and that the prizes fought over are trivial (824f).

While these correspondences reinforce the contemporary underpinnings of the issues raised in *Precepts of Statecraft*, Plutarch's essay served the broader purpose of creating cultural links between the challenges faced by leaders of his own day and those faced by leaders of the Greek and Roman past. To this end, Plutarch illustrates each of his precepts using incidents from the careers of Greek and Roman heroes from different cultural and political settings. For instance, he exemplifies the principles on managing friendships (807a–809a) with actions by Solon, Themistocles, Pericles, Phocion, Agesilaus, Epaminondas, Timoleon, and Cato Minor, thereby pulling exempla from Athens, Sparta, Thebes, Corinth, and Rome over a span of more than 500 years. This cultural connectivity was reinforced in the *Parallel Lives*, in which twenty-two of the exempla of *Precepts of Statecraft* are subjects of their own *Lives*, including Solon, Aristides, Cato Maior, Phocion, and Cato Minor, heroes of the *Lives* we examine below.[30]

Lessons for City Leaders in the *Parallel Lives*

The format of the *Parallel Lives* afforded Plutarch the opportunity to broaden and amplify the cultural connections between leaders of the present and past.[31] In place of the piecemeal

30 Each of these heroes appears as an exemplum multiple times in *Precepts of Statecraft*: Phocion (803b, 803e, 805f, 808a, 809a, 810d, 811a, 819a, 822e), Cato Maior (803c, 805f, 811a, 820b, 825e), Cato Minor (804c, 808e, 809d, 810c, 818d), Aristides (805f, 809b, 823e), and Solon (805f, 807e, 810d).
31 Stadter (2002b, 2015) describes the contemporary relevance of the *Lives* for leaders in provincial cities.

portraits of leaders through a series of isolated snapshots in *Precepts of Statecraft*, Plutarch was able, in the *Lives*, to create full-bodied characterizations of heroes that incorporated their moral character, motives, deliberations, and decisions, along with the consequences of their actions for the statesman and his state. In these multi-dimensional mirrors, readers could more readily identify with the heroes and recognize when to imitate or avoid their actions when confronting comparable situations in their careers as city leaders.

Solon-Publicola

In pairing Solon (c. 630- c. 560 BC) and Publicola (d. 503 BC), Plutarch joined two famous lawgivers who laid the foundation for the establishment of democracy in their cities. In *Precepts of Statecraft*, Solon was cited as a positive model of how to enter the public arena boldly (805e) and to avoid abusive speech toward rivals (810d), while he was a cautionary model of a man whose friends brought him into disrepute (807e).[32] Publicola, in contrast, is not mentioned. In *Solon-Publicola*, Plutarch presents paradigms of how to meet two major contemporary challenges discussed in *Precepts of Statecraft*: (1) how to attract the willing support of the populace (799b; 800b-f); and (2) how to design laws to promote harmony and prosperity in one's city (816a-817f). These challenges are examined from different perspectives in *Solon* and *Publicola*, providing a range of ideas on how to deal with them in contemporary contexts.[33]

Attracting Support through Virtue and Timely Theatrics

The ability to win the support of the people, especially when promoting policies that would contribute to harmony in one's city, is addressed from two perspectives in this pair. On the one hand, the principle that a statesman requires a reputation for moral integrity to win the trust and ready obedience of the people (*Prae. ger. reip.* 800b) is illustrated early in both *Lives*. Plutarch establishes Solon's reputation as a man of moral integrity by characterizing him as a lover of wisdom (*Sol*. 2.2) who conversed with the most famous wise men of his day (*Sol*. 3.5-6.3), and by further citing poems by Solon that express his disdain for wealth (*Sol*. 2.2-

32 The incident of Solon's friends taking advantage of the disburdenment is described at *Solon* 15.6-7.
33 For perspectives on Solon as a sage and adviser to rulers, see Stadter 2002a, 2015, 2002b, 2015; Hershbell 2008; Pelling 2004. De Blois (2008) compares Solon to Lycurgus. Desideri (2017) looks at Solon's travels.

3, 3.2) and love of justice (2.3, 3.4, 18.4). These qualities are said to have induced the Athenians to trust him in resolving the tensions between the rich and poor in Athens (*Sol.* 14.1). Publicola, in turn, is shown winning the confidence of the Roman people through his eloquence, which was always employed "with integrity and boldness in the service of justice" (ὧν τῷ μὲν ὀρθῶς καὶ μετὰ παρρησίας ἀεὶ χρώμενος ὑπὲρ τῶν δικαίων), and through his wealth, "with which he gave liberal and kindly aid to the poor and needy" (ἀφ' οὗ δὲ τοῖς δεομένοις ἐλευθερίως καὶ φιλανθρώπως ἐπαρκῶν, *Pub.* 1.2; trans. B. Perrin)[34]. His disdain for personal wealth was also displayed when he demolished his lavish house immediately upon learning that it offended the people (*Pub.* 10.1-3).[35] These qualities — combined with Publicola's accessibility (*Pub.* 4.4[36]) — induce the slave Vindicius to bring news of the Vitelli's conspiracy to Publicola, "attracted especially by the affable and kindly ways of the man" (μάλιστά τοῖς κοινοῖς καὶ φιλανθρώποις ἐπαχθεὶς τοῦ ἀνδρός, *Pub.* 4.4; trans. B. Perrin). Similarly, Plutarch later links Porsena's willingness to make peace with Rome to the confidence Porsena had in the virtue and nobility of Publicola (*Comp. Sol.-Pub.* 4.4). In these incidents, Solon and Publicola illustrate the benefits that can flow from the reputation for virtue and the cultivation of goodwill, showcasing actions that could be imitated by leaders in provincial cities of the imperial era.[37]

Plutarch also illustrates the pragmatic aspect of winning over the people by showing both heroes engaging in theatrics to win the support of the people at moments of crisis.[38] When Solon is unwilling to accept the Athenian withdrawal from the war for Salamis and is forbidden by law from proposing renewed efforts, he circumvents the law by feigning madness in the marketplace and reciting elegiac verses designed to spur renewal of the war (*Sol.* 8.1-3). Publicola, as consul, enhances his authority by adjusting how he handles the *fasces* in order to convey submissiveness to, and respect for, the people: he removed the axes

34 Unless otherwise noted, translations are my own.

35 Plutarch ties this incident to the precept that leaders must "have ears which are open to frankness and truth instead of flattery" (ἔχειν ὦτα παρρησίαν ἀντὶ κολακείας προσιέμενα καὶ λόγους ἀληθεῖς, ἔδειξεν, *Pub.* 10.3; trans. B. Perrin): Publicola acts after his friends tell him how offensive his house is to the people.

36 Plutarch further describes Publicola as a man who "was easily accessible to all needy, always kept open house and never refused to hear or help one of the lowly" (μὲν εὐπροσήγορος καὶ κοινὸς ὢν πελάσαι καὶ προσελθεῖν ἅπασιν, οἰκίαν τε παρέχων ἄκλειστον ὡς λιμένα φύξιμον ἀεὶ τοῖς χρῄζουσι) — an image of an ideal leader in *Prae. ger. reip.* (823a-b).

37 Stadter (2002b, 2015: 165-173) discusses the overlap of *Publicola* and Pliny's *Panegyricus* and the guidance for Trajan in the *Life*. Roskam (2014) discusses how Publicola models the qualities that produce an effective leader.

38 The role of theatrics is suggested indirectly in *Prae. ger. reip.* where the statesman is advised to accommodate the character of people to gain influence with them (799b) and to use speech that has greatest effect (803a).

from the rods and lowered them to the people as he entered (*Pub*. 10.5). Plutarch credits this action with deflating the envy of the people and raising Publicola's influence:

> ἐλάνθανε δὲ τούς πολλοὺς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν, ὡς ᾤοντο, ποιῶν ταπεινόν, ἀλλὰ τὸν φθόνον τῇ μετριότητι ταύτῃ καθαιρῶν καὶ κολούων, αὑτῷ δὲ προστιθεὶς τοσοῦτον μέγεθος δυνάμεως ὅσον ἀφαιρεῖν ἐδόκει τῆς ἐξουσίας, ὑποδυομένου μεθ᾽ ἡδονῆς αὐτῷ τοῦ δήμου καὶ φέροντος ἑκουσίως.
>
> And before the multitude were aware of it, he had succeeded--not by humbling himself, as they thought, but by checking and removing their envious feelings through such moderation on his part--in adding to his real influence over them just as much as he had seemed to take away from his authority, and the people submitted to him with pleasure and bore his yoke willingly (*Pub*. 10.6; trans. B. Perrin, adapted).

In both examples, Solon and Publicola select their actions based on the character and susceptibilities of their populace and achieve positive outcomes for their cities.

In creating these paradigms, Plutarch largely adhered to Aristotle's account of why Solon was acceptable to both sides as the person to solve the debt crisis (*Ath. Pol*. 5). The parallel depiction of Publicola's virtue inducing the slave Vindicius to approach him is a modification of Livy's account, in which Vindicius simply "lays the matter before the consuls" (*rem ad consules detulit*, Livy 2.4).[39] Plutarch's modification not only amplifies the power of virtue to help a leader secure trust in a crisis (as in Solon's case), but also to save his state from destruction. The account of Solon's feigned madness to renew the war for Salamis may trace to Solon's poems, while Publicola's lowering of the rods is consistent with Livy 2.8.

Adapt Policies to Circumstances to Promote Harmony and Prosperity

In his description of Solon's actions to solve the debt crisis and then create a new constitution (*Sol*. 13.1-16.3), Plutarch provides one of his most comprehensive treatments of the

39 Affortunati & Scardigli (1992) discuss a range of details in Publicola that depart from available sources.

dynamics of designing laws and policies to benefit one's city. After describing the source of the tensions (*Sol*. 13.1–3), Plutarch explains (1) why Solon was chosen to solve the debt crisis and write a new constitution (14.1–2); (2) the general considerations that influence Solon's decisions on laws (15.1–2); (3) details of the adjustments made to deal with debt, the first of his measures (15.3–5); (4) the response of both parties to the rules of disburdenment (16.1–3); and (5) a listing of major laws established by Solon (*Sol*. 17–24). Throughout this process, Solon is shown being ridiculed for resisting the suggestions of both parties that he become tyrant (*Sol*. 14.3–6); being disgraced by association when his friends take advantage of advance knowledge of the legislation (until he was the first to remit his own debts) (15.6–7); and facing the initial displeasure of both parties when his laws were revealed (16.1, 25.4–5). However, Solon is unfazed by the criticism and the Athenians ultimately see the benefits of the disburdenment and subsequently enlist him to reform other laws as well (16.3). [40]

While key elements of the intended lesson for leaders lie in Solon's steadiness in the face of criticism and the ultimate appreciation of the laws by the Athenians, Plutarch also emphasizes the pragmatic focus Solon adopted in devising his laws. In his discussion with Anacharsis (*Sol*. 5.3), Solon explains that "he was adapting his laws to the citizens" (τοὺς νόμους αὐτὸς οὕτως ἁρμόζεται τοῖς πολίταις) so that it would be clear to all that it was more advantageous to follow the laws than to break them. Similarly, regarding individual laws, Solon did not apply a general principle of justice, but rooted his decisions in practical considerations about what Athenians would accept:

> οὐ μὴν ἀπωσάμενός γε τὴν τυραννίδα τὸν πρᾳότατον ἐχρήσατο τρόπον τοῖς πράγμασιν, οὐδὲ μαλακῶς οὐδ᾽ ὑπείκων τοῖς δυναμένοις οὐδὲ πρὸς ἡδονὴν τῶν ἑλομένων ἔθετο τοὺς νόμους: ἀλλ᾽ ᾗ μὲν ἄριστον ἦν, οὐκ ἐπήγαγεν ἰατρείαν οὐδὲ καινοτομίαν, φοβηθεὶς μὴ συγχέας παντάπασι καὶ ταράξας τὴν πόλιν ἀσθενέστερος γένηται τοῦ καταστῆσαι πάλιν καὶ συναρμόσασθαι πρὸς τὸ ἄριστον: ἃ δὲ καὶ λέγων ἤλπιζε πειθομένοις καὶ προσάγων ἀνάγκην ὑπομένουσι χρήσασθαι, ταῦτ᾽ ἔπραττεν, ὥς φησιν αὐτός, "ὁμοῦ βίην τε καὶ δίκην συναρμόσας".
>
> However, though [Solon] rejected the tyranny, he did not administer affairs in the mildest manner, nor in the enactment of his laws did he show a feeble spirit,

40 On Solon's relations with the *demos*, see Pelling 2011.

> nor make concessions to the powerful, nor consult the pleasure of his electors. But, where a condition was as good as it could well be, he applied no remedy, and introduced no innovation, fearing lest, after utterly confusing and confounding the city, he should be too weak to establish it again and recompose it for the best. But those things wherein he hoped to find them open to persuasion or submissive to compulsion, these he did, "combining both force and justice together", as he says himself (*Sol.* 15.1; trans. B. Perrin, adapted).

Solon's approach to designing the best laws Athenians would accept ultimately gains the support of the people after they set aside their initial disappointment and see the advantages of his laws. By describing Solon's process of designing laws, Plutarch creates a paradigm for city leaders.

Plutarch shows Solon again "adapting his laws to the situation, rather than situation to the laws" (Σόλων δὲ τοῖς πράγμασι τοὺς νόμους μᾶλλον ἢ τὰ πράγματα τοῖς νόμοις προσαρμόζων, *Sol.* 22.3; trans. B. Perrin) by comparing the policies of Solon and Lycurgus regarding employment — another area of concern to his readers (as reflected in Dio's *Orations* 7 and 35). Because of the limited opportunities for employment for Athens' rapidly growing population, Solon enacted laws that promoted employment in trades and manufacture: he not only compelled fathers to teach their sons a trade, but ordered the council of the Areopagus to examine every man's means of livelihood and chastise those who had no occupation (*Sol.* 22.1-3). Plutarch contrasts this reform to that of Lycurgus in Sparta, where the large population of helots made it possible — and advantageous — to allocate labor in agriculture and crafts to the helots and allow citizens to focus on military skills (*Sol.* 22.3). By contrast, in Athens the land barely provided a living to those who tilled it and could not support the city's entire population.[41]

In the paired *Life*, Plutarch provides only a brief account of Publicola's deliberations as a lawgiver, devoting only two chapters to his laws (*Pub.* 11-12). First, Publicola is said to have acted quickly, before a second consul was named, to enact his most important measures, which he feared might be opposed because of envy or ignorance (*Pub.* 11.1). These included, among others, actions to (1) re-fill the senate for full membership; (2) relieve the poor by

41 Plutarch reinforces the importance of designing laws suitable to local conditions by comparing the reforms of Solon and Lycurgus, explaining that Lycurgus' equality was not possible in Athens because Solon lacked the authority of Lycurgus to impose it (*Sol.* 16.1-2). See also Pelling 2010: 229 and Jacobs 2020: 229-230.

lifting taxes; (3) reduce the penalty for disobeying consuls; and (4) place public funds in a public treasury under two quaestors (*Pub.* 11.2-12.2). The new tax law provides another perspective on policies that can stimulate prosperity: Publicola believed that after he lifted taxes the citizens would engage more energetically in manufacturing and commerce (*Pub.* 11.3).

In creating these paradigms for managing economic affairs, Plutarch departed from the historical accounts in Aristotle and Livy. While Plutarch's description of Solon ignoring the criticism and focusing on the best possible laws is consistent with Aristotle's account (*Ath. Pol.* 6-12), Solon's laws concerning employment are not reported in Aristotle and must therefore come from a source that has not survived or have been added by Plutarch. Similarly, Publicola's law relieving the tax burden on the poor as means of stimulating trades is not reported in Livy. The lack of mention of these initiatives in existing sources suggests that Plutarch purposely inserted these measures to amplify the contemporary resonance of policy measures enacted by the heroes in the pair. Again, the actions taken to stimulate prosperity were designed to suit the different circumstances in the two cities.

Aristides-Cato Maior

In *Aristides-Cato Maior*, Plutarch paired statesmen who played similar roles in cities at different stages of their rise to power. As Plutarch notes in the syncrisis (*Comp. Arist.-Cat. Mai.* 1.2-3), Aristides (530-468 BC) was active as Athens was just beginning its rise to power, while Cato Maior (234-149 BC) was active as the Roman Republic was reaching its zenith and had many powerful and well-established families active in the political arena. Both heroes were cited in *Precepts of Statecraft*, where Aristides models the proper management of rivalry (with Themistocles, 809b) and the qualities of a true leader (823e). Cato Maior, in turn, is a positive exemplum of willingly performing any public service (811b) and disdaining public honors (820b) but a deterrent model of inappropriately using ridicule in public speeches (803c).[42] Plutarch used the careers of these two men from different eras and cultural milieux to explore two key areas of concern for city leaders: (1) managing rivalries

42 Both Aristides (under Cleisthenes) and Cato Maior (under Fabius Maximus) model the slow entry into public life (805f), while Cato is also cited for believing problems should be solved when small (825e).

and (2) managing relations with allied cities to achieve common goals.[43] The destructive and complex nature of rivalry is treated extensively in *Precepts of Statecraft* (809b–811a) and is a recurring theme throughout the *Lives*. Within the context of provincial cities, these *Lives* provide insight into how to achieve harmonious (and mutually beneficial) relations within one's city and among cities in a province.

Managing Rivalries

A long-lasting rivalry with one other statesman is woven through both *Lives*: Aristides' rivalry with Themistocles, and Cato's with Scipio Africanus. Given the long careers of both heroes, Plutarch can examine rivalry from many perspectives and provide a variety of lessons for city leaders. In *Aristides*, Themistocles (524–460 BC) is introduced in the second chapter (*Arist*. 2.1) as a champion of the people opposing Aristides, who, in contrast, advocates an aristocratic form of government and admires Lycurgus (*Arist*. 2.1). In *Cato Maior*, the rivalry with Scipio Africanus (235–183 BC) is first mentioned at *Cat. Mai.* 3.5, where Cato's opposition to Scipio is linked to Scipio's rivalry with (and envy of) Fabius Maximus, Cato's mentor.

The dynamics of the rivalry between Aristides and Themistocles is on full display in the first half of *Aristides*. First, because of Themistocles' reckless agitation in the assembly, Aristides felt compelled to constantly oppose Themistocles, partly to defend himself and partly to slow Themistocles' rise (*Arist*. 3.1). The harm caused by habitual opposition is shown when Aristides finds himself opposing beneficial measures, or promoting harmful ones, simply to counter Themistocles.[44] Aristides acts to minimize this negative effect[45]:

> πολλάκις δὲ καὶ δι᾽ ἑτέρων εἰσέφερε τὰς γνώμας, ὡς μὴ φιλονεικίᾳ τῇ πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ Θεμιστοκλῆς ἐμπόδιος εἴη τῷ συμφέροντι.

43 Poverty and justice are also prominent issues in scholarship on this pair. See Pelling 1990, 2002; Stadter 1997, 2015; Martin 2011: 148–149; Roskam 2014: 517–518. On links to Platonism, see Nerdahl 2020.

44 To emphasizes the destructive force of rivalry, Plutarch includes an indirect statement by Aristides that "there was no safety for the Athenian state unless they threw both Themistocles and himself on the death pit" (ὡς οὐκ ἔστι σωτηρία τοῖς Ἀθηναίων πράγμασιν, εἰ μὴ καὶ Θεμιστοκλέα καὶ αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ βάραθρον ἐμβάλοιεν, *Arist*. 3.2; trans. B. Perrin).

45 The introduction of one man's proposal by someone more acceptable to win support is seen in *Prae. ger. reip.* 801c.

> And he would often introduce his measure through other men so that Themistocles would not be driven by the spirit of rivalry with him to oppose what was expedient for the state (*Arist.* 3.3; trans. B. Perrin, adapted).

The potential risks to Athens of this rivalry are finally eliminated before Salamis, when Aristides, having been ostracized at the instigation of Themistocles (*Arist.* 7.1-6), returns and provides information on the enemy and supports Themistocles in the decision to wage battle (*Arist.* 8.1).[46] Plutarch comments that while Themistocles was general with sole powers, Aristides assisted him in every undertaking even though by doing so he thereby "for the sake of the general safety, made his primary foe the most famous of men" (ἐνδοξότατον ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ κοινῇ ποιῶν τὸν ἔχθιστον, *Arist.* 8.1; trans. B. Perrin, adapted)[47] — illustrating the precept at *Prae. ger. reip.* 817d that a statesman should always put his best ideas at the disposal of those in power, even though they will receive the credit as benefactors of the community.

Plutarch amplifies the importance of eliminating rivalry by reporting two comments in direct speech by Aristides (*Arist.* 8.3-4) and Themistocles (8.5) that succinctly express the lesson for statesmen. On the one hand, Aristides gives the reasons to end this rivalry:

> εἶπεν, 'ὦ Θεμιστόκλεις, εἰ σωφρονοῦμεν, ἤδη τὴν κενὴν καὶ μειρακιώδη στάσιν ἀφέντες ἀρξώμεθα σωτηρίου καὶ καλῆς φιλονεικίας πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἁμιλλώμενοι σῶσαι τὴν Ἑλλάδα, σὺ μὲν ἄρχων καὶ στρατηγῶν...
>
> Themistocles, if we are wise, we will at last lay aside our vain and childish contentiousness, and begin a constructive and honorable rivalry with one another in competitive emulous struggles to save Hellas, you as commanding general and I as assistant counsellor... (*Arist.* 8.3; trans. B. Perrin, adapted).

Themistocles, in turn, reveals that he is immediately ready to engage in this honorable rivalry when he replies, "I will try to emulate your fair beginning and surpass you in my actions" (πειράσομαι δὲ πρὸς καλὴν ἀρχὴν ἁμιλλώμενος ὑπερβάλλεσθαι τοῖς ἔργοις, *Arist.*

46 The theatrics of Themistocles and Aristides to get the motion accepted, by convincing people it is public advantage and not pre-arrangement that motivates the discussion, is a strategy described at *Prae. ger. reip.* 813b.
47 Subsequently, Aristides repeatedly advises Themistocles and induces him to change course (at 9.3 he talks him out of the idea of capturing Asia in Europe; at 22.2, he argues against burning the naval station of the Hellenes).

8.5; trans. B. Perrin, adapted).[48] This exchange emphatically highlights the need for statesmen to set aside destructive forms of rivalry (*Prae. ger. reip.* 809e-f).

The contrary paradigm of unrelenting rivalry is found in *Cato Maior*, where Cato never abates in his rivalry with Scipio and, unlike Aristides, is the primary attacker (akin to Themistocles). As Scipio's quaestor in Sicily, Cato denounces Scipio's spending and spurs the Senate to investigate (*Cat. Mai.* 3.5-8). Later, he attempts unsuccessfully to convict Scipio on a capital charge (*Cat. Mai.* 15.2). Cato's animosity, moreover, overflows onto Scipio's family when Cato joins the effort against Scipio's brother Lucius and has him condemned to a large fine (15.3). As Censor, Cato had Lucius expelled from the equestrian order — an action that earns him the censure of the Romans, who believed he was trying to insult the memory of Scipio Africanus (*Cat. Mai.* 18.1). Thus, far from setting aside his rivalry while still sharing the stage with his rival, as Aristides did, Cato transfers his animosity to Scipio's family after Scipio has died. The criticism of Cato's conduct makes Cato a deterrent model in this area.

The importance of controlling rivalry as a lesson for leaders is revealed both in Plutarch's modification of Herodotus' account of Themistocles' speech to Aristides at Salamis and in the syncrisis. The comment by Themistocles "I will try to emulate your fair beginning and surpass you in my actions" (*Arist.* 8.5) is absent from Herodotus' account (Herod. 8.79-81), where Themistocles simply describes his planned strategy. Plutarch's insertion amplifies the broader implications of setting destructive rivalry aside if it is replaced by the beneficial form of rivalry. This aversion to destructive rivalry is reinforced in the syncrisis, where Plutarch credits Aristides with saving Athens by ending his rivalry and assisting Themistocles, "while Cato, by his opposition to Scipio, nearly ruined that wonderful campaign of his against the Carthaginians, in which he overthrew the invincible Hannibal" (Κάτων δ᾽ ἀντιπράττων Σκηπίωνι μικροῦ μὲν ἀνέτρεψε καὶ διελυμήνατο τὴν ἐπὶ Καρχηδονίους αὐτοῦ στρατηγίαν, ἐν ᾗ τὸν ἀήττητον Ἀννίβαν καθεῖλε, *Comp. Arist.-Cat. Mai.* 5.4; trans. B. Perrin, adapted).[49]

48 For additional perspective on this passage, see Frazier 2014: 495 and Stadter 2011, 2015: 281-282.
49 Cato's later insistence that Carthage be destroyed offers a different perspective on inter-city rivalry and the function of *metus hostilis* as a means of retaining control. See Pelling 1986, 2002: 224-225.

Managing relations with allies

Plutarch also uses this pair to illustrate how to work well with allies. Aristides, in his conduct before the battle of Marathon (*Arist.* 5), at Plataea (*Arist.* 12, 16, 20), and as envoy to the Greek allies after the victory (*Arist.* 23–24), models behaviour readers could emulate in conducting relations with colleagues in their own city and as representatives in relations with other cities in their province. Three key incidents at Marathon and Plataea portray Aristides working with a group of allies to achieve a common goal, while incidents in Asia display behavior that enables Aristides to win the ready cooperation of cities under Athens' authority. Plutarch designs this series of episodes to illustrate the principles of interaction that should guide all relations between ruler and ruled, whether between Emperor and subjects, provincial governor and Greek cities, or the primary Greek city and other cities in each province.

First, at Marathon, Aristides is shown handing his day of command over to Miltiades on the grounds that Miltiades' strategy is the best. Because Aristides' example induces the other generals to do the same, he is credited with 'turning the scale' (ῥοπήν) in favor of the Greeks (*Arist.* 5.2). The exemplary nature of this incident is underscored by Plutarch's authorial comment:

> ὡς περιῆλθεν εἰς αὐτὸν ἡ ἀρχή, παρέδωκε Μιλτιάδῃ, διδάσκων τοὺς συνάρχοντας, ὅτι τὸ πείθεσθαι καὶ ἀκολουθεῖν τοῖς εὖ φρονοῦσιν οὐκ αἰσχρόν, ἀλλὰ σεμνόν ἐστι καὶ σωτήριον. οὕτω δὲ πραΰνας τὴν φιλονεικίαν καὶ προτρεψάμενος αὐτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν μιᾷ γνώμῃ τῇ κρατίστῃ χρωμένους, ἔρρωσε τὸν Μιλτιάδην τῷ ἀπερισπάστῳ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἰσχυρὸν γενόμενον.
>
> [When Aristides turned over his command to Miltiades] he taught his fellow officers that to obey and follow men of wisdom is not disgraceful, but dignified and salutary. By thus appeasing the jealousy of his colleagues and inducing them to be cheerfully contented in the adoption of a single opinion (and that the best one), he confirmed Miltiades in the strength that comes from an unrestricted power (*Arist.* 5.2; trans. B. Perrin, adapted).

The general principle expressed in this passage echoes Plutarch's advice to be willing to share power and work efficiently with others in *Prae. ger. reip.* (812c–813a). In a second instance, at Plataea Aristides works with other generals to resolve a dispute by convincing them to

defer to the decision of an outside mediator, the Hellenes, who in this case decide to grant the meed of valor to the Plataeans (*Arist*. 20.1-3). A common element in these incidents is the willingness to cooperate and to forego glory to achieve a larger common goal.

Second, at Plataea, Aristides displays an ability to stifle the urge for dominance among allies. In his response to the argument between the Athenians and Tegeans over who should hold the left wing, Aristides emphasizes two points: that it is futile to argue amongst themselves when they have an enemy to conquer[50] and that what is important is to perform every function well. These sentiments illustrate the principles that leaders undermine the strength of the city when they are unwilling to occupy an inferior position (*Prae. ger. reip.* 815a); instead, they should enhance an inferior office and add to it the esteem and power derived from themselves (816a–817a). Another illustration of how to secure harmonious cooperation is found at *Arist*. 16, where Aristides convinces the Athenians to willingly follow the orders of Pausanias to change their position in line by reminding them that they should be happy to be fighting barbarian troops rather than other Hellenes. While Cato's *Life* includes no comparable management of an allied effort, it does include incidents that display Cato's tendency to self-praise and aggrandizement (*Cat. Mai.* 19.3–6) that puts Aristides' constructive conduct in sharper focus, as Plutarch notes in the syncrisis (*Comp. Arist.-Cat. Mai*. 5.2). As a group, the episodes depicting Aristides dispelling discord between his city and its allies provide an array of behaviors that could be imitated by leaders in provincial cities of his era.

Plutarch offers an additional perspective on working with allies in his account of Aristides' relations with the allied Greek cities — where Athens is the leading city rather than one among equals under Spartan leadership as at Plataea. The lessons for leaders lie in the process by which Athens displaced Sparta as the leader of the Greek cities:

> ἑώρα τόν τε Παυσανίαν καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἄρχοντας τῶν Σπαρτιατῶν ἐπαχθεῖς καὶ χαλεποὺς τοῖς συμμάχοις ὄντας, αὐτός τε πρᾴως καὶ φιλανθρώπως ὁμιλῶν καὶ τὸν Κίμωνα παρέχων εὐάρμοστον αὐτοῖς καὶ κοινὸν ἐν ταῖς στρατείαις

50 "We are come, not to quarrel with our allies, but to do battle with our foes; not to heap praises on our fathers, but to show ourselves brave men in the service of Hellas" (ἥκομεν γὰρ οὐ τοῖς συμμάχοις στασιάσοντες, ἀλλὰ μαχούμενοι τοῖς πολεμίοις, οὐδ᾽ ἐπαινεσόμενοι τοὺς πατέρας, ἀλλ᾽ αὑτοὺς ἄνδρας ἀγαθοὺς τῇ Ἑλλάδι παρέξοντες, *Arist.* 12.2; trans. B. Perrin).

> ἔλαθε τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων ... εὐγνωμοσύνῃ δὲ καὶ πολιτείᾳ τὴν ἡγεμονίαν παρελόμενος.
>
> When Aristides saw that Pausanias and the other Spartan commanders were offensive and severe to the allies, he made his own dealings with them gentle and humane, and induced Cimon to be on easy terms with them and to take an actual part in their campaigns. As a result, without the Spartans noticing … by means of tact and diplomacy Aristides had stripped them of the leadership (*Arist.* 23.1; trans. B. Perrin, adapted).

Plutarch ties Aristides' continued support from the allies to his fairness and equity in calculating the taxes: Aristides examined the resources available to each city and then set the assessments according to each member's worth and ability to pay (*Arist.* 24.1-2). Again, the lesson for leaders lies in the favorable reaction to this approach: the cities responded with grateful satisfaction and praise (*Arist.* 24.2-3).

Plutarch gives contemporary resonance to these events by modifying Herodotus' accounts of Marathon, Plataea, and Asia Minor. First, Herodotus makes no mention of Aristides at Marathon, where the tie-breaking vote that resulted in Miltiades' strategy being adopted was cast by the War Archon (8.109-110). Plutarch, by presenting Aristides as the catalyst, transforms this incident into a paradigm of how sharing power and letting others take the lead and claim the glory can serve the best interests of one's city. Similarly, the Athenian opposition to changing their position in the line is not in Herodotus, where instead the Athenians simply agree because they think this is a better plan (9.46). By presenting the Athenians as resisting until they consider that they will fight against barbarians rather than Hellenes, gives Plutarch a chance to interject his recurrent criticism of the destructive consequences of civil war among the Greeks.[51] This appeal had resonance in promoting peaceful relations among Greek cities in the Imperial era as a means of keeping Rome's intrusions to a minimum. Finally, the argument over the meed of valor is absent from Herodotus. By including this incident, Plutarch points to the beneficial role of arbitration by a third party as a means of resolving bitter disputes between allies.

51 The ruinous effects of civil war is a common theme, including in *Agesilaus-Pompey* (*Ages.* 15.1-3; *Pomp.* 70.1-4).

Phocion-Cato Minor

Phocion-Cato Minor touches more directly on the challenges faced by leaders in the provincial cities of the Roman Empire than Plutarch's other *Parallel Lives* because it addresses issues of relations between an overlord and subject cities. On the one hand, Phocion (402-318 BCE) serves as a leader of his city in freedom and as an ambassador to the overlord after Athens comes under the sway of Macedon (338 BCE).[52] On the other hand, Cato Minor (95-46 BCE) never held the consulship but, like many of Plutarch's readers, served in various administrative offices and participated in establishing policies for his city. In *Precepts of Statecraft*, Phocion is a positive model for, among other traits, keeping friendships and enmities within proper bounds (808a, 809d, 810d, 811a) and distracting the people from harmful demands (819a), while Cato Minor is cited for mixing praise and blame against opponents (810c) and judicious spending to appease the people (818e).[53] Both men enjoy a reputation for great virtue.[54] Plutarch takes advantage of the format of the *Lives* to illustrate additional principles of leadership articulated in *Precepts of Statecraft*, with Phocion providing multiple paradigms for how to deal with the Emperor and imperial authorities (*Prae. ger. reip.* 313e-316f) and Cato portraying techniques for setting the highest standards in performing administrative offices (quaestor, senator) similar to those held by leaders in cities in Imperial times (*Prae. ger. reip.* 811b-811d).[55]

Managing Relations with the Overlord

Plutarch designs his account of Phocion's interactions with the Macedonian Kings to illustrate precepts presented in *Precepts of Statecraft*, including the admonitions (1) to stay within the limits set by Rome (813e); (2) to show oneself and one's city blameless towards the rulers (814c); (3) to have friends in powerful positions (814c); and (4) to maintain harmony within one's city (823f-825a). Like Plutarch's contemporaries in provincial cities,

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52 Phocion is a mediator between Athens and Philip (d. 336 BCE), Alexander (d. 323 BCE), and Antipater (d. 319 BCE).
53 Phocion is also cited for his mastery of techniques of political oratory (803b; 803e), slow entry under Chabrias (805f), and confessing poverty (822e), while Cato Minor is a positive model for stamina in speaking (804c) and keeping rivalry in bounds (809d), but a deterrent model for acting too harshly towards friends (808e-f).
54 The *Phocion-Cato* pair have comparisons to Socrates as part of the backdrop. See Beck 2014.
55 *Phocion-Cato Minor* addresses a range of issues concerning the balance between personal ethical standards and the practical options open to city leaders. See Tritle 1988; Swain 1990: 197-199; Duff 1999: 131-160. Cato's suicide and associations with Socrates are also prominent themes. See Geiger 1999; Trapp 2007: 494-496; Zadorojnyi 2007; Beck 2014. For additional themes and lessons in this pair, see Jacobs 2017, 2018a, 2018b.

Phocion attempted to obtain as much autonomy as possible for his city on terms that were advantageous for its prosperity — issues routinely raised in Pliny's *Letters* and in Dio's *City Orations*.

Plutarch uses Phocion's interactions with Macedonian Kings to illustrate two practical skills essential to engaging constructively with the overlord: adapting one's behavior to the character of the overlord and balancing ideal objectives with practical constraints to obtain the best terms. First, in Plutarch's account of Phocion's interactions with Alexander (*Phoc.* 17.4–18.5) and Antipater (26.3–30.6), Phocion's success is tied to his ability to adapt his conduct to the moral character of each leader. In the one case, Phocion softened Alexander's attitude to Athens by saying many things that appealed to Alexander's nature and desires, and, as a result, Alexander received Phocion as a friend and listened to Phocion's appeals and advice (*Phoc.* 17.4–6). Nevertheless, Phocion set limits to this friendship when he repeatedly refused Alexander's gifts of money (*Phoc.* 18.1–2, 18.4, 18.5) on the grounds that he wanted to remain 'a man of honor and worth' (ἄνδρα καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν, 18.1–2). Ultimately, Phocion accepts the release of four prisoners in lieu of money. The issue raised here — of avoiding relations with the ruler that create suspicions among citizens — touches a theme also discussed by Dio (*Or.* 47.12–19).

In Antipater, Phocion faced a man with a more abrasive nature: Antipater showed 'a certain ruthlessness and hatred of goodness' (ἀγνωμοσύνῃ τινὶ καὶ μισαγαθίᾳ, *Phoc.* 27.2), was a 'more odious' (ἐπαχθέστερος) master, and was harder to appease when angry (*Phoc.* 29.2). In this case, Phocion was careful not to provoke him. For instance, Phocion did not resist Antipater's demand for a garrison — a demand that the philosopher Xenocrates strongly opposed as unworthy of free men (*Phoc.* 27.4–5). However, by acquiescing in the matter of the garrison, Phocion preserved a friendly rapport with Antipater and secured better terms in other matters, including more lenient terms for exiles (*Phoc.* 29.3) and a postponement in payments due from Athens (30.4). A similar pattern of establishing cordial relations with imperial envoys and then securing benefits for Athens is seen in Phocion's relations with Nicanor: when Nicanor takes over as the head of the garrison, Phocion by interviews (ἐντυγχάνων) and discussion (διαλεγόμενος) makes Nicanor mild (πρᾷον) and gracious (κεχαρισμένον) toward the city (*Phoc.* 31.2). The lesson for city leaders lay in demonstrating the role of compromise and give-and-take in dealing with an Emperor to secure the best possible outcomes for one's city.

Plutarch's desire to use Phocion to model how to engage with Emperors is reflected in his departure from accounts of Diodorus Siculus (16–18) and Nepos, neither of whom gives Phocion a prominent role in negotiations. In Diodorus, Demades is the envoy to Alexander and the Athenians negotiate with Antipater as a group, while in Nepos Phocion works in league with Demades to turn the city over to Antipater. By presenting Phocion as the lead ambassador in both instances, Plutarch could create paradigms for managing relations with the overlord.

Serving as a City Administrator

Cato Minor differs in significant ways from Phocion in his character and leadership. While both heroes were viewed as men of exceptional moral virtue, only Phocion demonstrates a capacity to balance moral considerations with expediency to produce positive outcomes for his city. In contrast, Cato Minor is portrayed as inflexible in his adherence to ethical considerations. Plutarch uses Cato's unwillingness to compromise his standards as the backdrop for lessons in how to perform duties tied to the administrative offices still held by Plutarch's readers. In these functions, an official had to serve as the ruler over subordinates while being ruled by the higher official in his city. In his depiction of Cato's preparation for and execution of his duties as quaestor and senator, Plutarch provides a role model for magistrates serving in provincial cities.

Plutarch's account of Cato's quaestorship (*Cat. Min.* 16–18) covers four stages: (1) Cato's preparation ahead of seeking the office; (2) his management of subordinates in office; (3) his relations with the senate and assembly; and (4) the response of the Romans to his performance. Plutarch describes how Cato prepared – by studying the laws and talking with men who had experience – and explains the reason: Cato wanted to be able to take charge immediately and not be dependent on subordinates when he took office:

> εἶτα νέους ἄρχοντας παραλαμβάνοντες δι᾽ ἀπειρίαν καὶ ἄγνοιαν ἀτεχνῶς διδασκάλων ἑτέρων καὶ παιδαγωγῶν δεομένους, οὐχ ὑφίεντο τῆς ἐξουσίας ἐκείνοις , ἀλλὰ ἦσαν ἄρχοντες αὐτοί
>
> When [the permanent staff in the treasury] received young magistrates who, because of their inexperience and ignorance, really needed others as instructors and tutors, they did not yield the authority of the office to those men, but were

> themselves the ones who held authority (*Cat. Min.* 16.2; trans. B. Perrin, adapted).

The considerations voiced here overlap Frontinus' motive for writing *De Aquis*: to help future water commissioners to not be dependent on instruction from subordinates (*De Aquis* 2.1-2).

Plutarch describes the results of this preparation in terms that would correspond to the experience of his readers. First, Cato was able to take charge of subordinates immediately and set the standards by which the department would operate — eliminating the corrupt practices that had become routine (*Cat. Min.* 17.2-3). He resisted efforts to misappropriate the funds under his control and thereby built up the resources available to the Roman people (*Cat. Min.* 18.1-2). Furthermore, he won the support of colleagues by taking any blame for his initiatives onto himself (*Cat. Min.* 18.2). Finally, his efficient and careful execution of the duties of his office won him the praise of his colleagues and the Roman people (*Cat. Min.* 18.3). By explaining Cato's experience of the quaestorship in this detail, Plutarch provided a role model for young leaders on how to approach the challenge of assuming an office for which they had no experience. Plutarch's intention to provide this paradigm is indicated by the absence of any detailed description of Cato's quaestorship in surviving sources, suggesting that Plutarch inserted this account to add instructive contemporary resonance.

Similarly, Plutarch presents Cato's general attitudes and actions as a senator in terms that could be imitated by senators of his own day. Cato's focus — as that of city leaders — was to preserve liberty (to the extent possible) in his city. To this end, Cato clears all business so he can attend all sessions of the Senate (*Cat. Min.* 19.1) and keeps track of all developments (decrees, trials, affairs) in the provinces through a network of connections (*Cat. Min.* 19.2). In this conduct, Cato exemplifies that life of a leader as described in *Precepts of Statecraft*:[56]

> οὐ μικρὸν ἡμέρας μέρος ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος ἢ τοῦ λογείου πολιτευόμενος... καὶ τὴν πολιτείαν βίον καὶ πρᾶξιν οὐκ ἀσχολίαν ὥσπερ οἱ πολλοὶ καὶ λειτουργίαν ἡγούμενος...

56 Cato's dedication illustrates the principle in *Whether an Old Man Should Engage in Public Affairs* 796f that the true statesman is one who even when out of office is always assisting in deliberations and keeping himself informed about public affairs.

> He spends no small part of the day engaged in the public business on the orators' platform … and regards public office as his life and his work, not, like most people, as an interruption to leisure and a compulsory expense… (*Prae. ger. reip.* 823b–c; trans. H.N. Fowler, adapted).

The effectiveness of Cato's application of these principles is reflected in his growing influence as a senator and as an advisor to men who attained the consulship, a post Cato never held.

Conclusion

The overlap between the *Lives* and the concerns highlighted in *Precepts of Statecraft*, Dio's *City Orations*, and Pliny's *Letters* indicates that Plutarch designed his paired *Lives* to produce cultural links between his contemporaries and the practices of the leaders in the free Greek city states and the Roman Republic. As shown in the analysis of the three sets of *Lives* discussed here, Plutarch made specific modifications to his source material to produce accounts of key incidents that would more closely parallel the challenges facing city leaders in his own day. By streamlining his *Lives* to amplify particular lessons that would resonate with contemporaries, and by including heroes from a variety of Greek states (including, across the *Parallel Lives*, heroes from Sparta, Syracuse, Corinth, Thebes, and Macedon) and across the pre-Imperial period, Plutarch presented his principles of effective leadership as a form of cultural practice rooted in the conduct of leaders of free states that now comprised the Roman Empire. By creating these cultural bridges, linking the principles of contemporary leadership to the practices of Greek and Roman statesmen of the pre-Imperial era, Plutarch positioned the local politics of provincial cities in his own day on a cultural continuum that extended into the far reaches of the past as well as into the future.

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