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Post-Coloniality in Plutarch's *Lives of Philopoemen and Titus Flamininus*

John Benjamin Martin

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Post-Coloniality in Plutarch's *Lives of Philopoemen and Titus Flamininus*

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Master of Arts

Plutarch's *Life of Philopoemen* and *Life of Titus Flamininus* are often overlooked in favor of Plutarch's more famous subjects. However, this biographical pair uniquely treats contemporary figures on opposing sides of the conflicts of the early 2nd century BCE: Philopoemen as the last great Greek general fighting for freedom, and Flamininus as the Roman general whose actions brought about Greece's subjugation to Rome. Reading these biographies through a post-colonial lens reveals Plutarch's internal resistance to the Roman subjugation. I argue that, although Plutarch does not outwardly denigrate the Roman conquest, he uses Flamininus and his flaws to criticize Rome's subjugation of Greece. He simultaneously shows a preference for Philopoemen and the cause of Greek freedom throughout both works. He not only praises Greece's former glory, but also condemns Rome's dominant position over Greece. Despite Plutarch predating the traditional subjects of post-colonialism, this act of literary resistance to the Roman occupation justifies a close reading of these texts through a post-colonial lens.

Keywords: Plutarch, Titus Quinctius Flamininus, Philopoemen, post-colonialism

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Introduction

As a Greek noble born in a Greece which had long been under Roman rule, Plutarch was in a uniquely complex situation. He was Greek by birth and upbringing, but he was a Roman citizen and, as a minor political official, he was expected to carry out the will of his Roman rulers. As Rebecca Preston has argued: “the Greek elite were in many ways the most Romanized of the population in the East. Yet, as the most educated and culturally proficient..., they could also be seen as the most Greek.”¹ Plutarch, like other Greek elites, was both the most and least Greek of his countrymen. This duality of Greek and Roman is shown throughout his *Parallel Lives*, particularly in his pairing of the *Life of Philopoemen* with the *Life of Titus Flamininus*. This pairing holds a unique position within the extant corpus of his works: it is the only pairing in which the subjects were contemporary to each other. Both lives discuss at length the events of the late 200s and early 190s BCE, specifically the wars in Greece leading up to Rome’s conquest of the Greeks. Philopoemen and Flamininus knew and interacted with each other. More than any of Plutarch’s other pairings, these men stood as polar opposites to one another: Philopoemen as the last great Greek general, and Flamininus as the Roman who brought Greece under Rome’s power. Within Plutarch’s works, these men act as personifications of their respective causes: Philopoemen represents Greece’s former glory and freedom, and Flamininus represents Rome’s conquest of Greece. The conflict between these Greek and Roman figures, and within Plutarch’s own life, establishes this pairing as a fertile ground for post-colonial analysis. In the *Life of Philopoemen* and the *Life of Flamininus*, we find a veiled resistance to Rome’s rule over Greece.

¹ Rebecca Preston, “Roman questions, Greek answers,” in *Being Greek Under Rome*, ed. Simon Goldhill, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 91.

Many scholars have written about Plutarch; however, little attention has been paid to these two lives and what they can reveal about their author.² Additionally, while Plutarch's opinion of Roman rule has occasionally been discussed in reference to his *Parallel Lives*, it has typically been dealt with only as a sub-point to other arguments. There is no common consensus among scholars: some claim that Plutarch's Greek lives remind his audience of Greece's former glory; others argue the opposite, claiming that the Greek lives are subservient to the Roman ones, meant only to elucidate themes in the Roman lives.³ His *Parallel Lives* are a comparison of Greek and Roman figures. Since Rome, by Plutarch's lifetime, had become the dominant political power throughout the Mediterranean, a post-colonial analysis of one of these pairs can reveal what Plutarch may have been implying about his own views on the relationship between these cultures. I argue that, although Plutarch does not overtly denigrate the Roman conquest, he uses Flamininus and his flaws to criticize Rome's subjugation of Greece, while simultaneously showing a preference for Philopoemen and the cause of Greek freedom throughout both works. He not only praises Greece's former glory, but also condemns Rome's dominance over Greece.

Why Post-colonialism?

The study of post-colonialism, from its inception, has dealt primarily with the effects of British and French colonialism from the 18th century onward. According to Edward Said, a colonial relationship between cultures is defined by knowledge and power. The imperialist nation has the political power to deny the subject nation's autonomy and has a "knowledge" of the subjugated people. But that "knowledge" is not necessarily accurate: it is the colonizer's

² See: C.P. Jones, *Plutarch and Rome*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 94-102; C.B.R. Pelling, "Plutarch's Adaptation of his Source-Material," in *Essays on Plutarch's Lives*, ed. Barbara Scardigli, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 125-154; Philip A. Stadter, *Plutarch and his Roman Readers*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 90-96, 278-285.

³ D.A. Russell, "On Reading Plutarch's *Lives*," in *Essays on Plutarch's Lives*, ed. Barbara Scardigli (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 125-154; Philip A. Stadter, *Plutarch and his Roman Readers*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 244-245.

perception of the colony, and it defines all interactions between them.⁴ Despite Said's focus on modern examples of colonialism, this concept of power and knowledge can be fruitfully applied to the relationship between Greece and Rome. Although Ania Loomba claims that European colonization holds a unique place within the history of colonization, in part because of its global reach and its economic exploitation, there are enough similarities between modern and ancient colonialism that post-colonial theory is relevant to the study of both.⁵ Roman imperialism did not have the quite global scope of British and French imperialism, yet at the height of its expansion, during Plutarch's lifetime, it still stretched from the British Isles to the Nile River, spanning numerous peoples and cultures. Additionally, while economic exploitation in Rome was not the capitalist exploitation of the modern era, Rome certainly benefited from and utilized the economies of their provinces. They pulled in resources from throughout the provinces in order to increase their own wealth.⁶ Despite the inevitable differences between ancient and modern colonialism, post-colonial theory is a useful tool in analyzing the effects of colonialism in any era, in particular by focusing not on the narrative told by the colonizer but on that of the colonized. In Plutarch's case, this approach will allow us to examine the narrative of someone who spent his entire life experiencing the effects of Roman imperialism.

The Nature of Rome's Colonialism in Greece

In modern examples of colonialism, one common characteristic is the cultural domination which accompanies the political domination. This is the chief difference between the Greco-

⁴ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 31-36.

⁵ Ania Loomba, *Colonialism-Postcolonialism*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 2-5.

⁶ One example of this economic exploitation can be seen in the Roman importation of purple dye made from *murex* shells in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, see: Natalie M. Susmann, "The Roman "Frantic Passion for Purple" (Pliny 9.66): A Geographic Analysis of the *Murex* Dye Industry from the Late Roman Republican Period to Late Empire," Order No. 1495511, Tufts University, 2011. For more on Rome's economic exploitation of the provinces and the poor, see: Neville Morley, "'The Emporium of the World': The Economic Impact of Empire," in *The Roman Empire: Roots of Imperialism*, (London; New York: Pluto Press, 2010), 70-101.

Roman relationship and the standard subjects of post-colonial study. As Martin Hose has shown, Greece's culture became the dominant cultural power even as Rome gained political control.⁷ Prior to their interaction with the Greeks, the Romans had very little in the way of literature. Eventually Greek authors came to Rome and started writing about Rome. Gradually the Romans started to make their own literature, but often they continued to emulate Greek style. This both mirrors and contrasts what took place in modern colonialism: "Literature develops during the colonial period in two different stages. First, it is dominated by people representing the center... Characteristic of their literary work is the identification with the center; it supports the idea of the center and the periphery. Subsequently there emerge people born in that country, or outsiders of the colonizing class... In their works they respect the rules of the literary discourse of the center- and implicitly strengthen them."⁸ This is how cultural domination progresses in modern examples of colonialism; the culture of the colonizer (or "center") is initially spread by the colonizers themselves, but over time it is adopted by the subjugated populace. While the Greco-Roman relationship does follow this same basic pattern of cultural domination, it does so in reverse: Greece was the cultural center instead of Rome in the early stages of interaction. Greek authors like Diocles of Peparethus and Polybius came to Rome and wrote Roman history in the early days of the interactions between their cultures. Plutarch states that Fabius Pictor, the earliest known Roman historiographer, consciously modeled his own historical writing after Diocles' work.⁹ Fabius Pictor even wrote his works in Greek, instead of his native Latin. Famously, during the Augustan age, Vergil directly drew material from Homer in order to write

⁷ Martin Hose, "Post-Colonial Theory and Greek Literature in Rome," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, Vol 40, no. 4 (2005), 303-326.

⁸ Hose, 308.

⁹ Plut. *Rom.* 3.1

the *Aeneid*. This trend was not limited to a handful of authors; it permeated much of Roman literature from the Middle Republic onward.¹⁰

Despite the influence of Greek literature, the othering¹¹ inherent in modern colonial relationships also existed within the Roman mindset. Throughout the history of interactions between Greece and Rome, there was some resistance to Greek thought among the Romans. One of the most prominent examples of this is Cato the Elder, who stood as a bulwark of *romanitas*¹² during the early 2nd century BCE. He was well-versed in the Greek language and in Greek literature.¹³ Nevertheless, he routinely denigrated Greeks and insisted on using an interpreter whenever speaking to Greeks, refusing to use their language in his discourse.¹⁴ He even went so far as to call for the expulsion of all Greeks from Italy;¹⁵ he also referred to all Greeks as “nequissimum et indocile genus / a most wretched and recalcitrant race.”¹⁶ This anti-Hellenism was not limited to Cato the Elder. Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso, in the early 1st century CE, criticized his contemporary Athenians as shadows of their former glory, censuring their treachery against Rome during the Roman civil wars and their own historical blunders which had ruined them.¹⁷ He viewed the Greeks as a fallen people who owed their allegiance to the Roman state. Juvenal, a Roman satirist contemporary with Plutarch, has his character Umbricius bemoan the moral

¹⁰ For a fuller discussion of the influence of Greek literature on Roman literature, see: E.J. Kenney, “Books and readers in the Roman world,” in *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, eds. P.E. Easterling and E.J. Kenney, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 5-10.

¹¹ Erich Gruen has defined Othering as, “the denigration, even demonization, of the ‘Other’ in order to declare superiority or to construct a contrasting national identity.” Erich Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 1.

¹² *Romanitas*, or “Roman-ness,” refers to the collective characteristics which make up the Roman conception of the ideal Roman.

¹³ Alan E. Astin, “Cato and the Greeks” in *Cato the Censor*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 157-168.

¹⁴ Albert Henrichs, “*Graecia Capta*: Roman Views of Greek Culture,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 97 (1995): 244-250; Plut. *Cat. Ma.*12.4-5

¹⁵ Plin. *Nat.* 7.113

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.14; note: all translations are my own. Astin, 169. For more on Cato’s anti-Hellenism, see: Erich Gruen, “Cato and Hellenism” in *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 52-83.

¹⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 2.55

decay of Rome by referring to it as a *Graecam urbem*, a Greek city.¹⁸ Greece was synonymous with corruption and immorality. This anti-Hellenism was certainly not universal,¹⁹ but it does not need to have been universal for this to be considered a colonial relationship. In colonial relationships it is the position of power and authority inherent in the interaction between cultures which matters most. This anti-Hellenism stemmed from a sense of Roman superiority which regarded the Greeks as foreign and inferior. But even those Romans who praised Greek culture and history played into the colonial relationship.

As discussed above, modern colonial relationships are defined by knowledge and power. In the case of Greece and Rome, Rome had a firm grasp on both aspects. Said, in discussing Orientalism in a speech by Arthur James Balfour, states, “knowledge to Balfour means surveying a civilization from its origins to its prime to its decline – and of course, it means *being able to do that*.”²⁰ This “knowledge” gives the colonial state power over the subjects, by providing a way to justify the subjugation. The colonial power uses this “knowledge” to compartmentalize and control the colonized people. Being able to see the decline of the colonized people allows the colonizer to view themselves as the “modern” heir to empire and the colonized nation as fallen. The height of Rome’s power came centuries after Greece’s decline, and so Rome could easily survey Greece’s origins, prime, and decline. In fact, the Roman love of Greek culture resulted in Greek literature becoming a pillar of the education of wealthy Romans. As such, “knowledge” of the Greeks became central to the Roman upper class. This “knowledge” of Greek society is what led certain Romans to feel justified in condemning contemporary Greeks. They could compartmentalize the Greeks, separating their contemporary Greeks from the cultural greatness

¹⁸ Juv. 3.60

¹⁹ David Shotter, “The Beginning of the End,” in *Nero Caesar Augustus: Emperor of Rome*, (Harlow: Pearson, 2008), 130-133.

²⁰ Said, 32.

of the 5th century BCE. They could look at the literature from Greece's golden age and judge these later Greeks to be inferior and immoral. The Greeks were a fallen people, one which ought to be ruled by the Romans. In tandem with this, those Romans who lauded Greek authors and sought to imitate them also contributed to the power which came from knowledge. Roman authors who emulated Greek authors established themselves essentially as the rightful successors to Greek literary prowess. It was the Romans, not the genetic descendants of classical Greek authors, who had taken up the mantle of literary greatness. Both Rome's denigration of contemporary Greeks and their praise of Greece's past augmented Rome's own position of authority over Greece. In the Roman mind, Greece had fallen, and Rome was the deserving heir.

Plutarch as a Colonial Subject

To understand why Plutarch's writing is particularly apt for a post-colonial reading, it is important to first examine Plutarch's life as a colonial subject. He was born in Chaeronea in 46 CE to a wealthy, aristocratic, Greek family.²¹ He grew up during the reigns of Claudius and Nero. He was educated in Athens in the Academy, becoming a skilled orator. And later, he became an adherent of Platonic philosophy.²² As part of his education he also spent time in both Smyrna and Alexandria. During these early travels, Plutarch likely became acquainted with the Second Sophistic movement, since Smyrna was the center of the movement.²³ He spent several decades of his life traveling throughout the Empire and visiting Rome itself as a part of unspecified political duties. His duties kept him so busy while there that, by his own admission, he never became comfortable with the Latin language.²⁴ It is likely during this period that

²¹ C.P. Jones, *Plutarch and Rome*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 8-9.

²² Jones, 13-14.

²³ Jones, 15.

²⁴ Plut. *Dem.* 2.2-4; Jones, 21. "ἐν δὲ Ῥώμῃ καὶ ταῖς περὶ τὴν Ἰταλίαν διατριβαῖς οὐ σχολῆς οὔσης γυμνάζεσθαι περὶ τὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν διάλεκτον ὑπὸ χρειῶν πολιτικῶν καὶ τῶν διὰ φιλοσοφίαν πλησιαζόντων. / but when I was in Rome and other places throughout Italy, there was no leisure to practice the Roman language because of my civic duties and my philosophy students." Plut. *Dem.* 2.2.

Plutarch received his Roman citizenship.²⁵ In the 90s CE, he retired to Chaeronea. Thereafter, he became one of the two permanent priests at Delphi.²⁶ The majority of his works were written after his return to Chaeronea. He died in roughly 120 CE.

The various aspects of his life make him an ideal subject for post-colonial study. He was a man of contradictions. He was born in Greece, wrote in Greek, and spent the last three decades of his life as a priest in one of the most important Greek shrines. Further, he was acquainted with the Second Sophistic movement, which lauded Greece's glory during the 5th Century BCE. It could be inferred from these aspects of his life that his works would have a strong affinity towards Greek nativism. On the other hand, his Roman citizenship and his lengthy tenure in various Roman offices muddy the water. His extensive involvement within the Roman political sphere indicates that he was not anti-Roman. Plutarch lived within the worlds of both the colonized and the colonizer. It is this position which establishes him as a colonial author. But it is the resistance to Rome within his writing which makes a post-colonial study of him fruitful.

Plutarch's Genre

Plutarch's approach to biography also lends itself well to a post-colonial reading. In his biographies, Plutarch is concerned more with the moral character of his subjects than with the purely historical retelling of events. This means that he often emphasizes certain events over others in order to illustrate the character of the figure. As Plutarch himself states:

οὔτε γὰρ ἱστορίας γράφομεν, ἀλλὰ βίους, οὔτε ταῖς ἐπιφανεστάταις πράξεσι πάντως ἔνεστι δῆλωσις ἀρετῆς ἢ κακίας, ἀλλὰ πρᾶγμα βραχὺ πολλάκις καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ παιδιὰ τις ἔμφασιν ἤθους ἐποίησε μᾶλλον ἢ μάχαι μυριόνεκροι καὶ παρατάξεις αἱ μέγισται καὶ πολιορκίαι πόλεων. / For I am not writing Histories, but Lives; there is not always a

²⁵ Jones, 22.

²⁶ Jones, 26.

manifestation of virtue or vice in the most remarkable deeds, but often some small matter or phrase or playful moment makes the character more clear than great battle lines and sieges of cities and battles where tens of thousands die.²⁷

Plutarch focuses on how he might best illustrate the moral character of each of his subjects, the good traits and the bad. By his own admission, his works are subjective rather than objective. He is evaluating these figures, creating an accounting of their moral value. Because Plutarch's biographies are explicitly subjective, they can be read as expressions of his own opinions. This becomes important when we consider his biographies of Philopoemen and Flamininus because he is evaluating not only two comparable figures from Greek and Roman history, but two opposing figures who represent Greece's freedom and subjugation, respectively.

Plutarch's moralizing agenda produces an analysis of the conquest of Greece which subtly shows his preference towards the side of Philopoemen and the freedom of the Greek world, while refraining from outright condemnation of Flamininus and Rome.

Philopoemen as Achilles

As we turn to the text of the *Life of Philopoemen*, we find Plutarch's resistance to Rome's "knowledge" of Greece. Plutarch does not deny that Greece is in a fallen state, but he uses the figure of Philopoemen to remind his Greek audience of their ancestor's former greatness.

Philopoemen is set up as a representation of the idealized embodiment of Greek virtue and nobility on the very first page. Plutarch draws a direct parallel between Philopoemen and the Greek mythic hero Achilles. These mythological allusions, both overt and implied, continue throughout Plutarch's descriptions of the Greek general, linking Philopoemen with one of the most well-known and important heroes in all of Greek mythology. Achilles epitomizes what it

²⁷ Plut. *Alex.* 1.2

meant to be a Greek epic hero.²⁸ By connecting these figures, Plutarch makes Philopoemen a symbol of Hellenic values. A symbol which is meant to remind his fellow Greeks of their culture's former greatness.

The first Homeric reference comes at the start of the *Life of Philopoemen*. It begins with a discussion of how Philopoemen was raised as a child. Cleander, after being exiled from his city, had been taken in by Philopoemen's father, Craugis. When Craugis died, Cleander decided to raise Philopoemen: “καθάπερ φησὶν Ὅμηρος ὑπὸ τοῦ Φοίνικος τὸν Ἀχιλλέα τραφεῖναι, γενναίαν τινὰ καὶ βασιλικὴν τοῦ ἦθους εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς πλάσιν καὶ αὐξήσιν λαμβάνοντος. / Just as Homer says that Achilles was raised by Phoenix, with the result that from the beginning the boy's character quickly took on a nobility and kingly training and growth.”²⁹ This analogy implies that in the same way that Achilles became kingly under the tutelage of Phoenix, Philopoemen also became kingly at the hands of Cleander. From the outset, the reader is made to think of these men as parallel figures. This connection becomes more compelling when you consider its contrived nature. Philopoemen was only raised by Cleander because his father was dead, whereas Peleus, Achilles' father, was alive and healthy throughout Achilles' childhood and into his adulthood. As an educated Greek aristocrat, Plutarch would have been well-acquainted with the stories of Achilles and Peleus. He would have known that the situations were quite different, but he chose to make the analogy anyway. This implies that instead of Plutarch simply pointing

²⁸ Beginning in the Archaic age with Homer and Pindar, Achilles is lauded as a great hero. He continued to be praised by the philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle. Although the Romans would later modify his image and critique his role as a hero, it is likely that Plutarch, having been educated in Greece, would have retained the earlier views. See: Susanne Gödde, 'Achilles', in *Brill's New Pauly Supplements I - Volume 4: The Reception of Myth and Mythology*. 1-14. For information on the importance of Homer during Plutarch's time, see: Froma I. Zeitlin, "Visions and Revisions of Homer," in *Being Greek Under Rome*, ed. Simon Goldhill, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 195-266.

²⁹ Plut. *Phil.* 1.2

out a similarity he noticed, he is purposefully linking Philopoemen with Achilles, and thereby linking him to the traits of nobility and kingliness as well.

Another Homeric analogy is drawn by Plutarch as Philopoemen trained and prepared the Achaean army. After being given command of the Achaean army, Philopoemen set out to train and equip his forces. Plutarch describes the Achaeans of this time as being caught up in lives of luxury. This does not make for good soldiers, and so Philopoemen channeled this extravagance into the armor and weapons of his men, prompting the creation of gilded breastplates and silvered shields, among other things.³⁰ The focus and care of the men was shifted onto their armaments, and this helped them to take pride in their soldiering. Plutarch then described how that beautifully crafted armor is a symbol of strength for an army, “ὡσπερ Ὅμηρος ἐποίησε τὸν Ἀχιλλέα τῶν καινῶν ὄπλων παρατεθέντων ἐγγυς ὑπὸ τῆς ὄψεως οἷον ὀργῶντα καὶ φλεγόμενον πρὸς τὴν δι’ αὐτῶν ἐνέργειαν. / Just as Homer described Achilles, when his new equipment was furnished for him, as becoming enraged by the sight of it and having a burning desire to use it.”³¹ While it is the army, not Philopoemen himself, being compared to Achilles, it still brings the idea of Homeric heroism into the discussion of Philopoemen’s acts. The armor and weaponry he had commissioned for his soldiers are likened to the divine armor made by Hephaestus, it inspired the men just as the god-made armor inspired Achilles. Were this analogy to be taken literally, it connects Philopoemen not only to the heroic imagery of Achilles, but to the divine imagery of Hephaestus (as the one who made the armor). Plutarch augments Philopoemen’s position as a great military leader by associating him with this moment from the *Iliad*. Philopoemen is set up as someone who inspires and is worthy of admiration.

³⁰ Ibid., 9.3-5

³¹ Ibid., 9.7

Both of these Homeric links place Philopoemen atop a pillar of Hellenic virtue by invoking the name of Achilles. But the Achilles association cuts both ways. Throughout the work, Plutarch demonstrates that Philopoemen also shared the excessive wrath which Achilles is known for. It is mentioned in two notable places, the first of which comes as Philopoemen sought to put the Spartans in check once and for all. After killing and enslaving many Spartans, and destroying their city walls, his final act was to remove the Lycurgan system. In this act, Plutarch describes Philopoemen as, “ἐμπιπλάμενος δὲ τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων / glutting his anger at the Lacedaemonians.”³² Additionally in the comparison at the end of the two lives, Plutarch writes that Philopoemen’s anger was his main flaw.³³ Although Plutarch does refer to it as a flaw, Philopoemen’s anger links him to Achilles even more closely. It cements the idea that Philopoemen was himself a great hero.

The link between Philopoemen and Achilles establishes Philopoemen as the very personification of the greatness of the distant Greek past, a greatness which Plutarch implies was lost following the Roman conquest. The Roman audience for these works would likely have seen this theme as a vindication of their own “knowledge” of the Greek decline. However, Plutarch is also reminding his Greek audience that they are descended from a great people. As we look at Plutarch’s other descriptions of Philopoemen, we can see more clearly that Plutarch is lamenting the moral decline which Greece has experienced, while simultaneously illustrating the virtues his fellow Greeks ought to emulate.

The Virtues of Philopoemen

In addition to the Achilles comparison, Plutarch routinely describes Philopoemen as the best Greek of his day and as someone who embodies many of their most important values. This

³² Ibid., 16.5

³³ Plut. *Comp. Phil. Flam.* 1.2

occurs throughout the text. For Plutarch's Greek audience, Philopoemen is a reminder of how a good Greek should act, something which Plutarch sees as forgotten by his contemporaries.

One such virtue is Philopoemen's austerity. During Plutarch's physical description, Philopoemen is depicted as being indifferent and simple in his dress: "ἐν τούτῳ δὲ τοῦ Φιλοποίμενος εἰσελθόντος χλαμύδιον εὐτελὲς ἔχοντος, οἰομένη τινὰ τῶν ὑπηρετῶν εἶναι καὶ πρόδρομον παρεκάλει τῆς διακονίας συνεφάσασθαι. / At that moment, because Philopoemen came up wearing a cheap, shabby cloak, the woman, thinking that he was one of his own servants sent on ahead, asked him to give her a hand with the chores."³⁴ Despite his position as the general of the Achaeans, he did not waste his money on his own appearance. Plutarch further praises his money handling while discussing how he makes his money outside of his military service. Philopoemen spent his time pursuing agriculture, which Plutarch refers to as "δικαιοτάτῳ τῶν χρηματισμῶν / the most just type of money-making."³⁵ He earned his money in an admirable way and spent it likewise. Plutarch ties this virtue to Greece's past by attributing it to Philopoemen's desire to emulate Epaminondas, the great Theban general.³⁶ According to Plutarch, one of Epaminondas' most notable virtues was his indifference to wealth. Epaminondas is only a generation earlier than Philopoemen, but it still demonstrates this trait as a return to the glory of Greece's past.

In addition to Philopoemen's indifference towards, and judicious management of, money, he is also shown to have been incorruptible. Perhaps the most important description of his incorruptibility comes after Philopoemen first brought the Spartans into the Achaean League. The restored exiles sought to thank him by sending a gift/bribe to him. He refused the bribe by

³⁴ Plut. *Phil.* 2.2

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.3

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.1

claiming that gifts should only be given to already corrupt men, not to noble men.³⁷ In response to this, Plutarch states that “ἐνθα δὴ καὶ διεφάνη καθαρῶς ἐκεῖνος ὁ ἀνὴρ οὐ δοκῶν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὄν ἄριστος. / Here, indeed, it was entirely clear that this man not only seemed to be, but truly was, an excellent man.”³⁸ He was a man worthy of praise and of emulation. His rejection of ostentation extended beyond a simple rejection of material wealth, but to a rejection of false appearances. He was not simply pretending to be a noble person; he truly was one.

Furthermore, Philopoemen is referred to three times as a figure who restored his contemporary Greece to a former grandeur. The first comes in the description of his education. Plutarch states that when Philopoemen was a child, “ταῖς τῶν παλαιῶν ἡγεμόνων ἐπιτεκοῦσα τοῦτον ἀρεταῖς. / Greece bore him to the virtues of her ancient commanders.”³⁹ In tandem with this, he cites an anonymous Roman who referred to Philopoemen as the “last of the Greeks.”⁴⁰ By including these mentions, Plutarch is implying that by the Hellenistic period, Greece had become a shadow of its former self. Philopoemen represented the nobility and greatness that had been lost. The final instance of this idea comes from the celebration of the Nemean Games in 205 BCE. During a performance of Timotheus’ *Persians*, the entire audience looked at Philopoemen and applauded him when one of the performers uttered a line about Greek freedom: “τῶν Ἑλλήνων τὸ παλαιὸν ἀξίωμα ταῖς ἐλπίσιν ἀναλαμβάνόντων καὶ τοῦ τότε φρονήματος ἔγγιστα τῷ θαρρεῖν γινομένων. / then the Greeks hoped for their ancient honor and they thought that they were nearest to their [ancient] courage.”⁴¹ To his contemporaries, Philopoemen represented not only the former glory of Greece, but the promise of its return in the near future.

³⁷ Ibid., 15.6

³⁸ Ibid., 15.4

³⁹ Ibid., 1.4

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 11.3

However, by adding the quote from the anonymous Roman, Plutarch is asserting that the hope was in vain: there would be no more greatness in Greece after Rome's conquest. He agrees with the Roman view of the Greeks as a fallen people. Yet the virtuous traits he attributes to Philopoemen are in direct opposition to the flaws claimed by the anti-Hellenists. They see Greece as immoral and corrupt; Plutarch details Philopoemen's judiciousness and incorruptibility. He acts as a reminder that Greece had not always been in a fallen state.

Feigned Praises for Flamininus

In connection with Plutarch's subversion of Rome's "knowledge" of Greece through Philopoemen's virtues, Plutarch uses Flamininus to subvert Rome's position of power over Greece. Flamininus acts as a symbol for the Roman subjugation of Greece as a whole. Throughout the *Life of Titus Flamininus*, Plutarch gives apparent praise to Flamininus' virtues, but he undercuts these by hinting at flaws which became more noticeable as Flamininus ages. As we will discuss later, by Flamininus' old age, he will have left behind almost all of the virtues which were praised in his youth. He was consumed by ambition, and it ultimately destroyed him. Plutarch uses Flamininus' character arc to mirror Rome's involvement in Greece: something which seems good and benevolent at first, but over time shows its true colors as an act motivated by self-serving ambition.

Ambition

The dominant character trait of Titus Flamininus throughout the biography is his ambition. Ambition drove all his actions in both Greece and Italy. Ambition by itself is neither positive or negative, its moral value is dependent on how it is used. Buszard has shown through his analysis of the *Alexander-Caesar* and *Pyrrhus-Marius* pairings that Plutarch sees ambition as a virtue only when it is governed by self-control and education (*paideia*). When ambition is not

restrained through philosophical virtues, it becomes a vice and brings about the downfall of the figure.⁴² Buszard illustrates that the ambition of Alexander is portrayed in a positive light by Plutarch because of Alexander's philosophical education and his adherence to those philosophical principles. In contrast, Plutarch criticizes Caesar's ambition frequently, owing to Caesar's lack of philosophical training.⁴³ This same theme can be seen in *Philopoemen-Flamininus* as well. Both men had ambition, but Philopoemen's is couched in terms of his desire to emulate figures from Greek literature: “ἠκροᾶτο δὲ λόγων καὶ συγγράμμασι φιλοσόφων ἐνετύγχανεν, οὐ πᾶσιν, ἀλλ’ ἀφ’ ὧν ἐδόκει πρὸς ἀρετὴν ὠφελεῖσθαι. καὶ τῶν Ὀμηρικῶν ὅσα τὰς πρὸς ἀνδρείαν ἐγείρειν καὶ παροξύνειν ἐνόμιζε φαντασίας, τούτοις προσεῖχε / he hearkened to the speeches and read the writings of philosophers, not all of them, but from those who he thought would help him gain virtue. And of Homer's works, he applied himself to those parts which he thought raised you to courage and enlarged your soul.”⁴⁴ Philopoemen had received a proper Greek education and used it to seek after virtue. Additionally, this further supports Philopoemen's connection to Achilles, as he was consciously looking at Homer for figures to emulate. In contrast to Philopoemen, we get no such description of education for Flamininus. Plutarch only says: “Παιδευθεὶς δὲ παιδείαν τὴν διὰ τῶν ἐθῶν τῶν στρατιωτικῶν / he was educated in the arts of soldiery.”⁴⁵ There is no reference to a study of philosophy or great literature. Thus, Flamininus' ambition is criticized by Plutarch as his greatest character flaw, and it is ultimately what destroyed him.

⁴² Bradley Buszard, "Caesar's Ambition: A Combined Reading of Plutarch's "Alexander-Caesar" and "Pyrrhus-Marius?"" *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974-2014)*, 138, no. 1 (2008): 185-215. For more on Plutarch's opinions on ambition, see: Geert Roskam, "Ambition and Love of Fame in Plutarch's *Lives of Agis, Cleomenes, and The Gracchi*" *Classical Philology* 106, no. 3 (2011): 208-25.

⁴³ Buszard, 188-199. Buszard does not claim that Caesar did not study Greek culture, but that Plutarch emphasizes only Caesar's education in literature such as the *Iliad*. Caesar did not have the same knowledge of philosophy that Alexander, as a pupil of Aristotle, had.

⁴⁴ Plut. *Phil.* 4.3-4

⁴⁵ Plut. *Flam.* 1.3

The first explicit mention of Flaminius' ambition shows up during his rise to prominence within the Roman government: “Τοῦτο δὲ αὐτὸν ἐπῆρε μάλιστα τὰς διὰ μέσου καὶ συνήθεις τοῖς νέοις ἀρχὰς ὑπερβάντα, δημαρχίαν καὶ στρατηγίαν καὶ ἀγορανομίαν, εὐθὺς αὐτὸν ὑπατείας ἀξιούν· / This (success in the 2nd Punic War) especially stirred him up so that he stepped over the typical intervening offices for young men, the offices of tribune, praetor, and aedile, and he thought that he was worthy of the consulship immediately.”⁴⁶ This was unusual among the Roman elite. It was typical for an aspiring Roman male to go in sequence through the offices, a sequence known as the *cursus honorum*. It was very uncommon for someone to bypass this, but Flaminius attempts it, and ultimately succeeds. According to Plutarch's account, two contemporary Roman tribunes were appalled by Flaminius' excessive ambition: “δεινὸν εἶναι λεγόντων ἄνδρα νέον εἰς τὴν μεγίστην ἀρχὴν εἰσβιάζεσθαι παρὰ τοὺς νόμους / they said that it was a terrible thing for a young man to force his way to the highest office, in violation of the laws.”⁴⁷ His ambition caused him to transgress proper societal behavior. It drove him to an act of hubris, seeking an office beyond what was acceptable. Despite the opposition, Flaminius was elected consul because he won over the favor of the people of Rome. His popularity with the people is another recurrent theme throughout the biography. His charisma may seem to be a positive trait, but Plutarch taints it by linking it to Flaminius' ambition and hubris. Plutarch does not outwardly give his opinion on this episode. Nevertheless, by providing, and not discounting, the complaints from the Roman tribunes, Plutarch is able to subtly show this ambition as a flaw, without having to criticize Flaminius in his own words.

After Flaminius had been waging war against Philip V of Macedon for a time, he put Philip to flight. During this flight, Philip began to lay waste to the countryside (the countryside

⁴⁶ Ibid., 2.1

⁴⁷ Ibid.

of his own allies). Flamininus interpreted these events as if Philip were “τρόπον τινὰ τῆς χώρας ἐξιστάμενος ἤδη Ῥωμαίοις / already giving up claim, in a way, on the land to the Romans.”⁴⁸ In traditional warfare, this would be an innocuous statement: the defeated army gives up land to the victorious force. However, Flamininus’ purported goal was the freedom of Greece.⁴⁹ Plutarch makes it clear in the following lines that Flamininus had more than just Greek freedom in mind: “ἐφιλοτιμεῖτο καὶ παρεκάλει τοὺς στρατιώτας ὥσπερ οἰκειίας καὶ παρακεχωρημένης κηδομένους βαδίζειν / [Titus] was ambitious and ordered his soldiers to go forward treating the land as if it were their own, since it had been ceded to them.”⁵⁰ His defeat of the tyrant Philip V is a commendable achievement, but his accomplishment is again soured by his ambition. It caused him to view lands, which ought to be free, as already subjugated to Rome. Although Plutarch does not say that Flamininus’ true goal was conquest, he plants the suggestion in this passage.

If he is viewed as a representation of Rome’s eventual conquest of Greece, Flamininus’ ambition implies that Rome’s intent during the early interactions with Greece was not one of altruism, but one of conquest. By undercutting Flamininus’ ambition, Plutarch begins to erode the foundation of Rome’s position of power. He is planting the idea that Rome’s subjugation of Greece was self-serving from the very beginning.

Greek Freedom

In 196 BCE, during the Isthmian Games at Corinth, Flamininus announced that the Greeks were free. This was met with thunderous applause by the Greeks in attendance. The reaction was so loud that Plutarch claims that it knocked birds out of the sky who happened to fly

⁴⁸ Ibid., 5.2

⁴⁹ “ἐφ’ οἷς ἀχθόμενος ὁ Τίτος καὶ βαρέως φέρων, καὶ δεόμενος τοῦ συνεδρίου, τέλος ἐξέπεισε καὶ ταύτας τὰς πόλεις ἀνεῖναι τῆς φρουρᾶς, ὅπως ὀλόκληρος ἡ χάρις ὑπάρξῃ παρ’ αὐτοῦ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν. Titus was grieved by these things, and after asking the council, he at last persuaded them to release these cities from the garrisons, in order that his benefaction to the Greeks might be universal,” Ibid., 10.2

⁵⁰ Ibid., 5.2

overhead.⁵¹ The Greeks at the time recognized that “πάσας τὰς μάχας ἢ Ἑλλάς ἐπὶ δουλείᾳ μεμάχεται πρὸς αὐτήν, καὶ πᾶν τρόπαιον αὐτῆς συμφορὰ καὶ ὄνειδος ἐπ’ αὐτὴν ἔστηκε... οὗτοι τοῖς μεγίστοις κινδύνοις καὶ πόνοις ἐξελόμενοι τὴν Ἑλλάδα δεσποτῶν χαλεπῶν καὶ τυράννων ἐλευθεροῦσι / Greece has fought to enslave herself, and every trophy stands for her own misfortune and disgrace... these [Romans] are freeing Greece from grievous despots and tyrants by taking upon themselves the greatest dangers and labors.”⁵² It seemed to the Greeks that they were finally free, that they had finally escaped the clutches of Macedon. Yet, Plutarch shows that this was not actually the case. Flaminius’ popularity and Rome’s benefactions here will swiftly lead Greece into subjugation again. After this proclamation, the Greek elite increasingly turned to Flaminius and Rome to solve disputes and to seek advice: “ἀλλὰ καὶ βασιλεῖς ὑφ’ ἑτέρων ἀδικούμενοι βασιλέων κατέφευγον εἰς τὰς ἐκείνων χεῖρας, ὥστε ἐν βραχεῖ χρόνῳ, τάχα που καὶ θεοῦ συνεφαπτομένου, πάντα αὐτοῖς ὑπήκοα γενέσθαι / but even kings, who had been injured by other kings, fled to Roman hands, with the result that in a short time – and perhaps with the gods lending a hand – everything became subject to them.”⁵³ In one moment, Flaminius successfully set up a patron-client relationship between himself and essentially all of Greece. By extension, this indebted the Greeks to Rome as well, which caused the Greeks to become increasingly more reliant on the Romans until eventually Rome stepped in and annexed Greece.⁵⁴ This link between Flaminius’ popularity and the subsequent subjugation of the Greeks is why it is possible to look at Flaminius himself as a symbol for the conquest of Greece. It could not have happened without him. His charisma and political prowess won over not only the Greek masses,

⁵¹ Ibid., 10.2

⁵² Ibid., 11.3-4

⁵³ Ibid., 12.5

⁵⁴ Greece did hold a unique status among Rome’s many provinces. However, Plutarch is writing about the larger moral implications of Rome’s annexation of Greece, not the specific details of how Greece was governed, and, as such, an in-depth discussion of those details would not be fruitful for the present analysis.

but the elite as well. Plutarch's proviso "τάχα που καὶ θεοῦ συναρπαστομένου / and perhaps with the gods lending a hand" at first glance points toward Plutarch's approval of Roman conquest, claiming divine mandate. However, in this clause he uses *τάχα* and *που* in conjunction, both of which mean 'perhaps.' By doubling up on these words, Plutarch reinforces the idea that it is only a possibility, not a fact. The Romans in Plutarch's time certainly believed it was their destiny to rule.⁵⁵ He is alluding to this idea, something which would have been expected of him by the Romans, but he undercuts it by compounding these words of doubt. Flamininus may have brought temporary peace and freedom to Greece, but his actions led directly to Greece's subjugation by the Romans.

Plutarch further casts aspersions on the hypocrisy of Flamininus' declaration of freedom by drawing a comparison to an event within Plutarch's own lifetime.

Τῆ δ' οὖν Κορινθίων πόλει πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας τὸ αὐτὸ δις ἤδη συμβέβηκε· καὶ γὰρ Τίτος ἐν Κορίνθῳ τότε καὶ Νέρων αὐθις καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐν Κορίνθῳ παραπλησίως Ἰσθμίων ἀγομένων τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἐλευθέρους καὶ αὐτονόμους ἀφῆκαν. / Therefore, it happened that this same benefaction to the Greeks occurred twice in the city of the Corinthians: for in Corinth at that time Titus, and in our own time Nero, also in Corinth, proclaimed the Greeks free and autonomous – both men doing so while the Isthmian Games were being held.⁵⁶

This connection with the Emperor Nero did not need to be made. Plutarch does not elaborate on this idea. He simply states it and moves on. At first glance it seems like a strange, unnecessary aside. But if it is viewed within a post-colonial framework it functions as a subtle critique of

⁵⁵ "Roman, remember that you rule the peoples (of the world) with empire, for these will be your arts: to place law upon peace, to spare the subjugated, and to destroy the proud." Verg. *A.* 6.851-853. Plutarch would have been well aware of this passage from Vergil, as would his audience.

⁵⁶ Plut. *Flam.* 12.8

Flaminius' declaration. Plutarch is undermining Flaminius' supposed benefaction, showing that it was actually meaningless. Unfortunately, Plutarch's *Life of Nero* has not survived into the modern era, but it can be gleaned from references to Nero in his *Life of Galba* that Plutarch shared the negative view of the young emperor which many of the ancient aristocracy held.⁵⁷ According to Suetonius' account of Nero's declaration of freedom, it was freedom in name only. Nero basically reasserted Greece's right to have local governments, but there was no lessening of Rome's hold on Greece.⁵⁸ Plutarch's allusion to Nero subverts Flaminius' benefaction. It implies to the reader that Flaminius was not actually giving the Greeks independence, but that he was giving them freedom as long as they yielded to Rome's guiding hand.

Throughout Flaminius' campaign in Greece, Plutarch depicts him with this duality. On one level, his actions seem to be beneficial to the Greek people. Underneath that veneer, Plutarch hints at flaws in Flaminius himself and in his actions. Because of Flaminius' prominent role in bringing Greece into the Roman sphere of influence, Plutarch is able to use Flaminius as a stand-in for the Roman conquest of Greece as a whole. Doing so allows Plutarch to criticize the motivations behind Rome's involvement with Greece without risking his career by stating it outright. Rome was not interested in helping the Greeks for the Greeks benefit, but in helping themselves. "Freeing" the Greeks was ultimately an empty gesture which garnered the good will of the people and earned Rome prestige and a larger pool of clients. It is something which seemed benevolent and generous at first but was ultimately self-serving.

⁵⁷ Plut. *Galb.* 2-4. Plutarch refers to "Evils produced by Nero" κακά... Νέρων παρέσχε (2.2), and "the sinful agents of Nero savagely and violently plundering the provinces at that time" τῶν ἀλιτηρίων ἐπιτρόπων ὡμῶς καὶ ἀγρίως τὰς ἐπαρχίας ἐκεῖνῳ διαφοροῦντων (4.1). This negativity towards Nero was focused primarily on his actions in the latter part of his reign, as his behavior became more erratic and petulant. His declaration of Greek freedom occurred during this part of his reign (in 66 CE), and so it stands to reason that this event would have been similarly criticized by contemporary and near-contemporary authors. See: Josiah Osgood, "Nero and the Senate," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Nero*, eds. Shadi Bartsch, Kirk Freudenburg, and Cedric Littlewood, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 34-47; Shotter (2008), 127-152.

⁵⁸ Suet. *Nero* 24.2

Flaminius' Fall from Grace

After Flaminius' return from Greece, the positive image began to fall apart. His faults became more prevalent and ultimately brought an end to his political career. Flaminius' descent from virtue is a mirror for Plutarch's critique of the Roman conquest of Greece, and the author uses this to criticize the nature of Rome's power. Despite initial appearances, Rome's subjugation of Greece ultimately showed itself to be self-serving and unjust.

In 184 BCE, Titus Flaminius' brother Lucius was expelled from the Senate because of some improper behavior. It was carried out by Cato the Elder who held the office of censor at the time. This understandably upset Titus Flaminius, prompting him to seek retribution:

συνέστη μετὰ τῶν πάλαι μισούντων τὸν Κάτωνα καὶ πάσας μὲν ἄς ἐκεῖνος ἐποίησατο τῶν δημοσίων ἐκδόσεις καὶ μισθώσεις καὶ ὠνάς ἠκύρωσε καὶ ἀνέλυσεν ἐν τῇ βουλῇ κρατήσας, πολλὰς δὲ καὶ μεγάλας δίκας κατ' αὐτοῦ παρεσκεύασεν, οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως εὖ καὶ πολιτικῶς πρὸς ἄρχοντα νόμιμον καὶ πολίτην ἄριστον ὑπὲρ ἀνδρὸς οἰκείου μὲν, ἀναξίου δὲ καὶ τὰ προσήκοντα πεπονθότος ἀνήκεστον ἔχθραν ἀράμενος / he allied himself with those who had hated Cato for a long time. After gaining power in the Senate, he canceled and nullified everything which Cato had done, the public lending, the leases, and the contracts. He also prepared many great indictments against him. I do not know that he acted well or in a manner befitting a statesman when he took up an incurable hatred against a lawful official and the best citizen on behalf of a kinsman who was undeserving and suffered what was fitting.⁵⁹

In Greece, Flaminius had been known for his beneficence and kindness.⁶⁰ But now he was consumed by “incurable hatred.” Additionally, it is even worse that this hatred is leveled at Cato,

⁵⁹ Plut. *Flam.* 19.3

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1

a man who is generally considered a model Roman citizen.⁶¹ Plutarch refuses to pass judgment outwardly on Flaminius' actions, seemingly leaving it up to the audience to decide. However, his reference to the "incurable hatred" could have been intended as a reference to his own philosophical treatise, *On the Control of Anger*, wherein anger is prescribed treatments as if it were a disease.⁶² Due to the uncertainty of the dating of Plutarch's various works, this allusion is not concrete. However, even if the treatise were written after the biography, there is a demonstrable continuity in how Plutarch characterizes anger. Much like Rome's offer of freedom to the Greeks, Flaminius seemed upstanding and kind, but ultimately his dark side came through.⁶³

The ambitious self-interest of Flaminius proved to be his ultimate downfall. Shortly after his conflict with Cato, Flaminius set his sights on a new adversary, the infamous Hannibal. The Carthaginian general had been defeated by the Romans during the 2nd Punic War and had fled to the East. He was living as a suppliant with King Prusias. Flaminius, now over 15 years removed from the climax of his career, was overcome by a desire to regain the glory he had during his time in Greece: "πρὸς δόξαν καὶ νεανίζοντα τῷ πάθει κατέχειν ἑαυτὸν οὐ δυνάμενος / he was not able to restrain his own passion for fame and youthful zeal."⁶⁴ This ambition caused Flaminius to seek out Hannibal's death by appealing to King Prusias. Hannibal committed suicide to prevent Flaminius from doing it. Flaminius achieved his goal, but Hannibal's death backfired on Flaminius; he had not realized that Hannibal was pitied by Rome once he ceased being a threat to them:

⁶¹ For more on Cato's uprightness, see: Plut. *Cat. Ma.*

⁶² Plut. *On the Control of Anger*

⁶³ Philopoemen's anger is referenced throughout his biography as well, however with Philopoemen it serves as a link to Achilles, as has been previously discussed. Flaminius has no such connection, instead his anger serves to undercut his own actions. His outbursts after returning to Rome indicate his true self, something which was mostly hidden while in Greece.

⁶⁴ Plut. *Flam.* 20.1

ἀπαγγελθέντων δὲ τούτων πρὸς τὴν σύγκλητον, οὐκ ὀλίγοις ἐπαχθῆς ἔδοξεν ὁ Τίτος καὶ περιττὸς ἄγαν καὶ ὠμός, ὥσπερ ὄρνιν ὑπὸ γήρωσ ἀπτῆνα καὶ κόλουρον ἀφειμένον ζῆν χειροήθη τὸν Ἀννίβαν ἀποκτείνας, οὐδενὸς ἐπείγοντος, ἀλλὰ διὰ δόξαν, ὡς ἐπώνυμος τοῦ θανάτου γένοιτο. / When these events had been announced to the Senate, to many of them Titus seemed to be grievous, excessive, and savage; because he had killed Hannibal who had been left alone to live submissively just like a bird which has been unwinged and de-tailed by old age. There was no need for this, except for the fame that his name might be associated with the death.⁶⁵

Hannibal did not need to be killed. It was not done out of necessity but out of ambition. Flamininus saw it as something by which he could gain glory, power, and reputation. Much like with the Cato incident, Plutarch does not need to fear reprisal here for voicing criticisms of Flamininus' character. These criticisms were held by many of Flamininus' contemporaries, and so it would not have been shocking for Plutarch's Roman audience to see these same criticisms in the biography. He can criticize Flamininus outwardly here, but if we look at Flamininus as a representation for the Roman conquest, we can see a veiled criticism of Rome: the Roman subjugation of Greece was not done because it was "right" or needful; it was done because it would benefit Rome. Plutarch is using this story as a parallel for the colonial relationship between Greece and Rome: Hannibal should not have been hunted down by Flamininus, and Greece should not have been taken over by the Romans. Flamininus and his fall are a condemnation of Rome's power - it is neither just nor benevolent.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 21.1

Plutarch's Comparison

The final element of these lives that needs to be discussed is Plutarch's direct comparison of the two figures. It is in this comparison where Plutarch judges not only the two men, but their respective causes. Flamininus is given the early lead in the comparison: he did not actively war against the Greeks, and he was merciful and magnanimous in his actions while in Greece.⁶⁶

These facts appear as praises for Flamininus, something which would have appeased Plutarch's Roman audience. However, as we have already seen, these magnanimous actions have already been undercut. Flamininus' ambition was the driving force behind everything he did, not altruism. In contrast, Philopoemen is criticized for his anger, but this criticism is followed by a lengthy discussion of Philopoemen's military superiority to Flamininus.⁶⁷ Plutarch overturns his initial statement about Flamininus not fighting Greeks when he says, "καὶ μὴν τό γε πρὸς Ἕλληνας τούτῳ γενέσθαι τοὺς ἀγῶνας οὐκ εὐτυχῆ μὲν, ἰσχυρὰν δὲ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀπόδειξιν παρεῖχεν / while it is indeed unfortunate that [Philopoemen's] fights were against Greeks, nevertheless this produced a strong proof of his excellence."⁶⁸ Flamininus' victories over Philip V are not as noteworthy to Plutarch, because he viewed Macedonians as inferior Greeks. In addition to his superiority as a general, Plutarch also praises Philopoemen as an individual warrior: "κατὰ χεῖρα τοίνυν Φιλοποίμενος μὲν ἔργα πολλὰ καὶ μεγάλα, θατέρου δὲ οὐδέν / therefore concerning their deeds, Philopoemen had many great deeds, but [Flamininus] had none."⁶⁹ Both the reference to anger and the accompanying description of military valor strengthen Philopoemen's connection to Achilles. Like Achilles, Philopoemen was a great leader of men, and a great warrior. Flamininus is shown to fall short of this mark.

⁶⁶ Plut. *Comp. Phil. Flam.* 1

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.2

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.3

According to Plutarch's statement that, "οἷς γὰρ ὅμοια τᾶλλα, τῷ προὔχειν ἀρετῆ κρατοῦσι / in those times when other things are equal, those who possess excellence are superior," Philopoemen should be judged as the superior figure in this comparison.⁷⁰ He also is said to have the more laudable actions in life: "Γενναῖα μὲν οὖν Τίτου τὰ πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἐπιεικῆ καὶ φιλόανθρωπα, γενναιότερα δὲ Φιλοποίμενος τὰ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους ὀχυρὰ καὶ φιλελεύθερα / therefore the fairness and philanthropy of Titus towards the Greeks was noble, but Philopoemen's firmness against the Romans and love of freedom are more noble."⁷¹ Plutarch explains that this is because it is easy to be kind to someone weaker than you, but difficult to stand up against a stronger power. Since Flamininus was in a position of power, his benefactions to the Greeks were not as meaningful: his actions were meant to increase his own reputation and client base. In contrast, it is specifically Philopoemen's resistance to Rome which is being praised here. Greece's decline was already in full-swing before Philopoemen rose to prominence, but despite Rome's strength, Philopoemen staunchly opposed their presence and interference in Greece. Plutarch describes freedom as a more noble cause than ambition. At the end, when Plutarch proposes to give Philopoemen "τὸν ἐμπειρίας πολεμικῆς καὶ στρατηγίας στέφανον / the crown of military experience and generalship" and Flamininus "τὸν δικαιοσύνης καὶ χρηστότητος / the crown of justice and kindness" he is really only giving one of them praise.⁷² Throughout the *Life of Titus Flamininus* Plutarch has undercut Flamininus' actions, his kind treatment of the Greeks was motivated by his ambition for glory and reputation, not altruism. Furthermore, we have already seen that in the comparison Plutarch sees these acts of kindness as less noble due to their easiness. In contrast, Philopoemen's achievements are not undercut but

⁷⁰ Ibid., 2.2

⁷¹ Ibid., 3.3

⁷² Ibid.

strengthened by Plutarch. Philopoemen's cause – the cause of Greek freedom - is held up by Plutarch as more noble and excellent than Flaminius' actions, including even his formal pronouncement of Greek freedom.

Conclusion

When examined through a post-colonial interpretation, the *Life of Philopoemen* and the *Life of Titus Flaminius* can be seen as an act of resistance to Rome's conquest of Greece. Plutarch routinely links Philopoemen with concepts of Greece's glory days. Philopoemen is an Achilles figure, a staunch supporter of Greek freedom, and a symbol of the greatness which Greece had lost. In contrast, Plutarch shows Flaminius' actions in Greece to be motivated by ambition, not kindness. Flaminius desired the conquest of Greece, even as he ostensibly freed it. His character arc is used to represent the Roman conquest: at first, he seemed to be working for Greece's benefit, but by the end of his career, his own ambition had become clear and destroyed him. Plutarch is certainly not calling for a revolution, or anything else extreme, doing so would likely have hurt his career or worse. Instead, he is giving voice to criticisms against Rome's subjugation of the Greeks and mourning Greece's fall from prominence. Philopoemen stands as a symbol for Greece's lost greatness and freedom. For the Romans, he seems to reaffirm their "knowledge" of the Greeks as a fallen people. For the Greeks, he is a reminder of what it means to be a noble Greek. Flaminius is a symbol for Greek subjugation by the Romans, a symbol of Roman power. Flaminius' initial benevolence and magnanimity are undercut and overpowered by his destructive ambition. Plutarch uses Flaminius' flaws to criticize similar flaws in Rome's annexation of Greece. Plutarch shows that Philopoemen and the cause of Greek freedom are more noble and excellent, whereas Flaminius and Rome's position as colonial power are self-serving and ultimately destructive.

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