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INDEX

	MIREILLE CORBIER	<i>Nouvelle lecture d'une inscription de Mâcon (Matisco) (Saône-et-Loire, France)</i>	11
	GIANLUCA DE MARTINO	<i>A Multicultural Approach to the Study of the Cult of Hera in Poseidonia/Paestum</i>	17
	RICHARD DUNCAN-JONES	<i>The Antonine Plague Revisited</i>	41
	HILLA HALLA-AHO	<i>Left-dislocation, Subordinate Clauses and the Stylistic Difference between Plautus and Terence</i>	73
	GEORGE HOLLENBACK	<i>The Problems in the Vitruvian Hodometer Revisited</i>	95
	MIKA KAJAVA & URPO KANTOLA	<i>A Funerary Inscription from Northern Mesopotamia</i>	99
	ARTHUR KEAVENEY	<i>Notes on Plutarch: Comparison Lysander-Sulla 2,5–7 and 5,5</i>	103
	GEORGIOS E. MOURATIDIS	<i>The Political Vocabulary of the Imperial-period Greek Elite; Some Notes on the Title ἀξιολογώτατος</i>	119
	TIZIANO OTTOBRINI	<i>Cirillo di Gerusalemme e le catechesi 12 e 13 nella basilica costantiniana (348 p.Ch.): verso una mistagogia sindonica</i>	137
	OLLI SALOMIES	<i>A Fourth-Century Inscription from Abritus in Moesia Secunda</i>	157
	KAJ SANDBERG & JASMIN LUKKARI	<i>Equestrian Fortunes and Roman Imperialism</i>	167
	HEIKKI SOLIN	<i>Analecta Epigraphica 322–326</i>	191
	KAIUS TUORI	<i>Pliny and the Uses of the Aerarium Saturni as an Administrative Space</i>	199

<i>De novis libris iudicia</i>	231
<i>Index librorum in hoc volumine recensorum</i>	271
<i>Libri nobis missi</i>	273
<i>Index scriptorum</i>	277

NOTES ON PLUTARCH: *COMPARISON LYSANDER-SULLA 2,5–7 AND 5,5*

ARTHUR KEAVENEY

In the *Comparison Lysander-Sulla 2,5–7* we read:

Αἱ τοίνυν ἀδικίαι τῷ μὲν ὑπὲρ φίλων, τῷ δ' ἄχρι φίλων ἐπράχθησαν. Λύσανδρος μὲν γὰρ ὁμολογεῖται τὰ πλείστα διὰ τοὺς ἐταίρους ἐξαμαρτεῖν, καὶ τὰς πλείστας σφαγὰς ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐκείνων ἀπεργάσασθαι δυναστείας καὶ τυραννίδος. Σύλλας δὲ καὶ Πομπηίου περιέκοψε τὸ στρατιωτικὸν φθονήσας, καὶ Δολοβέλλα τὴν ναυαρχίαν ἐπεχείρησε δοῦς ἀφελέσθαι, καὶ Λουκρήτιον Ὀφέλλαν ἀντὶ πολλῶν καὶ μεγάλων ὑπατειῶν μνόμενον ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἀποσφάζει προσέταξε, φρίκην καὶ δέος ἐμποιῶν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀνθρώποις ἅπασιν διὰ τῆς τῶν φιλτάτων ἀναιρέσεως.

Moreover, the acts of injustice which one committed were on behalf of his friends, while the other's extended even to his friends. For it is agreed that Lysander perpetrated most of his transgressions for the sake of his comrades and carried out most of his massacres to maintain them in absolute power. But Sulla reduced the number of Pompey's soldiers out of jealousy and tried to take away from Dolabella the naval command he had given him, and when Lucretius Ofella laid claim to the consulship as a reward for many great services, he ordered him to be cut down before his eyes, instilling in all men a fear and horror at his murder of his dearest friends.

Trans. Seager in Warner 2005

This passage invites comments both for the problems it presents for the historian but also for the light it throws on Plutarch's mode of procedure in these *Comparisons*. In both instances our discussion will centre round the three figures Plutarch mentions in the text.

Of the three Romans we have here Ofella – most likely really Afella – presents nothing in the way of difficulty. His bid for the consulship and his murder by Sulla have been fully narrated in *Sulla* 33.¹

Pompey is more problematical. All that we learn of Sulla's tyrannical behaviour in the *Life* (33) is his forcing Pompey to divorce his wife in order to make a political match. This incident is also found, with one or two other details, in *Pompey* 9. In place of the brief notice here in the *Comparison* we have a detailed account in *Pompey* 13–14 of how Sulla ordered him to send his army home from Africa and remain there with one legion until his replacement arrived but that a mutiny forced Pompey to return with the army, when he was able to extract a triumph from Sulla. Throughout Sulla's motives seem to have been political and strategic.²

Dolabella causes considerable difficulties. As this is the only reference to this man and his ναυαρχία there have been a variety of scholarly responses to the problem he poses. Piccirilli in his commentary passes over the matter in silence.³ Another commentator Ghilli identified Dolabella as Cn. Cornelius Dolabella cos. 81 but had nothing to say about his naval command.⁴ Something similar is found in Pelling's commentary on Plutarch's *Life of Caesar*. Chapter 4 contains an undisputed reference to the consul of 81. This Pelling glosses as, 'Sullan commander and admiral' and among the sources mentioned is *Comparison* 2,7.⁵ Turning to historians we find Fündling assigning, with some hesitation, an unnamed naval command to the same Dolabella.⁶ A slight variant is found in Keaveney who also accepts the consular identification but declares explicitly that the command is quite undatable.⁷ Münzer, Gruen and Seager, while also

¹ On this man see further, Keaveney 2003.

² Keaveney 1982, 128–133; Hefner 1995, 100–103, 116–119; Seager 2002, 26–28, 174.

³ Piccirilli 1997.

⁴ Ghilli 2001, 504 n.917 (cf. 449 n.666).

⁵ Pelling 2011, 145.

⁶ Fündling 2010, 180 n.36.

⁷ Keaveney 1984, 139.

holding that the consul of 81 is in question, believe this *ναυραχία* refers to an otherwise unattested naval command under Sulla in the First Mithridatic War.⁸

Objections may be made to such views. The attempt to take a command from a Dolabella may not belong in the First Mithridatic War.⁹ The other two incidents appear to date from the period of Sulla's dominance. Both Afella's murder and Pompey's deprivation of office occurred during the dictatorship.¹⁰ As Plutarch does not differentiate between the dictatorship of 81 and the consulship of 80 but speaks only of Sulla's *ἀρχή*¹¹ it is, I suggest, reasonable to suppose Sulla made his move sometime in this two-year period. We also need to bear in mind that we have no record of service in the East by the consul of 81 and our relatively abundant information on Sulla's fleet has L. Lucullus as its commander.¹² We might further add that it is curious Sulla only attempted to deprive Dolabella of his command. If he, as commander-in-chief, did want to remove his subordinate, then it is difficult to see how he could be thwarted.¹³

But, by far the strongest argument against the *communis opinio* is that Plutarch in fact seems not to be talking at all of the consul of 81. So far as I am aware, only Brennan has argued that the person in question is the homonymous praetor of 81 and the naval command is a reference to his governorship of Cilicia (80–79) where a fleet would be needed to fight the pirates. Brennan then goes on to suggest that Sulla first tried to deprive Dolabella of his province and, when that failed, saw to it he only held it *propraetore* whereas all other praetorian governors of the time held theirs *proconsule*.¹⁴

⁸ Münzer RE 6.1 col. 1297 (Cornelius 134); Gruen 1966, 386; Seager in Warner 2005, 390 n.1.

⁹ At any rate, I do not think the text will support Gruen's interpretation, 1966, 386 n.4, that Sulla reduced the number of ships under Dolabella's command.

¹⁰ See discussions cited in ns.1 and 2 above.

¹¹ Dictatorship and consulship were strictly differentiated: Keaveney 2005. For Plutarch, see Keaveney 2005, 426. More will be said below about the period in which Plutarch may have thought Sulla might have attempted to take Dolabella's command away from him.

¹² On Lucullus see Keaveney 2009, 27–38. The only fleet which Dolabella could conceivably have commanded was that which Sulla began to build while waiting for Lucullus (App. *Mith.* 51).

¹³ Below, I shall sketch a more likely circumstance when this thwarting could have happened.

¹⁴ Brennan 2000, 572. *Praetor urbanus* and governor of Cilicia: MRR 2,76, 80, 84; Brennan 2000, 444; Gruen 1966, 394–395. His career prior to the praetorship is a matter for conjecture – see Gruen 1966, 389–392 who accepts a suggestion of Cichorius that he could have served on the staff of Pompey Strabo at Asculum and believes he may have been a cousin of the consul of 81. On the

Certain qualifications may be in order. Let us begin with the *imperium* Dolabella is supposed to have held. We have two bodies of evidence, Cicero himself in the *Verrines* and some scholia which comment on them.

In two places in the *Verrines*, Dolabella is referred to as praetor.¹⁵ In another he is styled as praetor and propraeor.¹⁶ Turning to the scholia we find Dolabella is a proconsul in Ps. Asc. 208 St. but in Ps. Asc. 144, 234 St. he is confused with the consul of 81. In Schol. Gron. 333 St. he is correctly identified and called *imperator*.

With regard to the *Verrines* two observations seem pertinent. As has most recently been observed by Ferrary, in Cicero it is very frequent to refer to a governor as praetor without regard to the actual *imperium* held.¹⁷ Brennan himself concedes that, while the title may be only *propraetore*, the use of the term in a court record could, perhaps, be an administrative detail which does not reflect on the *imperium* actually held.¹⁸ Turning to the scholiast, we may say the confusion with the consul counsels caution but this confusion and the different titles conferred may just point to their authors encountering the same problems as moderns in interpreting the references to praetor and propraeor in the *Verrines*.

Surveying our sources, I am not sure they will support Brennan's idea that Sulla saw to it that Dolabella got a lesser *imperium*. As we shall see, there are some grounds for believing he did not like the man but the evidence for tampering with his *imperium* is, at best, equivocal.

Something must now be said about Dolabella's *ναυαρχία*. As we observed above, Brennan believed this was a reference to Dolabella's province of Cilicia.¹⁹ In making this deduction, he drew attention to Plutarch's using the

Dolabellae see further Badian 1965 and on Cilicia and piracy n.24.

¹⁵ 2 *Verr.* 1,50, 96.

¹⁶ 2 *Verr.* 1,99.

¹⁷ Ferrary 2017, 398–401. Cf. also Badian 1964, 74. This point was not considered by Jashemski 1950, 68, 147.

¹⁸ Brennan 2000, 444, 572. I cannot see why Brennan 2000, 572 thinks that Nero being in position in Asia while Dolabella was on his way to his province offers support to the notion of a quarrel with Sulla. On the governors of Asia see Keaveney 2009, 245–253.

¹⁹ The province has been the subject of much scholarly discussion. See briefly the summary in Kallet-Marx 1995, 293 n.5 with a bibliography to which should be added Freeman 1986; Brennan 1992, 2000, 257–359; Ferrary 2017, 323–353.

term *ναυαρχία* in relation to Pompey's great command against the pirates.²⁰ This may not be entirely apposite as Pompey's command was exceptional.²¹ At any rate, we need, I think, to remember there were many other naval commands with commanders of varying rank in Roman history.²²

Now, there would seem to be little reason to doubt that Cilicia meant war on pirates and that a fleet could be needed for this.²³ This, however, overlooks the fact that land armies could be involved also.²⁴ Three of Dolabella's predecessors are of interest here:

(1) M. Antonius in 102 had a fleet for his operations but he also had a land army which, it is conjectured, consisted of local levies.²⁵

(2) The next governor who concerns us is Sulla in 96. With local levies he fought a campaign by land but no naval operations are recorded for him.²⁶

(3) Finally, there is Q. Oppius who, in 89, took part in an ill-fated land expedition against Mithridates, but again there is no mention of ships in our sources.²⁷

We can fit Dolabella into this sequence. He conducted campaigns by land and by sea. Land operations were sufficiently severe so as to lead to the death of his

²⁰ Brennan 2000, 572. See Plut. *Pomp.* 25.

²¹ Seager 2002, 44, 176; Heftner 1995, 187–189.

²² Mason 1974, s.v. *ναυαρχέω*, *ναυαρχία*, *ναύαρχος*.

²³ Brennan 2000, 572, 765 n.5, cf. n.14 above. In my opinion, the observations of de Souza 1999, 91, 115, 121–123 do not invalidate this view.

²⁴ See the remarks of Ferrary 2017, 330–331.

²⁵ Cic. *de Orat.*; ILLRP no.342; Liv. *ep.* 68; Trog. *Prolog.*; Obsequens 44; Tac. *Ann.* 12,62 with Brennan 2000, 357; Magie 1950, vol.1 283, vol.2 1161 n.12; de Souza 1999, 103–108; Brunt 1971, 431. Cf. MRR 1,568–569, 572–573.

²⁶ App. *Mith.* 57, B.C. 1,77; *de Vir. Illust.* 75; Plut. *Sulla* 5; Liv. *ep.* 70; Vell. Pat. 2,15,3 with the fundamental discussion of Brennan 1992 where (151) action against the pirates is envisaged but, as de Souza 1999, 115 points out, it is not attested in our sources. Cf. MRR 3.73–74.

²⁷ App. *Mith.* 17, 20; Liv. *ep.* 78; Lic. 20 Cr.; Athen. 5,213a with Brennan 2000, 358–359; de Souza 1999, 115, cf. MRR 2,42, 3,152–153.

quaestor Malleolus and Cicero was later to attack him for leaving the war and the enemy to involve himself in the trial of Philodamus.²⁸ Verres, his *legatus pro praetore*, had charge of a fleet.²⁹

This mixed force must lead us to wonder, at the very least, why Plutarch spoke only of a ναυαρχία and did not use ἐπαρχεία, the usual word for *provincia*.³⁰

In an attempt to answer this question, we need, I believe, to keep in mind the brevity of the notice and its paucity of detail which might lead to ambiguity. In my judgement, therefore, ναυαρχία could be interpreted in two ways. It is entirely possible that, like some moderns, the role of the fleet in combatting piracy was uppermost in Plutarch's mind and that, speaking loosely, he does indeed mean a *provincia* here.³¹ However, we cannot completely dismiss the notion that Plutarch is here speaking simply of a naval command.³²

If the pro-magistracy is what is meant then plainly we are in 81, the year of Sulla's dictatorship. It would then seem Sulla in some way interfered with or attempted to influence the senatorial provincial *sortitio* either seeking to deprive Dolabella entirely of a province or change the one assigned.³³ This treatment of Dolabella is to be contrasted with that accorded Pompey and Afella. Pompey's divorce was forced because Sulla wished to form a political alliance with somebody who was obviously making his mark on the world while Afella was destroyed because, overestimating his own importance, he was defying Sulla's new constitutional arrangements.³⁴ On the other hand, Dolabella was

²⁸ Cic. 2 *Verr.* 1,72–77, 90.

²⁹ Cic. 2 *Verr.* 1,50, 52, 63, 95.

³⁰ Mason 1974, 135–136.

³¹ For this modern view see ns. 14, 23 and observe Brennan's emphasis, 2000, 887 n.6 on the presence of the fleet in later governorships.

³² I do not think the case of P. Rutilius Nudus who was a ναύαρχος and commanded land forces (App. *Mith.* 71; Oros. 6,2,13) is relevant here. The situation was exceptional (Appian) and, unlike Dolabella, he was not a governor: MRR 2.105, 3.183.

³³ On the *sortitio* see Willems 1968, 545–546, 565–566 who (566 n.2) cites an instance in Val. Max. 6,3,3b where a province is refused because the candidate *recte facere nescit* and Diod. Sic. 36,2,5 where one is changed.

³⁴ See the discussions cited in ns.1 and 2 above.

not a person of great importance³⁵ and, as the issue had none of the moment the other two had, then it is possible Sulla may simply have decided not to pursue it. Whether or not Dolabella had, like Caesar in slightly different circumstances, people of influence to speak for him is therefore open to question.³⁶

What is also obscure is Sulla's motivation for moving against Dolabella. Gruen argued for longstanding enmity between him and Sulla's circle.³⁷ But the praetorship would surely point to reconciliation in an age when political differences were temporarily forgotten as the *nobilitas* fell into place behind Sulla.³⁸ So, I find marginally more attractive Brennan's suggestion that Dolabella's behaviour as praetor had irked Sulla.³⁹

If we take *ναυραχία* literally then we are in 80 when Sulla is consul but no longer dictator. Again here we must have recourse to conjecture both as to Sulla's motive and his failure. It may be, perhaps, that Sulla wanted to take the fleet out of the hands of Dolabella because of his incompetence and the ravaging of his subordinate Verres. His failure to dislodge him could be attributed to his waning influence in that year and we know of a case which might broadly parallel Dolabella's, that of Sulla's failure to call P. Cornelius Lentulus to account for financial irregularities during his quaestorship the previous year.⁴⁰

We can see that a case may be made for either of the two possible interpretations of Plutarch's *ναυραχία* and it is not easy to choose between them.⁴¹

³⁵ Keaveney 1984, 142.

³⁶ Caesar: Suet. *Div. Jul.* 1. For more on Dolabella's lack of influence see n.38.

³⁷ Gruen 1966, 389–392.

³⁸ On this state of affairs see Keaveney 1984, 146–148 who believes also the reconciliation of the Servilii and the Luculli may have happened about now: Keaveney 2009, 6–12. Dolabella's subsequent failure to find friends and condemnation, to which Gruen 1966, 384, 397–398 draws attention, is, in my opinion, to be explained as the resurfacing of old enmities with the resumption of normal political life subsequent to Sulla: Keaveney 1984, 146.

³⁹ Brennan 2000, 444.

⁴⁰ Sulla in 80: Keaveney 2005, 433–438. Dolabella's poor performance: Freeman 1986, 259–260 and possible connivance in Verres' crimes: Gruen 1966, 395–396. Like Rawson 1983, 40–43, for instance, I accept the veracity of what Cicero says about Verres and those who associated with him.

⁴¹ It could be *ναυραχία* is specified because of the way the tricolon is constructed: τὸ στρατιωτικὸν (referring to land command), then follows a naval command and finally a desired consulship. However, we need to remember that Plutarch is not always as exact in his terminology as we might suppose: Smith 2013, 298, commenting on Sulla F26 says Plutarch always uses *συμμαχικὸς πόλεμος*

On balance, I would say that the arguments in favour of his using it in the sense of *provincia* are the stronger.⁴²

From the examination of these three Roman figures we move to a consideration of their role and function within the *Comparison*.

We saw above that our information about Pompey in this *Life* and the *Comparison* can be amplified by reference to the *Life* of Pompey. It is held that the pair *Lysander-Sulla* predates the *Agesilaus-Pompey*.⁴³ This, in turn, brings us to Plutarch's mode of procedure as he chose and arranged the material at his disposal – issues which have received a good deal of attention from Pelling.⁴⁴ Drawing on his conclusions, we find three explanations offering themselves. The fuller treatment in the *Pompey* could mean that, as work on the *Lives* progressed, Plutarch gained more knowledge of a particular incident. But it may also be his treatment is dictated by his literary techniques. Or again, we have to reckon with the possibility that the interests and emphases could alter from *Life* to *Life*. In my judgement, this last is what is in question here. There is little substantial difference in the two accounts of the forced divorce and, so far as the troops are concerned, in the *Comparison* Plutarch has already stated the essential point: Sulla reduced their number and so I would contend that when he wrote this he would have known about the circumstances under which it occurred. Thus, I would conclude that Plutarch, having gathered material during his research for one *Life*, applies it in a somewhat different fashion in another *Life* to fit that *Life's* requirements.⁴⁵

In the light of this and the appearance of Afella in both *Life* and *Comparison* it is, I hold, not unreasonable to suppose that, although he does not appear in the *Life*, Plutarch had come upon this particular Dolabella in the course of his reading but decided not to include him in the *Life* but reserve him for the *Comparison* where, as we shall see, he would function more appropriately. Like

of the Social War and ἐμφύλιος πόλεμος of the Civil. Yet a comparison of the narratives of Plut. *Mar.* 33 and *Mor.* 202a shows that in the latter ἐν δὲ τῷ ἐμφυλίῳ πολέμῳ the Social War is meant.

⁴² Whatever way we choose to interpret ναυαρχία, we have, I believe, demonstrated, at least, that Sulla's attempt to deprive Dolabella of it can plausibly be fitted into his two year period of dominance.

⁴³ Jones 1995, 109–111.

⁴⁴ Pelling 2002, 1–115.

⁴⁵ On this point see especially Pelling 2002, 3–4, 11–19, 53–59.

Afella and Pompey he has undergone a process of selection. At the very least, this reconstruction would call in question Pelling's view that events mentioned in the *Comparison* but not in the *Life* are to be seen as some kind of after-thought.⁴⁶

We may refine this argument. Plutarch himself tells us that in his philosophical works he kept *ὑπομνήματα* – commonplace books or memoranda.⁴⁷ As might be expected, there has been a good deal of scholarly debate as to whether *ὑπομνήματα* might also have been used when preparing the *Lives* and, if so, what form they might have taken.⁴⁸

This leads me to make a tentative suggestion. The three who suffered at Sulla's hands all had one thing in common: they were all office-holders or aspired to be.⁴⁹ It is not, therefore, forbidden to wonder if Plutarch had not drawn up for use a memorandum of these specific contemporaneous examples of tyranny for use at the appropriate moment which would, of course, be here in the *Comparison*.

This hypothesis may be strengthened when we go on to examine how skilfully and artistically the relevant information is deployed as part of a careful structure.

Self-evidently the *Comparisons* to the *Lives* explore aspects of the character and actions of the pair dealt with in any particular *Life*. As Duff emphasises a *Comparison* is strongly influenced by rhetorical practice, especially that of composing speeches arguing a case from two different viewpoints. The *Comparison* favours first one subject and then the other. In the present instance a favourable view is taken of Lysander and a negative one of Sulla and from *Comparison* 3,8 that verdict is reversed.⁵⁰ Here the aspect of both men's careers that is dealt with is their treatment of their political, not personal, friends and Sulla comes off worst.

Lysander is put in the better light. It is claimed that he had committed most of his crimes for the sake of his friends and carried out massacres to help

⁴⁶ Pelling 1986, 19–20, 2002, 352–353 with the qualificatory remarks in 360–361 and note the observations of Duff 1999, 258–259, 265–267.

⁴⁷ *Mor.* 457a, 464f.

⁴⁸ See Pelling 2002, 65–90.

⁴⁹ On the nature of their 'friendship' with Sulla see below.

⁵⁰ Duff 1999, 201, 253, 258.

keep them in power. Plutarch is almost certainly referring to the events narrated in *Life* 13, 19.⁵¹ The contrast between *Life* and *Comparison* is marked. In the *Life* he expresses disapproval of Lysander's actions but here softens his stance and gives a lame excuse for them. This is one of the occasions when the emphasis and interpretation in a *Life* differs from that in a *Comparison*.⁵² They have been altered to fit the requirements of the *Comparison* at this particular point.

On a superficial reading it might be possible to argue that there is little difference in tone between *Sulla* 33 and the *Comparison*. In both Sulla is playing the tyrant. Probing a little further though, it seems clear that Plutarch, in making his point, has actually here blackened Sulla's name further. In the case of Pompey he has introduced yet another example of high-handed behaviour and brought in also the hitherto unmentioned case of Dolabella. Further, although we know Sulla had acted against Pompey for political and strategic reasons,⁵³ Plutarch here accuses him of being motivated by φθόνος the besetting vice of the Greeks.⁵⁴ By implication, Lysander is free from the vice.⁵⁵ Finally, it may not be entirely fanciful to see in Plutarch's remark about Sulla's killing Afella after he had done him much service, a reference to the dictator's boast on his tombstone that he had given friend and foe alike their due.⁵⁶

II

In the *Comparison Lysander-Sulla* 5.5 we read:

Ἐπὶ πᾶσι δὲ καὶ τὸ περὶ τὰς Ἀθήνας ἔχει τινὰ ῥοπήν εἰς ἡθους
σύγκρισιν, εἴ γε Σύλλας μὲν ὑπὲρ τῆς Μιθριδάτου δυνάμεως

⁵¹ Ghilli 2001, 505 ns.913, 915 who also invokes *Agésilas* 7 – a later *Life*: Jones 1995, 111; Piccirilli 1997, 418 who thought *Lys.*8 might also be in question.

⁵² Duff 1999, 200. Cf. Duff 1999, 263–264, 283–286.

⁵³ See n.2 above.

⁵⁴ On this Greek trait see the comprehensive treatment of Walcot 1978 especially 1–21 and note the brief comments of Keaveney - Bartley 2014, 23–24. Brennan 2000, 572 thought all three men were victims.

⁵⁵ For Spartan envy see e.g. Thuc. 4,108,7.

⁵⁶ Plut. *Sulla* 38.

καὶ ἡγεμονίας πολεμήσασαν αὐτῷ τὴν πόλιν ἐλών, ἐλευθέραν ἀφήκε καὶ αὐτόνομον, Λύσανδρος δὲ τοσαύτης ἡγεμονίας καὶ ἀρχῆς ἐκπεσοῦσαν οὐκ ᾤκτιρεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν δημοκρατίαν ἀφελόμενος, ὠμοτάτους αὐτῇ καὶ παρανομ<ωτάτ>ους ἀπέδειξε [τοὺς] τυράννους.

And besides all this, their treatment of Athens is of some weight in a comparison of their characters. After taking the city, although it had fought against him in support of the power and supremacy of Mithridates, Sulla left it free and independent. But Lysander, though Athens had fallen from such a height of imperial power, showed it no pity, but abolished the democracy and appointed most savage and lawless men as tyrants.

Trans. Seager in Warner 2005

Any attempt to evaluate this statement must involve first isolating the three characteristics of Sulla's capture of Athens. They are as follows,

- a. Sulla's soldiers slaughtered many of the inhabitants but he eventually called them off: App. *Mith.* 39; Flor. 1,40,10 who adds the detail that he did this out of respect for the Athenians of old.⁵⁷
- b. The ringleaders of the Athenians, including Aristion, were executed: Lic. 19 Cr.; Strabo 9,1,20; Paus. 1,20,6.⁵⁸
- c. The troops were allowed to plunder but forbidden to fire the city: App. *Mith.* 38. Memnon (BNJ 434 F.22,11) says Sulla did not raze the city because the senate asked him not to.⁵⁹ The Livian epitome (*ep.* 81) is surely referring to this when it says Sulla *quae habuerat reddidit*.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ On Florus see Assenmaker 2013.

⁵⁸ Pausanias speaks of decimation. On Pausanias see further n.61.

⁵⁹ For the true state of affairs see n.64.

⁶⁰ Cf. n.62 for some further remarks on this source.

The only destruction in the city was the firing of the Odeon by Aristion: App. Mith. 38.61 Damage by the Romans was confined to the Piraeus: App. Mith. 41; Strabo 9,1,15, 14,2,9; Flor. 1,40,10.

Liv. *ep.* 81 says Sulla restored its freedom to the city.⁶² Strabo 9,1,20 reports that Sulla pardoned the city and it has remained free down to his own day. Appian (*Mith.* 38) is more detailed. According to him, Sulla sold the captured slaves, took away the voting rights of the free but restored them to their offspring. He also gave them essentially the same laws as they had been previously granted by the Romans. This passage has provoked scholarly discussion but the essential point of granting freedom is not in doubt.⁶³

Now, in the *Sulla* itself (14) Plutarch shows knowledge of (a) and (b) and also in *Sulla* 23 where the killing of Aristion is mentioned in a discussion of Sulla's partiality for the Pontic commander Archelaus.⁶⁴ Both (a) and (b) are also mentioned in an earlier *Life*, that of Lucullus.⁶⁵ In *Lucullus* 19 Plutarch tells us how, in the Third Mithridatic War, the town of Amisus fell to Lucullus and was fired by the retreating Pontic garrison. Lucullus ordered the flames extinguished but was ignored and he was forced to allow his troops to plunder. As they went about this, their torches added to the damage. Lucullus then commented that he had not been able to exercise at Amisus the control Sulla had at Athens.⁶⁶

Of (c), however, there is no trace in Plutarch save that in the passage of the *Lysander-Sulla Comparison* we are discussing.

Duff expressed puzzlement at this since it appears to be rather lenient to Sulla and drew attention to a theory of Brenk's that Plutarch may not have wanted to offend those prominent Romans with whom he associated. Duff was not entirely happy with this, pointing to the vivid accounts of the fall of Athens

⁶¹ Paus. 1,20,4 blames Sulla for this but his animus against Sulla is marked: Thein 2014, 180 and Eckert 2016, 108–110.

⁶² In full: *urbi libertatem et quae habuerat reddidit* (cf. n.60). Eckert 2016, 90 n.20 thought the source difficult to evaluate because of its brevity and a lacuna. However the text seems sound here and its meaning tolerably clear.

⁶³ See Kallet-Marx 1995, 212–219 for how Appian is to be interpreted.

⁶⁴ Incidentally, in *Sulla* 14 he, in contrast to Memnon (n.59), correctly states it was exiled senators and not the senate itself who persuaded Sulla to stop the killing. Cf. *Mor.* 202e, 505a–b.

⁶⁵ Jones 1995, 111–113.

⁶⁶ Cf. Keaveney 2009, 123–124.

and what he calls Sulla's 'degrading death' in *Life* 14, 36.⁶⁷ We might add that by now Sulla's posthumous reputation was well established.⁶⁸ As Dowling points out, by the time of Augustus two generations had passed since Sulla died and so it was possible to cite him as an example of a tyrant.⁶⁹ Unlike Duff, I would, therefore, have no hesitation in rejecting this theory of Brenk's.

Two other hypotheses which Brenk advanced may be briefly considered even though neither seems to me to be persuasive. At one point, Brenk wonders if Plutarch was sympathetic to Sulla because they shared the same attitude to dreams. And in another whether he was influenced by Sulla's mysticism.⁷⁰ Of the first I think we may say that, perhaps, this is a rather slender basis for sympathy between two such different characters. Of the second we would observe that the attribution to mysticism to Sulla is a purely modern scholarly phenomenon which receives no support from our ancient sources.⁷¹

I do not believe the solution to the problem this passage seems to pose is to be found in Plutarch's contemporary situation. Rather, I will argue that that solution can be achieved if we analyse the passage in the light of Plutarch's work methods in the same way as we did with *Comparison* 2,5–7.

Plutarch is deploying his information in accordance with his own artistic criteria. As with Dolabella, this is the only mention of Sulla's constitutional ar-

⁶⁷ Duff 1999, 202–203; Brenk 1977, 265 n.18. Plutarch's "circle" is delineated in Jones 1971, 48–64. Brenk also wondered here and also in 170 if Sextus Sulla who appears in the *Moralia* was, or at least claimed to be, a relative of Sulla. For more on Sulla's relatives and his death see n.69. Unlike Duff 1999, 203 n.167, I would not attach any particular significance to the failure of Liv. *ep.* 81 to mention the violence at the capture of the city. Despite an effort such as that of Dowling 2006, 324–330 to divine what may have been in the lost original, I do not think we can usefully say much about the epitomator's method of selection but it is difficult to see how Livy himself omitted all details of the sack, even if we think he might have agreed with the tradition that saw Sulla as a benefactor after the capture, for which see n.74.

⁶⁸ It has been extensively studied by modern scholars: Christ 2002, 155–167; Dowling 2006; Eckert 2016; Hinard 1985, 278–286, 2011, 23–38; Laffi 1967, 263–277; Thein 2014.

⁶⁹ Dowling 2006, 318. This seems preferable to me to Eckert's attempt, 2016, 74–75, to argue Sulla's descendants conspired to keep secret details of his death from Phithiriasis until the family was wiped out by Nero, a theory which neglects the power of gossip (exemplified in Suet. *Tib.* 43–45) and does not give due weight to that body of opinion in antiquity which saw nothing unnatural or shameful in the illness: Keaveney - Madden 1982, 89–90.

⁷⁰ Brenk 1977, 234, 265 n.18.

⁷¹ See the survey of Sulla's religious beliefs in Keaveney 1983.

rangements for Athens and the reason for this may not be far to seek. I do not think it hazardous to suggest that when Plutarch researched Sulla's capture of Athens he will have come upon details of Sulla's arrangements but elected to reserve them for where their deployment might be more effective and appropriate. With tolerable clarity, we can see where that is.

We are in that portion of the *Comparison* where the verdict becomes favourable to Sulla rather than Lysander.⁷² The subject at this point is the treatment of Athens by both men but the comparison made is a narrow one. Nothing is said of the physical destruction or loss of life, rather Plutarch speaks only of the differing institutions both men devised for the city after they had captured it. In the case of Lysander the issue is clearest, the installation of the Thirty narrated in *Lysander* 15.⁷³ For Sulla, it would seem that Plutarch now has recourse to information he had already acquired but had not yet decided to use and which shows Sulla in a favourable light.⁷⁴ By utilising this, he is able to show that, in this respect at least, Sulla is superior to Lysander.⁷⁵

University of Kent

⁷² n.50.

⁷³ Ghilli 2001, 513 n.967.

⁷⁴ I am agnostic on the question as to whether Plutarch shared the view that post war Athens saw Sulla as a liberator, for which see briefly Thein 2014, 183 n.90. Thein 104 draws attention to Plut. *Sulla* 12 and Vell. Pat. 2,23,4–5 which talk of Athens being unwilling opponents of Sulla. Habicht 1995, 313 and Eckert 2016, 87 disagree on the question of the historicity of Velleius.

⁷⁵ While accepting responsibility for this paper, I should like to thank John Madden for discussing a problem with me and the journal's referees for comments which have, I believe, helped to improve it.

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