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PLUTARCH'S USE OF THE POETS*

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Plutarch's *Moralia* and *Parallel Lives* are liberally spiced with quotations from the poets. Despite the fact that Plutarch argues for a discerning use of the poets,¹ the very way in which Plutarch quotes the ancient poets has been responsible in part for the indictment that he does not have a first-hand knowledge of many of the poets quoted. Plutarch, like other ancient Greek and Roman writers, is not consistent in his mode of reference to his sources. By our standards he often tends to be vague and seemingly inexact.

For example, Plutarch noting the points of similarity between Romulus and Theseus remarks that both were of uncertain and obscure parentage, and were reputedly descendants of the gods, and then he adds by way of a quotation: 'Both were also warriors, as surely the whole world knoweth.'² There is no mention of Homer or the *Iliad*, neither is there any reference to the fact that this verse applies to Ajax and Hector.'³ Plutarch seems to assume that his reader is able to place the quotation in its context and thus appreciate the fuller significance of the comparison.

At times the reader is offered a vague reference with Plutarch attributing a quotation in very general terms simply to an unnamed tragic or comic poet, or indefinitely to 'some poets'. Commenting on Demosthenes' competence in oratory Plutarch says:

Of the comic poets, one calls him a 'trumpery-braggart', and another, ridiculing his use of the antithesis, says this:

(First Slave) 'My master, as he took, retook.'

(Second Slave) 'Demosthenes would have been delighted to take over this phrase.'⁴

At other times the apparent vagueness is extended to the actual words of the poet when Plutarch paraphrases the sentiments of a named or unnamed poet. In the *Life of Agesilaus* Plutarch speaks of the value of ambition and contention acting as an incentive to virtue and he invokes supportive evidence from Homer.

And some think that Homer also was clearly of this mind; for he would not have represented Agamemnon as pleased when Odysseus and Achilles were carried away into abuse of one another with 'frightful words', if he had not thought the general interests likely to profit by the mutual rivalry and

quarrelling of the chieftains.⁵

A very common method of reference by Plutarch and other ancient authors when quoting poetry is simply to name the poet from whom the quotation is derived without mentioning the poem or work involved. For example, in the *Life of Pericles* Plutarch recounts an incident when the Athenians branded the Samian prisoners with the image of a ship-of-war which had the design of a boar's head for prow and ram, a ship called the 'Samaena'. He ends his account by saying:

To these brand-marks, they say, the verse of Aristophanes made riddling reference:

'For oh! how lettered is the folk of the Samians!' ⁶

However, Plutarch is not always vague and imprecise in the attribution of a quotation. In the very same passage where he vaguely refers to the comic poets calling Pericles a Squill-head,⁷ Plutarch adds a quotation alluding to Pericles, but this time cites the name of the poet as well as the title of the work in which the quotation occurs:

So the comic poet Cratinus, in his *Cheirons* says:

'Faction and Saturn, that ancient of days, were united in wedlock; their offspring was of all tyrants the greatest, and lo! he is called by the gods the head-compeller.' ⁸

The same passage has a further quotation attributed to the 'Demes' of Eupolis.⁹ Elsewhere Plutarch quotes the first two lines from a poem of Solon which he says is a poem entitled 'Salamis', and he adds that it contains a hundred very graceful verses.¹⁰

A quotation without any attribution to a poet or poem does not necessarily imply that Plutarch is vague or uncertain. Many quotations, which are unattributed in one passage, Plutarch cites elsewhere with proper attribution. The line: 'Ah yes, to generous souls how noble every task,' ¹¹ which occurs in the *Life of Pompey* without any attribution whatsoever, is quoted again in the *Moralia* and there attributed to Euripides.¹²

Critics have been quick to point out that even when a quotation is attributed to a particular poet it does not imply that such a quotation is known directly from the work of the poet concerned, but that Plutarch could have known it through an intermediary source. The vogue to credit Plutarch with only a limited knowledge of his sources is still to be discerned in recent scholarship. Sandbach¹³ suggests that Plutarch only had a direct acquaintance with some of Aristotle's work — this despite the fact that Aristotle is one of the most frequently and most extensively quoted authors in Plutarch.¹⁴ A recent thesis submitted for a Ph.D degree at the University of Southern California argues that Plutarch knew Euripides' work only in part.¹⁵ H. Schläpfer, *Plutarch und die klassischen Dichter*, concludes that Plutarch knew only some of the Greek lyric poets at first hand.¹⁶ As for Plutarch's knowledge of Latin literature, Barrow in his book, *Plutarch and his Times*, reflects a fairly general view when he says:

Whole sections of Latin literature may be written off at once; he shows no

knowledge of Latin drama, or of poetry, except for two quotations from Horace, or of philosophy, except an anecdote about Seneca, which he need not have obtained from Seneca himself. Clearly Plutarch had no interest in Latin literature as such; the poets would be too difficult, the philosophers had nothing to teach him; and as his interest was in real people, he confined himself virtually to the historians.¹⁷

On the other hand, there are some scholars who recognise in Plutarch an extremely well read man.¹⁸

Collections of concise sayings, summarising experience or embodying practical wisdom, are to be found throughout ancient Greek literature.¹⁹ At first collections of wise sayings were made for the purpose of philosophy, and already by Aristotle. The Alexandrian scholars made collections for literary purposes. We know that Aristophanes of Byzantium produced two books of proverbs in verse and a treatise, *Excerpts from Menander*. It is clear from Plutarch's own work that he was not only aware of a variety of collections of this nature but also made use of them. He uses anecdotes on Pericles and Philopoemen, told in the schools of philosophy;²⁰ he quotes sayings of a tragic actor;²¹ he refers to the habit of ancients using maxims to enhance their speeches;²² he evaluates Themistocles' nature, *inter alia*, by examining memorable sayings attributed to him;²³ he consults such selections as a work, *On Tombs*, by Diodorus, the topographer.²⁴ From Plutarch we learn that Demosthenes was able to recite off-hand some narrative speeches from Euripides and Sophocles. This possibly implies that for the purpose of training orators such a collection of speeches was available in the time of Demosthenes.²⁵

However, it would be wrong to deny Plutarch a first-hand knowledge of the poets because he admits using such collections as these. His information, as he himself states, was drawn from such written and oral sources as he could find.²⁶

If Quintilian, a Roman contemporary of Plutarch, ranked Homer as the greatest poet of all,²⁷ it is almost absurd to question Plutarch's knowledge of Homer at first hand. Since Homer can serve as an example of a poet whom Plutarch did know directly from the Homeric texts, it is worth noting what knowledge he reveals of Homeric poetry and what his habits are when quoting from Homer.

In Plutarch's *Lives* and *Moralia*, Homer is the most extensively quoted poet. A glance at the Homeric passages listed in *Plutarch's Quotations* by Helmbold and O'Neil will show that the quotations are taken from every single book of the *Iliad* and all twenty-four books of the *Odyssey*. Numerous characters in the *Lives*, covering a timespan from before 600 B.C. to 69 A.D., are reported to be quoting Homer. Whether it be by Plutarch himself, or by a character in his *Lives*, Homer is quoted for his wisdom, his insight into human character, his appropriate phrasing, and the beauty of his poetry. Homer's standing in Antiquity is clear from Quintilian's remarks that 'no-one has ever surpassed him (Homer) in the sublimity with which he invests great themes or the propriety with which he handles small'. He describes his poetry as being 'at once luxuriant and concise,

sprightly and serious, remarkable at once for its fulness and brevity', and 'supreme for its poetic power', excelling in his 'similes, amplifications, illustrations, digressions, indications of fact and inferences', while transcending 'the limits of human genius in his choice of words, his reflexions, figures, and the arrangement of his whole work'.²⁸

Plutarch reflects a knowledge of the state of the Homeric texts. He tells of Alcibiades, already at the end of the 5th Century B.C., being indignant that a teacher did not have a book of Homer (βιβλίον Ὀμηρικόν), while another teacher evoked admiration because he replied that he had a Homer which he himself had edited (ἐτέρου δὲ φήσαντος ἔχειν Ὀμηρον ὑφ' αὐτοῦ διορθωμένον).²⁹ It is related in the *Life of Lycurgus* that in his lifetime already certain families had the poems of Homer, and that others possessed certain portions of the poems. According to Plutarch, Lycurgus was the first to make the Homeric epics really known.³⁰ Plutarch is aware of a certain subdividing of the Homeric epics when he refers to a passage which occurs in the 'Catalogue of Ships',³¹ and elsewhere to Homer's 'Nekuia', i.e. *Odyssey* 11 which tells of Odysseus' visit to the Underworld.³² Plutarch knows the tradition that Peisistratus in order to gratify the Athenians inserted into the 'Nekuia' of Homer the line: 'Theseus, Peirithous, illustrious children of Heaven'.³³ In the *Life of Solon* he comments on the possibly spurious nature of *Il.*2.557–8.³⁴ He quotes *Il.*3.144 as evidence for the presence of Aethra, the mother of Theseus, amongst the following of Helen of Troy, but adds that some reject this verse of Homer.³⁵ He ascribes to Solon the insertion of lines 557–8 in the 'Catalogue of Ships' (*Il.*2) in order to suggest a tradition of an Athenian alliance with Salamis since the days of Troy.³⁶ He refers to Alexandrian scholarship which removed four lines from the *Iliad* (our present *Il.*9.458–61), but Plutarch argues for their retention and authenticity.³⁷

Certain lines of our present Homeric text we owe to Plutarch as a source rather than to the manuscript tradition of the *Iliad*. Thus lines 458–461 of *Iliad* 9 are not found in any manuscript of Homer's epic, but on the basis of these lines being quoted by Plutarch in his *De audiendis poetis* (26F), and ascribed to Homer when quoted in part in the *Life of Coriolanus* (32), and also partially quoted in *Moralia* 72B, they have been included in some modern texts of the *Iliad*.³⁸ Likewise *Iliad* 11.543 is included on the authority of Plutarch's quotations in *De audiendis poetis* (24C, and in part in 36A), its occurrence in the *Life of Homer* ascribed to Plutarch (*Vit. Hom.*132), and the fact that it is also quoted by Aristotle in his *Rhetorica* (2.9).³⁹

Plutarch is sufficiently familiar with the Homeric text to adapt Homeric lines with ease so that they are stylistically and grammatically integrated in his own text. Dealing with maxims which are usually given in the second person, and wishing to point to a parallel between the well known saying 'Know Thyself' and the sentiments expressed by the Homeric line: 'Seeing that Zeus was wrath if *he* fought with a man far better', he changes the line to: 'Seeing that Zeus is wrath if *you* fight with a man far better'.⁴⁰

An adapted quotation is often put in the mouth of a character featuring in one

of Plutarch's *Lives*. The adaptation of a quotation implies that the hearer knows the Homeric text sufficiently well to appreciate the subtlety of the adapted version. For example, Pyrrhus in his battle for Sparta urges his men to take their arms and act upon the belief that:

One is best of all omens, to fight in defence of Pyrrhus

(Εἷς οἰωνὸς ἄριστος ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ Πύρρου),

which is a clever adaptation of the Homeric verse:

One is best of all omens, to fight in defence of one's country

(Εἷς οἰωνὸς ἄριστος ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πάτρης).⁴¹

In the *Life of Anthony*⁴² a Roman adapts the Homeric phrase 'not a good thing is the rule of the many' (οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη *Il.2.204*) to 'not a good thing is a Caesar too many' (οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκαισαριή) when advising Augustus Caesar to get rid of Caesar's offspring by Cleopatra.

Plutarch's ability to comment on the context of a particular quotation seems to me to be a strong argument in favour of his first-hand knowledge of the poem, or at least of the episode from which the quotation is derived. Plutarch is very much aware of the importance of considering the context for the proper understanding of any given quotation. In his treatise on *How to Study Poetry* he says: 'We must not neglect the means for rectifying a statement which are afforded by the words that lie near, or by the context.'⁴³ This is not unlike the sentiment expressed by his contemporary, Quintilian: 'nor must we study an author in parts, but must read through the whole work from cover to cover and then read it afresh.'⁴⁴ Therefore, it is not surprising to find that Plutarch often adds a comment which displays a knowledge of the context of his quotation. In the following passage he not only comments on the immediate context of the quotation, but also reveals a knowledge of the portrayal of the character in the poem as a whole. He compares the action of Pompey with that of Achilles and says:

For not even Achilles played the part of a man, but that of a youth wholly crazed and frantic in his quest of glory, when he made a sign to the rest which prevented them from smiting Hector,

'Lest some one else won honour by the blow,

and he come only second.'⁴⁵

For the benefit of his readers Plutarch at times appears to place in context a quotation which seems to be derived from an intermediate source. He relates how Marcus Favonius rushed into a room where Brutus and Cassius, who had both been saluted as imperator, were engaged in bitter fault-finding of each other, 'reciting in an affected voice the verses *wherein Homer represents Nestor as saying* "But do ye harken to me, for ye both are younger than I am," and so forth.'⁴⁶ While no final answer can be given, it is possible that the italicised relative clause is Plutarch's own comment and not that found in his source. If this is indeed the case, the brief remark putting the quotation in its wider context adds much to provide a vivid parallel between the action of Nestor and that of Marcus Favonius.

Plutarch exhorts young men, when reading poetry, not to admire everything

nor to be enthralled by heroic names, but to discern between the noble and mean in a character since no character is perfect or unassailable in all respects.⁴⁷ This implies that the assessment of any character portrayal should be in the context of the entire poem. His own analysis of Achilles, Odysseus, Nausicaa, and Penelope seems to support this conviction as he makes use of several quotations ranging widely through *Iliad* 1, and *Odyssey* 6, 13 and 18.⁴⁸ Furthermore, those features which Plutarch identifies as being characteristic of any particular Homeric character usually reflect a good understanding of Homer's portrayal of that individual in general.

Pompey, broken in spirit when he realised that his forces were defeated at Pharsalus, is likened to Ajax retiring before Hector and the Trojans. To quote Plutarch:

What thoughts passed through his (Pompey's) mind it were difficult to say; but he was most like a man bereft of sense and crazed, who had utterly forgotten that he was Pompey the Great, and without a word to any one, he walked slowly off to his camp, exemplifying the verses (of Homer):

'But Zeus the father, throned on high,
 in Ajax stirred up fear;
 He stood confounded, and behind him cast
 his shield of seven ox-hides,
 And trembled as he peered around upon the
 throng.'⁴⁹

Such a comparison requires a knowledge of the portrayal of Ajax in general, and if not in the Homeric epic as a whole, at least in the episode from which the lines are quoted. To be able to epitomise a character by a brief but well-chosen quotation requires a good knowledge of the epic poem. Thus, when Plutarch describes Cleomenes as taking no pleasure in his life of ease and luxury, but, like Achilles, 'pining away in his dear heart' and 'yearning for war cry and battle',⁵⁰ he reflects an understanding of the essential nature of the Homeric Achilles.

Plutarch's knowledge of Homeric characters is impressive. According to him Theseus and Romulus display characteristics similar to *Ajax* and *Hector*,⁵¹ Camillus is compared with *Achilles* while Aristides is contrasted with Achilles as portrayed in *Iliad* 1.407–412.⁵² To support his argument that costly trappings of war exalt the spirit and inspire courage, Plutarch refers to the portrayal of Achilles in *Iliad* 19.15 ff.⁵³ Philopoemen being reared by a friend is likened to Achilles being raised by *Phoenix*.⁵⁴ The death of Lysander is compared to that of Achilles at the hands of *Paris* at the city gates.⁵⁵ Antony taking refuge with Cleopatra is likened to Paris running to Helen's chamber after his defeat.⁵⁶ In Plutarch's view Otho gained dignity through his marriage to Poppaea as Paris 'the husband of fair-haired *Helen*' gained dignity from his wife.⁵⁷ *Odysseus*' entry into the cave of the Cyclops is the point of comparison in the *Life of Cato Maior*,⁵⁸ while his passing through the Straits of Scylla forms a parallel in the *Life of Dion*.⁵⁹ Coriolanus entering in disguise the home of his foe, Tullus Aufidius, is likened to an *Odysseus* entering the city of his deadly foes.⁶⁰

Plutarch assumes on the part of his audience a knowledge of Homer's portrayal of Zeus, when he states that Pheidias has given a visible form to the Zeus of Homer.⁶¹ In Antiquity a thorough knowledge of Homer is taken for granted since Roman characters too see Homeric parallels in attitudes and actions of individuals. In the *Life of Brutus*, Acilius draws a parallel between the emotional moment when Porcia departs from Brutus and the touching farewell which Andromache bids Hector.⁶² Cicero compares his way of life to that of Laertes, while Cleopatra's alluring charms are likened to those of Hera 'decked out in fine array' as she goes to meet Zeus.⁶³

Plutarch discusses Homer's views on a variety of topics. Before one can make a statement on the views of a poet, even if it is based on a single episode, one must know the rest of his poetry to be assured that such a view is not contradicted or modified elsewhere in his work.⁶⁴ Plutarch knows that Homer is of the school of thought which believes that those fare best whose fortunes incline now one way and now another.⁶⁵ Plutarch is firmly anti-Stoic and takes a stand contrary to the teaching of his time when he argues that Homer, as Euripides, supports the concept that good and bad are commingled and one must 'say farewell to the Stoics who will have it that nothing base can attach to virtue, and nothing good to vice'.⁶⁶ With several quotations from the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, Plutarch illustrates Homer's habit of attributing to human volition 'those acts which are natural, customary, and the result of reasoning', but to a god's prompting 'exploits of a strange and extraordinary nature which require some rush of inspiration and desperate courage'.⁶⁷ A philosophic reason is given for Homer's practice of always portraying his boldest and most valiant heroes well armed and equipped in battle.⁶⁸ Plutarch is aware that Homer, in agreement with Hesiod, supports righteousness in the management of a household and views idleness as a source of evil.⁶⁹

Further indications of Plutarch's thorough knowledge of Homeric poetry is his ability to comment on such general characteristics as Homer's habits in the use of introductions and closing lines;⁷⁰ his observation that Homer grants alluring words even to mean characters;⁷¹ and his identifying typical Homeric epithets and glosses.⁷² Finally, Plutarch can relate details found in the traditions about Homer,⁷³ which only adds to the impression that Plutarch had a sound knowledge of Homer and his poetry.

In dealing with Plutarch's sources R H Barrow points out that a certain 'rough and ready rule' has been established in Plutarchean source criticism. He states:

In the *Moralia* a citation, direct or indirect, is made very often for the purpose of illustration; it is not vital to the argument; it could be omitted. Such citations occur only to a mind familiar with the work from which citation is made, and, if references are made over the whole range of the work, it is a reasonable conclusion that the whole work has been read and is well known.⁷⁴

While these may be useful criteria in the case of historical sources, they are inadequate for poetry. Quotations from the poets are very often incidental as

they are usually embellishments rather than facts vital to an argument. For Plutarch's biographies the poetry of Homer, Greek Comedy and Tragedy, being rich in character sketches, frequently offer more suitable material than lyric poetry. Thus, merely to consider the frequency of quotations from a poet may be less appropriate than considering the particular nature of the poetry. Obviously the standing of an individual poet at the time of writing will also influence the extent to which a writer like Plutarch would use his poetry.

Keeping these limitations in mind, and judging by the nature of Plutarch's knowledge of Homer, I would suggest that the following criteria could be indicative of Plutarch's first-hand knowledge of a poet:

1. The frequency with which a poet is quoted, provided one also gives due consideration to the nature of the poetry and to the range of topics on which a poet is cited.
2. The knowledge displayed of the text of any poetry as reflected in an ability to refer to titles, sub-divisions, or length of a particular poem; and in an ability to comment on the textual tradition, or even in the very use of adapted lines.
3. A knowledge of the context of a given quotation.
4. Judgements or statements which depend on a knowledge of a poet's work in general, such as the portrayal of a character; comments on a poet's point of view; statements on typical aspects of style; the use of epithets, introductions and metre in general.

Not all these factors need be present, but the more there are the stronger the argument becomes for a knowledge of a particular poet at first hand.

Among the Greek poets admired by Quintilian, the lyric poets who receive special mention are Pindar, Simonides, Archilochus, Alcaeus, and Stesichorus.⁷⁵ This may serve as an indication of the lyric poets who were in vogue at the time when Plutarch wrote his work. Plutarch quotes Pindar 126 times, Simonides 55, Archilochus 25, Alcaeus 9 and Stesichorus 4 (possibly 8).⁷⁶ Significantly all these poets belong to the 5th century B.C. and earlier. In keeping with trends in Antiquity they, as lyric poets, are not quoted that frequently.⁷⁷

Although Alcaeus and Stesichorus are not frequently quoted, the citations from these poets involve two criteria which are possibly the strongest indications of a first-hand knowledge of a poem, namely the ability to comment on the context of a line or phrase, and a judgement which depends on a knowledge of a poet's work in general.

Plutarch knows of Stesichorus that he never mentions an Egyptian or Phoenician Heracles, and that his phrase for an eclipse is 'midday night falling'.⁷⁸ Plutarch can place in context the lines: 'She thought a serpent came to her, its head smeared on the crown with blood, when lo it changed into the royal Pleisthenid.' He informs his readers that this is a dream of Clytemnestra and he comments on the general nature of that dream as described by Stesichorus.⁷⁹

Plutarch knows that Alcaeus' epithet for Pittacus is a 'dusk diner', and he expounds on the significance of this epithet as used by Alcaeus.⁸⁰ Plutarch displays a knowledge of the context for at least two other quotations from

Alcaeus.⁸¹ Furthermore, when he quotes a poem of the lesser known Alcaeus, the epigrammatist, he is at pains to distinguish him from Alcaeus, the lyric poet. He tells his readers that the poem quoted was written in mockery of Philip of Macedonia; he describes the poem as an epigram in elegiac verse and of many such writings the one most popular in Philip's time.⁸²

The comments on the general nature of the metre in the poetry of Stesichorus,⁸³ and the comment of Alcaeus' portrayal of Apollo,⁸⁴ should not be considered as they occur in the *De Musica*, which scholars do not attribute to Plutarch.

Archilochus is quoted more extensively than either Alcaeus or Stesichorus. Plutarch is well aware of characteristic epithets and phrases to be found in the poetry of Archilochus;⁸⁵ he knows the poet's viewpoint on several matters;⁸⁶ and in one passage he provides an extensive quotation to epitomise Archilochus' un-Spartan attitude which saw no shame in abandoning his shield in order to save his life.⁸⁷ Plutarch can tell us that Archilochus' poetry is bitter in tone with a certain licence and puerility.⁸⁸ Several quotations are used with a knowledge of the context in which they occur in Archilochus' poetry. For example, Plutarch knows that the phrase 'fields are fattened' is used of fallen in battle;⁸⁹ that the lines:

This island, like the backbone of an ass,
Stands up beneath its cover of wild wood,

are a description of the fruitful fields and vineyards of Thasos.⁹⁰ Plutarch knows his author sufficiently well to comment on the circumstances in which certain lines were composed.⁹¹

Simonides is extensively quoted over a wide range of subjects, and often for the beauty and aptness of his poetry. More than once, Plutarch tells his reader that the lines quoted from Simonides are to be found in some or other honorific inscription.⁹² He refers to a poem of Simonides which tells the story of the battle of Plataea, and then goes on to quote several lines which honour the men from Ephyrus' Springs to which he adds:

And these lines are not meant to be sung by a chorus in Corinth, nor are they from an ode in honour of the city; they come from an elegiac poem which simply tells the story of those events.⁹³

On another occasion he refers to an 'epigram' of Simonides,⁹⁴ and elsewhere he states that he is only quoting the last lines of a verse inscription.⁹⁵ In several quotations he reveals a knowledge of their context.⁹⁶ Plutarch is aware of epithets which are characteristic of Simonides's poetry.⁹⁷ Frequently the views of Simonides are given with appropriate quotations from his poetry.⁹⁸

Pindar is the most frequently quoted lyric poet in Plutarch's *Lives* and *Moralia*. The only other poets which are quoted more often are Aeschylus, Sophocles, Hesoid and Euripides.⁹⁹ Plutarch quoting extensively from Pindar demonstrates convincingly that he is familiar with the most popular of Greek lyric poets.¹⁰⁰ It is clear that he is familiar with the text of Pindar's poetry;¹⁰¹ that he knows the context of lines and phrases quoted from Pindar;¹⁰² and that he is capable of making statements which depend on a knowledge of the poet's work as a

whole.¹⁰³

Clemens (150–211/216 A.D.) and Stobaeus (early 5th century A.D.) who quote extensively from ancient Greek literature, relied much on collections of excerpts and maxims derived from a tradition which reached back to the 3rd century B.C. Yet a comparison of Plutarch's quotations from the lyric poets, Pindar, Simonides, Archilochus, Alcaeus, and Stesichorus, with the quotations in Clemens and Stobaeus shows no real correlation.¹⁰⁴ The quotations from these lyric poets in Plutarch have so little in common with those in Clemens and Stobaeus that the possibility of Plutarch relying on the same tradition of excerpts and gnomai as these late authors must be excluded. The few quotations which these authors do have in common with Plutarch indicate a philosophic interest rather than a common interest in the lyric poets.

I have not dealt with the almost complete absence of references to Latin poets in Plutarch's work. This is a problem of a different nature. However, noting that Quintilian concedes the supremacy in poetry to the Greeks, but claims Satire as a Roman genre and describes Horace as the only Roman lyric writer worth reading, it is significant that the only Roman poet cited by Plutarch is Horace.¹⁰⁵ On my reading of Plutarch the evidence seems to support very strongly the view that Plutarch at least had an extensive and first-hand knowledge of those lyric poets who were of any significance in his time.¹⁰⁶

NOTES

- * Delivered during the 17th Biennial Conference of the Classical Association of South Africa at Stellenbosch, January 1987.
1. *de Aud. Poet.* 28B.
 2. *Theseus* 2.1. For convenience the Loeb translation has been used throughout.
 3. See *Iliad* 7.281.
 4. *Demosthenes* 9.5.
 5. *Agessilaus* 5.4 with reference to *Od.* 8.75 ff.
 6. *Pericles* 26.4. The quotation is attributed to Aristophanes' *Babylonians*.
 7. *Pericles* 3.2–4.
 8. *id.* 3.3.
 9. *id.* 3.4.
 10. *Solon* 8.2–3.
 11. *Pompey* 73.7.
 12. *Moralia* 85A. For further examples of this nature, see *Aristides* 3.4, *Mor.* 88B, 32D.
 13. F.H. Sandbach, 'Plutarch and Aristotle', *ICS* 7 (1982).
 14. W.C. Helmbold and E.N. O'Neil, *Plutarch's Quotations*, Baltimore 1959, 8–12.
 15. S.G. Mitchell, *An Analysis of Plutarch's Quotations from Euripides*, Diss. Calif. 1968.
 16. H. Schläpfer, *Plutarch und die klassischen Dichter*, Zurich 1950, 26–41.
 17. R.H. Barrow, *Plutarch and his Times*, Bloomington 1967, 151.
 18. See the comment of P.A. Stadter, *Plutarch's Historical Methods. An Analysis of the Mulierum Virtutes*, Cambr. Mass. 1965, 128, and his reference in note 9 on page 128 to Ziegler, *RE.* 914–928, and Theander, *B. Lund*, 1950–51, 1–86.
 19. See *Oxford Classical Dictionary* s.v. 'Paroemiographers' and 'Aristophanes (2)'; *Der Kleine Pauly, Lexikon der Antike* s.v. Aristophanes (4); D.A. Russell, *Plutarch*, London 1973, 46 ff. The works of authors later than Plutarch, e.g. Clemens of Alexandria (150–211/216 A.D.),

Stobaeus (early 5th century A.D.), and Chryssipos (second half of 5th century A.D.), whose works abound in quotations from Greek literature, made use of collections of excerpts and *gnomai* which had a tradition going back to the 3rd century B.C.

20. *Pericles* 35.2, and *Philopoemen* 2.3.
21. *Agesilaus* 21.4.
22. *Fabius Maximus* 1.5.
23. *Themistocles* 18.1.
24. *id.*32.5.
25. *Demosthenes* 7.2.
26. *id.*31.4.
27. Quintilian, *Instit. Orat.*10.1.46.
28. *id.*10.1.46–50.
29. *Alcibiades* 7.1.
30. *Lycurgus* 4.4.
31. *Theseus* 25.2, with reference to *Iliad* 2.494–877.
32. *Marius* 11.6.
33. *Theseus* 20.1–2, quoting *Od.*11.631 and reading ἄριδείκετα for ἔρυκυδέα.
34. *Solon* 10.2.
35. *Theseus* 34.1.
36. *Solon* 10.1.
37. *de Aud. Poet.*26F.
38. For example, W. Leaf and M.A. Bayfield, *The Iliad of Homer* Vol.1, London 1965, and the Budé text, *Homère Iliade*, Paris 1972. See M.M. Willcock, *A Companion to the Iliad*, Chicago 1976, comment ad loc. This commentary is based on Richmond Lattimore's translation. A. Ludwich, *Homeri Ilias*, Lipsiae 1902, comment ad loc., and also Loeb ed. *Plutarch's Moralia*, Vol.1, 140 note b.
39. W. Leaf & M.A. Bayfield, *op.cit.* comment on 11.540–543. A. Ludwich, *op.cit.* comment ad loc., and also Loeb ed. *Plutarch's Moralia* Vol.1, 126, footnotes 2 and 6; and 188–9, footnote c.
40. Compare *de Aud. Poet.*24 B–C, where Plutarch quotes Homer *Il.*11.543: Ζεὺς γὰρ οἱ νεμέσα ὄτ' ἀμείνονι φῶτι μάχοιτο, with *de Aud. Poet.*36A where *Il.*11.543 is adapted to read: Ζεὺς γὰρ τοὺ νεμεσῶ, ὄτ' ἀμείνονι φῶτι μάχοιτο.
41. Compare *Pyrrhus* 29.2 and *Il.*12.243.
42. *Antony* 81.2.
43. *de Aud. Poet.* 22B. The Loeb translation has been adjusted.
44. *Instit. Orat.*10.1.20.
45. *Pompey* 29.4 quoting *Il.*22.207.
46. *Brutus* 34.1–3, quoting *Il.*1.259.
47. *de Aud. Poet.*26A–B.
48. *id.*26B–27E.
49. *Pompey* 72.1–2 quoting *Il.*11.544 ff.
50. *Agis and Cleomenes* 34.3 quoting *Il.*1.491 f.
51. *Theseus* 2.1 with reference to *Il.*7.281.
52. *Camillus* 13.1, and *Aristides* 7.6.
53. *Philopoemen* 9.7.
54. *id.*1.2 with reference to *Il.*9.438 ff.
55. *Lysander and Sulla* 4.3.
56. *Demetrius and Antony* 3.4.
57. *Galba* 19.2.
58. *Cato Maior* 9.3.
59. *Dion* 18.3.
60. *Coriolanus* 22.2 quoting *Od.*4.246.
61. *Aemilius P.*28.2.
62. *Brutus* 23.3–4 with reference to *Il.*6.429 ff.
63. *Cicero* 40.3 with reference to *Od.*1.189 ff.; and *Antony* 25.2 referring to *Il.*14.162.
64. See Plutarch's own statement to this effect in *de Aud. Poet.*20C–21D.

65. *Aemilius P.* 34.4.
66. *de Aud. Poet.* 25C.
67. *Coriolanus* 32.4–7. See too *Pyrrhus* 22.6 where the sentiments of Homer are not quoted but paraphrased.
68. *Pelopidas* 1.4–5.
69. *Aristides and Cato* 3.4.
70. *de Aud. Poet.* 19B–D.
71. *id.* 27–28A.
72. *Fabius Max.* 19.2, *Aratus* 45.6, *Galba* 19.2, *Demetrius* 42.5, *Phocion* 2.2, and *de Aud. Poet.* 22C–E.
73. *Lycurgus* 1.2, *Sertorius* 1.3–4.
74. R.H. Barrow, *op. cit.* 156.
75. Quintilian, *Instit. Orat.* 10.1.59–64.
76. For frequency of quotations, see Helmbold & O’Neil *op. cit.*
77. H. Schläpfer, *op. cit.* 26, points out that lyric poets are poorly represented in Ancient literature since their material was less suitable for quoting and because they enjoyed less interest and were considered of less value from a philosophic and rhetorical point of view.
78. *Moralia* 857F and 931E.
79. *id.* 555A.
80. *id.* 726B.
81. *id.* 763E and 647E.
82. *Flaminius* 9.1–3.
83. *Moralia* 1133F and 1135C.
84. *id.* 1135F.
85. *Marius* 21.3–4, *Mor.* 976F and 386D.
86. *Mor.* 950F and 1070A, *Demetrius* 35.4.
87. *Mor.* 239B. This passage is also known to other authors, but Plutarch offers the most detailed and extensive quotation.
88. *Cato Min.* 7.2.
89. *Marius* 21.4.
90. *Mor.* 604C. For further quotations which reflect Plutarch’s knowledge of their context, see *Mor.* 33A, 23B, 950F, 1070A, 985A, and *Demetrius* 35.4.
91. *Mor.* 604C and 985A.
92. *id.* 436B and 785A.
93. *id.* 872D–E.
94. *id.* 869C.
95. *id.* 785A.
96. *Theseus* 17.5–6 suggests a sound knowledge of Simonides’ poem since several points are made with reference to Simonides as authority. See further *Mor.* 602D, 872D–E, 869C, 785A, 79C, 41F.
97. *Agessilaus* 1.2.
98. *Dion* 1.1, *Theseus* 17.5, *Themistocles* 15.2 and 1.3, *Lycurgus* 1.4. *Moralia* 111C is not considered to be by Plutarch.
99. See Helmbold and O’Neil, *op. cit.* Euripides is cited more often by far.
100. See Helmbold and O’Neil, *op. cit.* 55–56 for the range of references to Pindar’s *Isthmia*, *Nemea*, *Olympia*, *Pythia*, and numerous fragments.
101. Plutarch at times paraphrases a sentiment of Pindar, and then elsewhere quotes Pindar’s own words on the very same subject (*cf. Mor.* 1030A and 397A); he can refer to an early lyric of Pindar to illustrate the poet’s over-reaction in his formative years to the criticism that his poetry lacked mythological references (*Mor.* 348A); Plutarch is adept at integrating by appropriate adaptations the text of Pindar into his own work (*Mor.* 417C, 623B and 706E; 867C and 552B; 365A, 745A, 757E–F, and 415D).
102. See *Themistocles* 8.2, *Mor.* 21A, 747D, 732E, 350A, 867C, 617C, 167C, 1102E–F.
103. Pindar’s views on many a subject are quoted: on death (*Romulus* 28.6), on justice (*Demetrius* 42.5), on valour and music (*Lycurgus* 21.3), the value of truth (*Marius* 29.3), the compelling power of fate (*Marcellus* 29.5), the supreme god, Zeus (*Mor.* 550A, 618B, 927B), the fate of the righteous (*Mor.* 1130C–D), the nature of Apollo (*Mor.* 394A–B, 1102E–F), on demi-gods

(*Mor.*415D), on gods (*Mor.*167F), and on old age (*Mor.*477B, 480C).

Plutarch uses Pindaric epithets of Ares (*Marcellus* 21.2), and of Zeus (*Mor.*618B and 927B); he knows Pindar's poetic descriptions of Athens (*Mor.*232E, 350A, 617C) and of Artemesium (*Mor.*867C). He comments on a typical banquet described in Pindar as opposed to that in Homer (*Mor.*643E).

Plutarch knows the portrayal of characters in Pindar (*Lycurgus* 21.3, *Mor.*1057D), and the nature of his poetry which he describes as lyric (*Mor.*348A) or melic (*Mor.*120C). He is aware of the tone of certain passages, which suggests a knowledge of much of Pindar's poetry (*Mor.*21A). He is able to quote appropriate passages to illustrate Pindar's skill in the use of onomatopoeia and metaphor (*Mor.*747D). Plutarch also knows that although Pindar professes that vaunting is undesirable, he in fact never wearies of extolling himself (*Mor.*539C). Plutarch also reflects a knowledge of personal or anecdotal details of Pindar and his work (*Numa* 4.6, *Mor.*867C, 348A, 717D).

104. C. Wachsmuth and O. Hense, *J. Stobaei Anthologium*, Vol.1–5, Berlin 1884–1912; *J. Stobaei ed. Weidmannianae appendix*, Berlin 1923 (Index Bks.III and IV); O. Stählin (hsrg), *Clemens Alexandrinus Ges. Werke (Die Griechischen Christliche Schriftsteller)* 1905–1936; A. Elter, *De Gnomologiorum Graecorum historia atque origine Commentationes I–9*, Bonnæ 1893. See too P.W. s.v. 'Stobaeus' and 'Clemens Alexandrinus'.
105. *Lucullus* 39.5 where Horace *Ep.*1.6.40–46 is paraphrased.
106. Compare the conclusions of H. Schläpfer, *op.cit.*26–41.

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