

TYCHE IN PLUTARCH'S *AEMILIUS PAULUS-TIMOLEON*

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The *Aemilius Paulus-Timoleon* is unexcelled in its exhibition of Plutarchan artistry. The work commences with a formal and programmatic prologue that has, naturally enough, attracted much exposition, and the detailed (and obvious) thematic integration of the twinned biographies showcases their author's fondness for parallelism and *synkrisis*, his fundamental methodologies for the representation of character. And, for each biography in this pairing, its hero can only be described as virtuous in the best Greco-Roman sense of the term: each is an incorruptible and victorious warrior whose virtue is abetted by providence, and each wages war against opponents who, though mighty, deserve to fail because they are immoral. Not all so different from Avatar, really, and, as I hope to show, Plutarch is no less keen than James Cameron to exploit his obvious predecessors. The two biographies correspond almost perfectly in their length, advertise their most obvious connexions, and conclude with a brief comparison the verdict of which (for once) seems clear (for all his outstanding merits, so this *synkrisis* concludes, Timoleon's *ethos* did not have *megethos*: *synk.* 2.12). In short, then, the *Aemilius-Timoleon* is a pairing that elegantly incorporates all the major features of Plutarch biography.¹

¹ The formal prologue: *Aem.* 1.1-4: see T. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford 1999), 30ff. Plutarchan methods: e.g. C. Pelling, *Plutarch and History: Eighteen Studies* (London 2002), with extensive references to important previous scholarship. The *Aem.-Tim.*: J. Geiger, 'Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*: the Choice of Heroes', in B. Scardigli (ed.), *Essays on Plutarch's Lives* (Oxford 1995), 184ff.; S. Swain, 'Plutarch: Chance, Providence, History', *AJP* 110 (1989), 272-302; 'De Fortuna Deorum', *CQ* 39 (1989), 504-16; 'Plutarch's Aemilius and Timoleon', *Historia* 38 (1989), 314-34; *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World AD 50-250 BC* (Oxford 1996), 151ff.; P. Desideri, 'Teoria e prassi storiografica di Plutarco: una proposta di lettura della coppia Emilio Paolo-Timoleonte', *Maia* 3 (1989), 199-215; R. Scuderi, 'Perseo, ultimo sovrano di Macedonia, nella biografia plutarchei de Emilio Paolo', *Acta Classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debreceniensis* 40-41 (2004-2005), 55-64.

The most important – and extensive – discussions of this are found in a series of publications by Simon Swain that has set our understanding of it on a new level, both in terms of its literary construction and its moralizing and cultural implications. A central focus of Swain’s examination is Plutarch’s conceptualization and deployment of *tyche*.

Now it can hardly be necessary to rehearse the extensive versatility in meaning exhibited by this commonplace word, the sense of which varies enormously. It denominates any of several versions of an ancient goddess (e.g. Hes. *Theog.* 360; *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 420; Pind. *Ol.* 12.1-2) as well as the object of Hellenistic and Imperial cult. It also denotes the merest chance or coincidence. And it invokes varying types of providential forces, good or ill in temper, particular or historical in scope. The word is often used inconsistently even by a single writer, and all too often the word is so vague that it resists specific definition.² Which of course makes it a perfect target for any serious critic.

Swain has carefully demonstrated that Plutarch’s use of *tyche* can be divided into three categories, each tethered to specific generic situations. In his serious philosophical essays, Plutarch eschews every ambiguity of which *tyche* is susceptible: there the word is applied only to events that are purely accidental. The universe of the *Lives*, by contrast, differs. There Plutarch’s usage is much less precise: in addition to referring to mere chance, *tyche* also often overlaps with *theos* and *daimon* and so indicates a guiding force much like providence. The final pattern of Plutarchan usage, and the least relevant to the purposes of this paper, is found in his purely rhetorical pieces. In his *De Fortuna Romanorum*, to cite the most obvious case, Plutarch exhibits *tyche* not merely in her providential guise but here (and only here in Plutarch) as a full-blown goddess, though

² Tyche: G. Herzog-Hauser, *RE* 7A 2 (1943), 1643-89, where much of the evidence is assembled; M.P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Munich 1961), 200-18; LSJ s.v. ; I. Karanto, ‘Fortuna’, *ANRW* 2.17.1 (Stuttgart 1981), 525-31. Fourth century and Hellenistic religion: J. Mikalson, *Athenian Popular Religion* (Chapel Hill 1983), 59-62; P. Green, *Alexander to Actium: The Historical Evolution of the Hellenistic Age* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1990), 400-401; R. Parker, *Athenian Religion: A History* (Oxford 1996), 231-32. Imperial cult: Karanto, op. cit. Hellenistic historiography: F.W. Walbank, *Selected Papers: Studies in Greek and Roman History and Historiography* (Cambridge 1985), 83-84. The specific and important case of Polybius is taken up below.

one of the rhetorical and not the theological variety. It is obvious from Swain's important analysis that, although it can happen in Greek literature that *tyche* is used by an author without discrimination, Plutarch himself tends to display a significant degree of self-consciousness whenever he introduces the term. It is a word to be watched, then, not least in the *Aemilius-Timoleon*, where it is a central theme. Which is why Swain is right to approach this pairing by way of its deployment of *tyche*.

Now it is Swain's contention that *tyche* operates differently in the two biographies. The *Timoleon* is dominated by providential *tyche*. This is itself an unusual feature, since Plutarch tends to restrict the operation of providence (in the *Parallel Lives*) to the rise of Rome or the collapse of the republic in favour of imperial monarchy. Timoleon is an exception, however, because, as Swain is right to observe, his career resulted in a Greek victory not over other Greeks but over tyrants and barbarians, all in the cause of freedom. Thus it was utterly unsullied by the infighting that was anathema to the imperial Greek ideal – and certainly to Plutarch's ideal – of proper Hellenism. The providential nature of *tyche* in this Greek life, it is urged, contrasts sharply with the role of *tyche* in its Roman parallel. There *tyche*'s appearances are rarely signifiers of divine or fateful impulses. Instead, the *tyche* that buffets Aemilius is personal and capricious.³

The literary purpose of this striking variation in the register of *tyche*, Swain concludes, is to underscore the point that Timoleon's mission was favoured by the divine order, and that its historical realization approximated the miraculous. Aemilius' victory in the Third Macedonian War, on the other hand, lacked any comparable historical heft. In the biographer's assessment, according to Swain, 'the events in which Aemilius was involved were not after all stupendous'. In a related discussion of the same matter, Swain goes so far as to claim that, in Plutarch's view, 'Aemilius' campaign did not produce really great changes in the world'. Hence Plutarch's concentration, in the *Aemilius*, on a

³ *Tyche* and Rome in Plutarch: Origins of Rome (e.g. *Rom.* 8.9; *Cam.* 6.3); Roman expansion (e.g. *Phil.* 17.2; *Flam.* 12.10); imperial monarchy (e.g. *Phoc.* 3.4; *Pomp.* 53.8-9); political harmony in Rome (e.g. *Flam.* 12; *Pomp.* 75.5). See Swain, *Historia* 38 (1989), 314-16; *Hellenism and Empire*, 151ff. (with further references). The exception of Timoleon: Swain, *Historia*, 333-34; *Hellenism and Empire*, 154-55.

purely individual register for *tyche*, while its providential version is reserved for the *Timoleon*.⁴

This conclusion about Plutarch's assessment of the historical significance of Aemilius Paulus' success at Pydna seems far from inevitable, however, and perhaps a bit unexpected. After all, Aemilius' victory in the Third Macedonian War was not simply an enduring hallmark of Rome's eastern advance, as Polybius had recognized early on (more on that presently), it was, for subsequent generations of Romans, a strong token of divine favour, much like the victory at Lake Regillus.⁵

It is true, of course, that Plutarch's central purpose in this as in all his pairings is not so much to make historical as ethical assessments, and he tells us explicitly that it is his intention in the *Aemilius-Timoleon* to explore the relationship between intelligence (*phronesis*) and *tyche* in the lives of each subject:

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| <p>ὧν ἐν τῷ παρόντι προκεχειρίσμεθά σοι τὸν Τιμολέοντος τοῦ Κορινθίου καὶ τὸν Αἰμιλίου Παύλου βίον. ἀνδρῶν οὐ μόνον ταῖς αἰρέσεσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς τύχαις ἀγαθαῖς ὁμοίως κεχρημένων ἐπὶ τὰ πράγματα. καὶ διαμφισβήτησιν παρεξόντων πότερον εὐποτμία μᾶλλον ἢ φρονήσει τὰ μέγιστα τῶν πεπραγμένων κατώρθωσαν.</p> | <p>Just such examples have I selected for you in this present work: the life of Timoleon of Corinth and the life of Aemilius Paullus. These men were alike not only in the excellence of their moral principles but also in the good fortune each enjoyed when it came to actual events, and they will make it hard to determine whether it was owing to their good luck or to their intelligence that they accomplished the greatest of their achievements (<i>Aem.</i> 1.6).</p> |
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⁴ Quotations drawn from Swain, *Historia* 38 (1989), 334 and *AJP* 110 (1989), 275.

⁵ Aemilius' reputation: for the literary record, see, in general, W. Rieter, *Aemilius Paullus: Conqueror of Greece* (London 1988). Divine favour: Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.6; Val. Max. 1.8.1; Plin. *HN* 7.86; Florus 1.28.14-15; cf. Liv. 45.1.1-5; Plut. *Aem.* 24.4-6. Imprinted in the material fabric of Rome: Arch of Fabius: *ILLRP* 392; Forum of Augustus: sources in J. Geiger, *The First Hall of Fame: A Study in the Statues of the Forum Augustum* (Leiden 2008), 151; after all its several refurbishments by ambitious Aemilii, it is unimaginable that Aemilius went unremembered in the Basilica Pauli, which in Plutarch's day was one of Rome's most splendid constructions (Plin. *HN* 36.102): see H. Bauer, 'Basilica Paul(i)i', in E.M. Steinby (ed.), *LTUR*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Rome 1993), 183-87.

For Plutarch, *tyche* – in the sense of chance or accident – was implicated in the exercise of *phronesis* and thus in the moral well being of every individual.⁶ Which makes it perfectly natural that Aemilius' biography should concentrate on its hero's ethical consistency in his confrontation with good fortune and bad, not least because he was a figure associated with strong views on the matter. Still, recent criticism has correctly rendered it no longer possible or desirable to attempt too strict a distinction between the ethical and the historiographical dimensions of Plutarchan biography.⁷

Now there is no question that he is capable of drawing attention to the greater significance of a Greek life when it is matched against the importance of its Roman twin (the *Coriolanus-Alcibiades*, to take an obvious example, illustrates this). None the less, any demotion of Aemilius' victory over Perseus could only be described as revisionist or even provocative – at least to a Roman reader. This in itself hardly refutes Swain's view of the pairing, but it perhaps prompts a second look, for which the urgency of the crucial evidence adduced by Swain about *tyche* remains undeniable and essential. These same observations, however, can lead to a different reading of the *Aemilius* against its chief literary and historiographical background.

(ii)

Now Swain is absolutely right when he draws our attention to the emphasis on providential *tyche* exhibited by the *Timoleon*. This is all the more evident when we turn to the *Aemilius*, where *tyche* most often takes the guise of chance. And it is undeniable that a central concern of the biography lies in its repeated insistence on the importance of each individual's mental and moral preparation for unexpected reversals of fortune, be it fate, nemesis or caprice. This is the subject of no fewer than three key passages in which Aemilius, in direct discourse, addresses first Perseus (*Aem.* 26.10-12), then his sons and

⁶ *De virt. mor.* 443F-444A; *Dion* 1.3; the same connexion is made, in rhetorical rather than philosophical terms, in *De fort.* See Swain, 'Character Change in Plutarch', *Phoenix* 43 (1989), 62-68, esp. 64-65.

⁷ Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, 14-22; Pelling, *Plutarch and History*, 102-03; 259-61.

officers (*Aem.* 27.2-5) and finally the Roman people (*Aem.* 36.3-9), in what constitutes a crescendo of wisdom on the topic. Aemilius' own fortitude in the teeth of personal adversity (which, we must observe, he interprets in public as well as private terms at *Aem.* 36.7-8), only reinforces the moral truth of his previous sermons, all of which constitutes a lesson that scarcely appears in the *Timoleon*. Furthermore, Plutarch explicitly prefers to credit Aemilius' success in the Third Macedonian War to his natural capacities than to his good fortune (*Aem.* 12.1-2), which seems straightforward enough, though one must not overlook the fact that he prefers a similar assessment in the case of Timoleon (*Tim.* 36.4).

Still, it is by no means the case that Plutarch's treatment of Aemilius's life eschews any and every providential aspect, even if that particular drum is pounded less often in the Roman's than in the Greek's biography. In the formal prologue to the pair, as we have seen, Plutarch ascribes the success of *both* his heroes at least in part to a guiding providential force (*eupotμία* – a rare word in Plutarch).⁸

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| <p>ὧν ἐν τῷ παρόντι προκεχειρίσμεθά σοι τὸν Τιμολέοντος τοῦ Κορινθίου καὶ τὸν Αἰμιλίου Παύλου βίον, ἀνδρῶν οὐ μόνον ταῖς αἰρέσεσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς τύχαις ἀγαθαῖς ὁμοίως κεχρημένων ἐπὶ τὰ πράγματα, καὶ διαμφισβήτησιν παρεξόντων πότερον εὐποτμία μᾶλλον ἢ φρονήσει τὰ μέγιστα τῶν πεπραγμένων κατώρθωσαν.</p> | <p>Just such examples have I selected for you in this present work: the life of Timoleon of Corinth and the life of Aemilius Paullus. These men were alike not only in the excellence of their moral principles but also in the good fortune each enjoyed when it came to actual events, and they will make it hard to determine whether it was owing to their good luck or to their intelligence that they accomplished the greatest of their achievements (<i>Aem.</i> 1.6).</p> |
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At *Aem.* 10. 6-8 (the omen of the puppy named Perseus, which Plutarch found in Cicero's *De divinatione* 1.103) and *Aem.* 17.7-13 (the lunar eclipse and Aemilius' sacrificial exertions in response, on which actions Plutarch dilates), divine favour is thoroughly conjoined with Aemilius' own determination to find it, in keeping with the healthy balance between providence and prudence that is Plutarch's recurring characterization of this hero. By contrast, the portentousness that suffuses chapter 24 is concentrated and

⁸ *Eupotμία* rare in Plutarch: Swain, *AJP* 110 (1989), 300.

conspicuous, advertised by signs and significations, each a supernatural manifestation of providential goodwill heralding Aemilius' success in the aftermath of Pydna (when even the rapid collapse of Macedonian resistance is marked out as evidence of Aemilius' *tyche*: *Aem.* 24.??-??). In this same chapter, Plutarch shifts back to the battle itself, the result of which, he reports, was mysteriously made known at Rome even as it transpired in the east, all of which is Plutarch's version of the involvement of Castor and Pollux known from Roman traditions (*Aem.* 24.??-??).⁹ It is at this point that Plutarch initiates a digression on portents of this kind (*Aem.* 25), a literary device used elsewhere by Plutarch (and not exclusively by Plutarch) in order to punctuate and to supplement his material. There Plutarch implicitly associates Pydna with the Romans' victory over the Etruscans at the battle of Lake Regillus as well as the Greeks' over the Persians in the battle of Plataea.¹⁰ It is perhaps best, then, not to react reductively to the record of *tyche* in the *Aemilius*: matters seem manifold and untidy, for which Plutarch had good and unavoidable precedent.

(iii)

This brings us to Polybius, his *History*'s engagement with multiple notions of *tyche* and its representation of Aemilius as a figure in whom nearly the entire range of Polybian *tyche* is implicated. Now *tyche* in Polybius can hardly be described as a subject that has passed unnoticed by previous scholarship, and it will be unnecessary here to offer a detailed review of the matter or its controversies. Instead, I simply want to adduce certain key aspects of Polybian *tyche*, which, it will quickly become clear, are relevant to Plutarch's pairing of Aemilius with Timoleon.

⁹ Providence in the *Aemilius*: *Aem.* 1.6; 10.6-8; 17.7-3 (cf. the different emphasis of Polyb. 29.16.1-2; Liv. 44.37.5-9); 24-25 (cf. Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.6; Liv. 45.1.1-5; Val. Max. 1.8.1; Plin. *HN* 7.86; Florus 1.28.14-15).

¹⁰ Digressions and their integration into the totality of literary (including oratorical) works: M. Heath, *Unity in Greek Poetics* (Oxford 1989), 88-97 and *passim*.

Polybius opens his *History* with references to two different species of *tyche*, each with abiding significance for the whole of his work.¹¹ The principal moral utility of history, Polybius insists from the start, lies in learning how to bear with dignity the vicissitudes of *tyche* by observing the calamities of others (Polyb. 1.1.2):

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| <p>πάντες ... φάσκοντες ἀληθινωτάτην μὲν εἶναι παιδείαν καὶ γυμνασίαν πρὸς τὰς πολιτικὰς πράξεις τῆν ἐκ τῆς ἱστορίας μάθησιν. ἐναργεστάτην δὲ καὶ μόνην διδάσκαλον τοῦ δύνασθαι τὰς τῆς τύχης μεταβολὰς γενναίως ὑποφέρειν τῆν τῶν ἀλλοτρίων περιπετειῶν ὑπόμνησιν</p> | <p>all historians ... agree that the study of history constitutes a sound education and a rigorous training for politics; and the most vivid – in fact, the only – means of learning how to endure the vicissitudes of <i>tyche</i> nobly is our mindfulness of the calamities of others</p> |
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A few lines later, Polybius introduces another, and in this instance, providential *tyche*, at Polyb. 1.4.1:¹²

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| <p>τὸ γὰρ τῆς ἡμετέας πραγματείας ἴδιον καὶ τὸ θαυμάσιον τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς καιρῶν τοῦτ' ἔστιν. ὅτι καθάπερ ἡ τύχη σχεδὸν ἅπαντα τὰ τῆς οἰκουμένης πράγματα πρὸς ἓν ἔκλινε μέρος καὶ πάντα νεύειν ἠνάγκασε πρὸς ἓνα καὶ</p> | <p>For what gives my work its unique quality and what is the most amazing thing of our present time in this: Fortune (<i>tyche</i>) has guided almost all the affairs of the world in one direction and has compelled them to incline toward one and the same end;</p> |
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¹¹ *Tyche* in Polybius: the topic has been much discussed and remains controversial: e.g. K. von Fritz, *The Theory of the Mixed Constitution in Antiquity: A Critical Analysis of Polybius' Political Ideas* (New York 1954), 388-97; F.W. Walbank, *A Commentary on Polybius*, vol. 1 (Oxford 1957), 16ff.; 'Fortune (*tyche*) in Polybius', in J. Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, vol. 2 (Oxford 2007), 349-55; P. Pédech, *La méthode historique de Polybe* (Paris 1964), 331-54; D. Musti, 'Polibio negli studi dell'ultimo ventennio (1950-1970)', *ANRW* 1.2 (Stuttgart 1972), 1126-27; A. Eckstein, *Moral Vision in the Histories of Polybius* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1995), 254-71; J.-M. Pailler, 'Polybe, la Fortune et l'écriture de l'histoire: Le cas de la première guerre punique', in P. Defosse (ed.), *Hommages à Carl Deroux*, vol. 3 (Brussels 2003), 328-39 – each with further references. See also A. Mauersberger, C.F. Collatz, M. Gützlaf, and H. Helms (eds.), *Polybios-Lexikon* 3.2 (Berlin 2004), s.v.

¹² Providential *tyche*: Polyb. 1.4.1 & 4-5 (cf. W. Warde Fowler, 'Polybius' Concept of *Tyche*', *CR* 17 (1903), 445-49). Polybius on the unexpected: F. Frazier, 'L'inattendu et l'extraordinaire: Les emplois de παράδοξος dans les *Histoires* de Polybe', *Ktéma* 27 (2002), 79-86.

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| <p>τὸν αὐτὸν σκοπὸν. οὕτως καὶ δεῖ διὰ τῆς ἱστορίας ὑπὸ μίαν σύνοψιν ἀγαγεῖν τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσι τὸν χειρισμὸν τῆς τύχης. ...</p> | <p>consequently, it is the task of the historian to present to his readers under one synoptic view the process by which she has accomplished her general purpose ...</p> |
| <p>παντελῶς ὑπέλαβον ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι τὸ μὴ παραλιπεῖν μηδ' ἔᾶσαι παρελθεῖν ἀνεπιστάτως τὸ κάλλιστον ἅμα κῶφελιμώτατον ἐπιτήδευμα τῆς τύχης. πολλὰ γὰρ αὕτη καινοποιοῦσα καὶ συνεχῶς ἐναγωνιζομένη τοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων βίοις οὐδέπω τοιόνδ' ἀπλῶς οὔτ' εἰργάσατ' ἔργον οὔτ' ἠγωνίσατ' ἀγώνισμα. οἶον τὸ καθ' ἡμᾶς.</p> | <p>Consequently I thought it essential not to leave unnoticed or to allow to fall into oblivion the most beautiful and most beneficial achievement of Fortune (<i>tyche</i>). For although she makes many changes and is always involving herself in the lives of men, she has never in a single instance accomplished such a work, never produced such a show-piece, as in our own time</p> |

This *tyche*, it has long been observed, is a world historical force, the greatest production of which defined the central subject of Polybius' inquiry, namely the period ending in 167, when, in the aftermath of Perseus' defeat in 168, the kingdom of the Macedonians came to its end (and the world-wide dominion of the Romans began, for better or for worse). It is true that Polybius later expanded his project to 145 – just to investigate whether it *was* better or worse. But the salient point of the opening of Polybius's history is his assertion that *tyche*'s grandest accomplishment culminated in the career of Aemilius Paullus.¹³

The Polybian spectrum of meaning for *tyche* is broad: she is the guiding power of history, she is caprice, she is caprice as a world-historical power (this is a view associated with Demetrius of Phaleron but enthusiastically endorsed by Polybius):¹⁴

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| <p>ἀλλ' ὅμως ἡ πρὸς τὸν βίον ἡμῶν ἀσύνθετος Τύχη καὶ πάντα παρὰ τὸν λογισμὸν τὸν ἡμέτερον καινοποιοῦσα</p> | <p>Never the less, <i>tyche</i>, who makes no compact with our lives, but always defeats</p> |
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¹³ The design of Polybius' *History*: Walbank, *Selected Papers*, 325ff.; K.-E. Petzold, *Studien zur Methode des Polybios und ihrer historischen Auswertung* (Munich 1969), 52-64. The importance of Pydna is plain: Polyb. 1.1.5; 3.1.9-10; 29.21.

¹⁴ On Demetrius see now L. O'Sullivan, *The Regime of Demetrius of Phalerum, 317-307 BCE: A Philosopher in Politics* (Leiden 2009). It is not entirely obvious exactly where in Book 29 Polybius placed his quotation from Demetrius: Walbank, *A Commentary on Polybius*, vol. 3 (Oxford 1979), 393.

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| <p>καὶ τὴν αὐτῆς δύναμιν ἐν τοῖς παραδόξοις ἐνδεικνυμένη. καὶ νῦν. ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ. δείκνυσι πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις. Μακεδόνας εἰς τὴν Περσῶν εὐδαιμονίαν εἰσοικίσασα. διότι καὶ τούτοις ταῦτα τάγαθὰ κέχρηκεν. ἕως ἄν ἄλλο τι βουλεύσῃται περὶ αὐτῶν</p> | <p>our reckoning by some novel stroke, demonstrating her power by deceiving our expectations, even now, I think, makes it clear to all men, by handing over to the Macedonians the great wealth of Persia, that she has only lent them these things until she decides to deal differently with them (Polyb. 29.21.5-6).</p> |
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She is, furthermore, nemesis, and she is nemesis as a world-historical power.¹⁵ Polybius deploys all these senses of the word, without obvious method or any hint of systemization. As Walbank observed more than fifty years ago, ‘the contradictions in Polybius’ account of *Tyche* are not one but several. The various conceptions merge one into another’.¹⁶ It can only be observed that *tyche*, in her guise as the guiding power of history, although underscored in the work’s introduction, is thereafter less visible in his *History* than her competing versions, which does not, however, mean that Polybius’ early reference to this *tyche* ceased to matter thereafter simply because Polybius did not repeat himself again and again.

Polybius’s Aemilius – and this is important for our reading of Plutarch – exists at the conjunction of the historian’s many versions of *tyche*. The collapse of Macedonia was not only the *telos* of the guiding *tyche* with which Polybius’ *History* began. It also, as we have seen, represented the work of retributive *tyche*: Perseus’ fall came as just punishment for Philip the Fifth’s wickedness in scheming to seize the kingdom of the Ptolemies (Polyb. 29.27.12). Aemilius, in the aftermath of Perseus’ defeat, draws a still different lesson, when he delivers to his officers a lecture on the mutability of fortune:

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| <p>ἀλλ’ ὅτε μάλιστα τις κατορθοίῃ κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον βίον καὶ κατὰ τὰς κοινὰς πράξεις. τότε μάλιστα παρεκάλει τῆς ἐναντίας τύχης ἔννοιαν λαμβάνειν. καὶ γὰρ οὕτω μόλις ἂν ἐν ταῖς εὐκαιρίαις ἀνθρώπων μέτριον ὄντα φανῆναι.</p> | <p>It is especially urgent, whenever anyone achieves success for himself or for his country, that he take thought, at that very moment, of a reversal of fortune. For it is only in this way, and then only with effort,</p> |
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¹⁵ *Tyche* punishes Perseus for the crimes of Philip V: Polyb. 29.27.12; cf. 15.20.7. Discussion in Walbank, *Commentary*, 20-21.

¹⁶ Walbank, *Commentary*, 24.

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| <p>τοῦτο γὰρ διαφέρειν ἔφη τοὺς ἀνοήτους τῶν νοῦν ἔχόντων. διότι συμβαίνει τοὺς μὲν ἐν ταῖς ἰδίαις ἀτυχίαις παιδεύεσθαι. τοὺς δ' ἐν ταῖς τῶν πέλας.</p> | <p>that a man can remain moderate in the midst of his prosperity. For this, he said, is the difference between fools and intelligent men: the former are schooled by their own misfortunes, the latter by the misfortunes of others (Polyb. 29.20).</p> |
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Here Aemilius is fashioned as Polybius' ideal student of history's utility: according to Polybius, it was the mark of a superior man to remain moderate and contemplative in the midst of his successes. Although Aemilius is not the only figure in Polybius who grasps this truth, he is granted the distinction of doing so by way of a formulation that actually reprises Polybius' own views on the purpose of history (compare Polyb. 1.1.2 cited above).¹⁷ If it is correct that the speech supplied to Aemilius on the death of his sons in Livy, Diodorus and Plutarch originated in Polybius' account, then Polybius's Aemilius was emphatically portrayed not merely as the agent of *tyche*'s purpose at Pydna but also as the best exponent of history's fundamental lesson for contending with *tyche*.¹⁸ And, finally, it is on the occasion of Aemilius's victory, perhaps in the vicinity of his speech on *tyche*, that Polybius introduced his digression on Demetrius of Phaleron's treatment of *tyche*, which he applied to the changed circumstances of the kingdom of Macedon (Polyb. 29.21.1-9).

In one figure, then, at the conclusion of *tyche*'s great show-piece, the various and varying manifestations of *tyche* locate themselves. They are by no means harmonized or resolved. Instead, they are simply and unmistakably concentrated in Polybius' representation of Aemilius Paullus. Now whether this is the result of conscious artistry or instead an accident of Polybius' unrelenting focus on the momentousness of Pydna is surely arguable. But the implication of *tyche* – in nearly every sense of the word – in

¹⁷ The importance of moderation in success: Polyb. 38.21.3 (a compliment to Scipio Aemilianus); Walbank, *Commentary*, 19, collects further examples, including Antiochus (Polyb. 8.21.10-11) and Hannibal (Polyb. 15.15.5).

¹⁸ Liv. 45.41; Diod. 31.11; Plut. *Aem.* 36. Polybian origin: H. Nissen, *Kritische Untersuchungen über die Quellen der vierten und fünften Dekade des Livius* (Berlin 1863), 278. Polybian literariness and emphasis here: Eckstein, *Moral Vision*, 230-32.

Polybius' Aemilius could hardly have been overlooked by Plutarch, whose sensibilities on the topic, as Swain has demonstrated, were advanced.

(iv)

Now it is uncontroversial that Polybius was Plutarch's principal source for his *Aemilius Paullus*. For the Roman's character, and for his actions in the Third Macedonian War, Polybius was in fact *everyone's* source.¹⁹ References to Polybius, and appropriations of Polybius, abound in the entirety of Plutarchan biography, and these have been conveniently assembled in an important paper by Alexei Zadoronjnyi,²⁰ As a Greek expert in Roman society, whose *History*, by way of its universality, elevated Greek affairs to a rough equivalence to *res Romana*, Polybius held an obvious appeal to Plutarch. It has recently, and cogently, been argued that Plutarch detected in Polybius a model of dignified compliance with the political realities of Roman power: Polybius, it is clear, was no sycophant, as the extension of his *History* suffices to demonstrate. Nor was Plutarch. In composing his *Aemilius Paullus*, then, Plutarch did not turn to Polybius merely to cull the facts of his subject's campaign at Pydna.²¹

By now it will be obvious that Plutarch's Aemilius is very much of a piece with his Polybian predecessor. His career exhibits the clear working of *tyche* in her guise

¹⁹ Plutarch's sources for *Aemilius*: H. Peter, *Die Quellen Plutarchs in den Biographien der Römer* (Halle 1865), 86-89; Z.C. Liedmeier, *Plutarchus' Biographie van Aemilius Paullus: Historische Commentar* (Utrecht 1935), 290-91 (and passim); B. Scardigli, *Die Römerbiographien Plutarchs* (Munich 1970), 57-60; 174-75. The most lucid discussion remains R. Flacelière and É. Chambry, *Plutarque: Vies*, vol. 4 (Paris 1966), 60-65.

²⁰ A.V. Zadoronjnyi, 'King of His Castle: Plutarch, *Demosthenes* 1-2', *PCPS* 52 (2006), 102-27, esp. 114ff.

²¹ Polybius a model for Plutarch: J.M. Candau Mórón, 'Polybius and Plutarch on Roman *Ethos*', in G. Schepens and J. Bollansée (eds.), *The Shadow of Polybius: Intertextuality as a Research Tool in Greek Historiography* (Leuven 2005), 307-28; G. Zecchini, 'Polibio in Plutarco', in A. Pérez Jiménez and F.B. Titchener (eds.), *Historical and Biographical Values of Plutarch's Works: Studies devoted to Professor Philip A. Stadter by the International Plutarch Society* (Logan 2005), 513-22.; Zadoronjnyi, *PCPS* 52 (2006), 117-18.

as a guiding force. At the same time, this Aemilius demonstrates the wisdom of a man who understands the fickle nature of success, and he is himself stalwart when buffeted by the very vicissitudes he exhorts others to contemplate. Plutarch's debt to Polybius in this *Life*, then, which is plainly pervasive, extends to its deployment of its various versions of *tyche*, which situate Aemilius historically and reveal the quality of his moral fibre. It should not go unnoticed that Plutarch's representation of Aemilius' character also reprises Polybius. Plutarch, like Polybius before him, puts emphasis on the merits of Roman religiosity, on Aemilius' receptiveness to Greek culture and, most conspicuously, on his indifference to material gain.²² This last quality receives special praise from Polybius in Book 31, in his obituary for Aemilius Paullus, which will have been his final dilation on the man (Polyb. 31.22.1-8). I think it is no accident that the *synkrisis* of Plutarch's pairing closes on this Polybian sentiment (*synk.* 2.8-12). Aemilius surpasses Timoleon in his refusal to profit from his victories, and he surpasses Timoleon in his reaction to misfortune (the solitary mention of *tyche* in the *synkrisis*), history's lesson according to Polybius.

(v)

If this approach to the *Aemilius* is the correct one, then the question must be asked: why, in contrast to the Polybian texture of the Roman *Life*, does Plutarch suffuse his account of Timoleon's career with explicit references to providential *tyche*? The answer could of course lie in the nature of his sources, in which *tyche* played an undoubted role.²³ In the biography by Cornelius Nepos, for instance, Timoleon's good

²² Aemilius' indifference to material gain: Plut. *Aem.* 4.4-5; 39.10; *Synk. Aem.-Tim.* 2.8-9; cf. Polyb. 31.22.1-8. Aemilius surpasses Timoleon in his correct reaction to the events of life: Plut. *Synk. Aem.-Tim.* 2.10-12.

²³ Timoleon's Felicity: Nep. *Tim.* 4-5. Divine favour: Diod. 16.66.1-5; 16.79.3-6; 16.80.2 (the sources used by Diodorus in Book 16, however, remain a subject of irresolvable debate). Timaeus the likeliest source for Plutarch: R. Flacelière and É. Chambry, *Plutarque: Vies*, vol. 4 (Paris 1966), 6-7; J. Geiger, 'Plutarch's *Parallel Lives: The Choice of Heroes*', in B. Scardigli (ed.), *Essays on Plutarch's Lives* (Oxford 1995), 186-87 (with further references).

fortune is a matter of celebration: each of his greatest victories, according to Nepos, occurred on his birthday, irrefutable evidence of his *fortuna* and *felicitas* (*Tim.* 4). There is less overt emphasis on destiny in Diodorus Siculus' lengthier account of Timoleon's Sicilian campaigns. Never the less, his treatment of these events commences by observing the miraculous signs that evidenced divine support for their successful outcome (Diod. 16.66.1-5). This is the tradition that Plutarch obviously favours, and it can safely be traced back to Timaeus, no longer a fashionable historian when Plutarch was writing his biographies.²⁴ Plutarch's embrace of the Timaeian Timoleon, then, is at least a bit remarkable in itself. When viewed in the light of the clear Polybian background to this pairing, established in the first of its two biographies, Plutarch's deployment of the Timaeian tradition becomes an extraordinary – and quite independent – correction of Polybius' rejection of the consequence of Timoleon's historical significance and reputation.

Now of course Polybius does not record the events of Timoleon's career. But he does offer an assessment of its importance, in Book Twelve, in his extensive historiographical polemic against Timaeus:

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| <p>Τίμαιος δὲ μείζω ποιεῖ Τιμολέοντα τῶν ἐπιφανεστάτων θεῶν ... οὗτος δὲ Τιμολέοντα τὸν οὐχ οἷον δόξαντά τι πεπραχέναι μεγαλείον. ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἐπιβαλόμενον. μίαν δ' ἐν τῷ βίῳ γραμμὴν διανύσαντα. καὶ ταύτην οὐδὲ σπουδαίαν τῶν τινὰ πρὸς τὸ μέγεθος τῆς οἰκουμένης. λέγω δὲ τὴν ἐκ τῆς πατρίδος εἰς Συρακούσας. ἀλλὰ μοι δοκεῖ πεισθῆναι Τίμαιος ὡς, ἂν Τιμολέων. πεφιλοδοξηκῶς ἐν αὐτῇ Σικελίᾳ. καθάπερ ἐν ὄξυβάφῳ. σύγκριτος φανῆ τοῖς ἐπιφανεστάτοις τῶν ἡρώων. κἂν αὐτὸς ὑπὲρ Ἰταλίας μόνον καὶ Σικελίας πραγματευόμενος εἰκότως παραβολῆς ἀξιωθῆναι τοῖς ὑπὲρ τῆς οἰκουμένης καὶ τῶν καθόλου πράξεων πεπονημένοις τὰς συντάξεις.</p> | <p>Timaeus makes Timoleon into something greater than the glorious gods... By contrast [with Callisthenes' praise of Alexander], Timaeus honoured Timoleon, who appears not only never to have accomplished any great enterprise, but never even to have tried one. In his whole life he made only a single move, and that was not a very significant one when one compares the extent of the inhabited world: I speak of his voyage from his native city to Syracuse. In my opinion, Timaeus was convinced that if Timoleon, who sought fame in a mere saucer of a place such as Sicily, could be shown to be comparable to the most glorious heroes, then Timaeus himself, who had written only of the affairs</p> |
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²⁴ R.J.A. Talbert, *Timoleon and the Revival of Greek Sicily* (Cambridge 1974), 42; J. Geiger, 'Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*', 186.

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| | of Italy and Sicily, would be worthy of comparison with those writers whose books had dealt with world-wide events and with universal history (Polyb. 12.23.4-6). |
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It is unmistakable how Polybius here maps literary histories onto history itself, and vice-versa. But, more to the point for our purposes, is Polybius's total rejection of the historical significance of Timoleon – a view that Plutarch clearly repudiates simply by way of composing a biography of the man. But Plutarch's correction runs deeper. Owing to the fundamental parallelism that defines the pairing, Timoleon's *tyche* takes on the Polybian proportions operative in the *Aemilius*, twin and predecessor of the conjoined *Timoleon*. Which means that the providential forces that brought Rome to greatness also played their part in the liberation of the Greeks of Sicily. The freedom of the Greeks and the rise of Rome are results born of the same providence.

(vi)

The work of Simon Swain has made it plain how extensively Plutarch interrogated the meaning and meaningfulness of *tyche* in the personal and public lives represented in his *Aemilius-Timoleon*. Furthermore, his revealing account of the differing ways in which *tyche* appears in the two biographies has posed an inescapable interpretive problem for any reader of the pairing. Naturally more than one response is possible, but, in the reading proposed here, Plutarch's biography, despite its undeniable emphasis on the personal dimension of Aemilius' encounter with *tyche*, none the less very largely conforms to Polybius' representation of the man, where he is an agent of the providential *tyche* the historian believed was responsible for the rise of Rome and, at the same time, is a figure who grasps what for Polybius is history's essential lesson about the correct personal reaction to *tyche*. Plutarch's thoroughly Polybian Aemilius, by way of Plutarchan parallelism, has the effect of enhancing the world historical claims made in this pairing about Timoleon's liberation of Sicily, a Plutarchan assertion that actually operates as a repudiation of Polybius' own assessment of the consequence of Timoleon's career. This interpretation, if correct, tends to emphasize the unity over the diversity of

the two *Lives*, each of which celebrates the historical as well as the personal achievements of its subject.²⁵ It is the Polybian quality of the *Aemilius* that underscores and helps to focus the purpose of the guiding *tyche* that permeates the *Timoleon* – and so helps to impress the reader with the historical momentousness that Plutarch perceived in Timoleon’s liberation of the Greeks of Sicily.²⁶

²⁵ Artistic and moralizing unity in Plutarch: Duff, *Plutarch’s Lives*, 243ff., and Pelling, *Plutarch and History*, 91ff.; 349ff. (each with further references).

²⁶ An expanded and further developed version of this paper will appear in *Historia*.