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Plutarchus



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Τὸ καλὸν αὐτό [...] ἔχοντας τέλος (*Praec. ger. reip.* 799A)

Plutarch on the foundation of the politician's career*

by

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Abstract

In his *Political precepts*, Plutarch gives much attention to the difficult problem of the politician's motivation. Already in the second chapter of the treatise, he collects and discusses many motivations, and concludes that there is only one which is correct, that is, a deliberate choice for the honourable course. Later in the treatise, he returns to the question, by rejecting once again the two most current and most dangerous wrong motivations, that is, φιλοπλουτία and φιλοτιμία. Plutarch finally succeeds in neutralizing the dangerous feeling of φιλοτιμία by redefining true honour and by redefining true honour and by emphasizing the absolute importance of the moral course.

With his *Political precepts*, Plutarch wants to contribute to the political education of Menemachus, a young aristocrat of Sardes. This political education includes much practical advice, to be sure, but Plutarch also deals with several fundamental questions. One of these concerns the motivations of the statesman. Which aim should be pursued by a good politician? What should be his political project, and which should be

his intentions? Plutarch considers these questions important enough to deal with them at the very beginning of his treatise. Indeed, the *corpus* of the *Political precepts* begins with a discussion of many different motivations that can drive a man to political life. Some people begin a political career because they have no other occupations which are useful and worth some trouble, considering politics as a pastime and a good remedy against boredom (798CD)¹. Others aim at vain glory and are led by φιλονεικία, being ambitious to win the

* This is a much more elaborate version of a paper that was read at the VIIIth International Symposium of the Spanish section of the I.P.S. (Barcelona, November 6-8, 2003).

¹ This was the case with Pyrrhus (*Pyrrh.* 13.1; cf. also *Pyrrh.* 12.5); cf. also the attitude of Philopoemen (*Phil.* 13.3), Demetrius (*Demetr.* 41.1), and Marius (*Mar.* 31.2), and Lucretius' famous description of the restless man at the end of the third book of his *De rerum natura* (3.1063-1067). By a similar motivation also the Epicureans could be driven to political life (cf. *De tranq. an.* 465F-466A = fr. 555 Us.). But on this point as well, Plutarch disagrees with Epicurus (*De tranq. an.* 466A).

political contest (798C, 798E, 799A)². Still others strive for political power, expecting to be feared by others (798E)³. Greed for money appears to be another important, though defective motivation (798EF)⁴, and even an onset of emotions (798F)⁵, or mere coincidence (799A)⁶ can be the driving force which urges on the politician to enter public life.

All those motivations are explicitly rejected by Plutarch, and all are based in the end on the same fundamental fault: they do not rest on a rational, well-considered choice, starting from a correct

conception of political life. On the contrary, they often lead to a sudden, unreflected decision, more than once provoked by the spell of external advantages. Hence, it should cause no wonder that political life falls short of such erroneous expectations: a political career is no pastime where a great many advantages can easily be obtained. It is a dangerous occupation full of troubles (798E), which often brings *ἀδοξία* instead of *δόξα* (798E), and *δουλεύειν* instead of *ἄρχειν* (799A)⁷. Hence, the man who is led by such wrong motivations is often quickly confused, regretting his decision (799A),

- ² Ambition is one of the most important motivations in the *Vitae*. The classic example is Themistocles, who “surpassed everyone in ambition” (*Them.* 5.2; cf. also 3.1 and 3; 18.1-5), but also other heroes often give evidence of great ambition (further references in B. BUCHER-ISLER (1972), 58-59; A. PÉREZ JIMÉNEZ (1995), 369). Passions like *φιλοτιμία* are also rejected as correct motivation of the politician in *Maxime cum principibus*, 777E-778A; *An seni*, 788C and 790C; *Praec. ger. reip.* 815C; 819F-821F. They can only be tolerated to a certain extent in youths, who need some fame as incentive of their virtues (cf. *Agis*, 2.1), although one should avoid all excess, which, though always harmful, is especially pernicious in the case of ambition and which directly leads to madness (cf. *Agis*, 2.2).
- ³ For the correct attitude towards political power, cf. *Maxime cum principibus* 778AB.
- ⁴ Love of money is rejected as motivation in *Maxime cum principibus* 777D and *Praec. ger. reip.* 819E. For Stratocles and Dromocleides, who called the speaker’s platform “the golden harvest”; cf. *Praec. ger. reip.* 799F-800A; *Demetr.* 11.1-3; 12.1 and 4-5; 13.1-2; 26.2-3 and 34.4-5; E. VALGIGLIO (1976), 85; J.-C. CARRIÈRE (1984), 161; A. CAIAZZA (1993), 200.
- ⁵ Plutarch mentions Caius Gracchus as example: after he had retired from public life in the period immediately following the death of his brother, he entered political affairs because of anger against some persons who had abused him. On Caius Gracchus’ inclination to anger, see *TG* 2.4; on the beginning of his career, cf. also *CG* 1.1-6 (which does not mention this bad motivation of Caius); J.-C. CARRIÈRE (1984), 161; A. CAIAZZA (1993), 200-201.
- ⁶ One could recall the beginning of Alcibiades’ political career (*Alc.* 10.1), and the origin of Demosthenes’ eagerness to become an orator (*Dem.* 5.1-3); *ἀνάγκη* can be a motivating factor as well; see, e.g., *Comp. Thes. et Rom.* 1.1; cf. also the case of Caius Gracchus (*CG* 1.5).
- ⁷ Moreover, the greater the political offices, the greater also the troubles in which they are involved. In any case, monarchy, the most important political office, also entails most cares and toils (*An seni* 790A).

and longing for the rest of a sequestered life (798F). Such men look outside (798D), but are forced to stay where they are, lamenting their situation, thus bringing political life into discredit (798DE)⁸.

The *corpus* of the *Political precepts* thus opens with a quite comprehensive ἔλεγχος: a great variety of erroneous motivations is collected and rejected. Plutarch is cleaning his slate before developing his political advice. However, he does not confine himself to a merely negative argumentation: from the very beginning, his sharp criticisms also clear the way for a positive perspective. In the second chapter, destructive ἔλεγχος and constructive νοθεσία are blended, also by means of the alternating structure, into one harmonious whole.

But which is the driving force that urges on the true politician to participate in political life? The positive pole of the second chapter has both a formal and a contentual component. Formally, the true politician does not proceed rashly or thoughtlessly, he is not led by a sudden impulse, but relies on a good preparation (cf. ἐκ παρασκευῆς, 799A). His decision is based on a strong choice (προαίρεσις), which is based itself on κρίσις and λόγος (798C), γνώμη (798E) and λογισμός (798E, 799A). Reason

obviously has a crucial part to play, being ἀρχή (beginning and principle) of the προαίρεσις which itself is the basis of everything and has to come first (πρῶτον, both structurally and chronologically, 798C). Furthermore, reason makes the choice to one's own choice: one is no longer led by external data like chance or passions, but one is able to begin one's political career in an orderly manner. One no longer falls accidentally and unexpectedly into political life as into a well (look before you leap!), but one is able to descend into it quietly (799A). When the basic choice has become stable and unchangeable (798C, 799B), the politician acquires a certain steadfastness (cf. βέβαιον, 798C). He will no longer be thrown off his balance (798E, 799A), but his rational choice guarantees his stability, even in times of adversity⁹.

With regard to content, too the προαίρεσις of the true politician differs from the wrong motivations of other people. His choice is based on the rational insight that the arrangement of public matters is in fact a most fitting and honourable activity (798E). This insight will keep upright in all political disturbances (cf. οὐδ' ἀναστρέφεται τὴν γνώμην, 798E), thus guaranteeing continuity not only on the level of concrete action, but also on the theoretical level of personal

⁸ For such behaviour, Demosthenes could be blamed as well (*Dem.* 26.5).

⁹ Cf. also *Tim.* 6.2. Accordingly, Demosthenes maintained his policy to the very end, and even died for it, once he had made his fundamental choice (*Dem.* 13.1); cf. also *Cic.* 38.1; *Arat.* 10.4; *Agis* 19.5; T. DUFF (1999a), 80-82.

convictions. Furthermore, this insight will also determine the final end of the politician: he will not give preference to external advantages, but will engage in politics for the sake of political activity itself (798E)¹⁰. This implies that he will regard τὸ καλόν as his τέλος. Finally, the rational choice at the outset of the political career will also determine the concrete behaviour of the politician: he will not be thrown into confusion by the troubles of political life (798E, 799A), and he always knows how to observe a certain balance in his actions (799A). In this way, Plutarch from the very beginning points to the most fundamental pillars on which the politician's life should rest. For that reason, *the second chapter is one of the most important chapters of the Political precepts, clarifying the ultimate foundations, the general perspective which will always form the ultimate justification of the concrete actions of the politician* (cf. ὑποκείσθω πολιτεία, 798C).

* * *

At the end of chapter 26, Plutarch returns, rather abruptly¹¹, to the problem of the politician's motivation. Gradually approaching the end of his essay, Plutarch feels the need to secure the

honourable character of the politician's προαίρεσις, being conscious that his whole political building will collapse when its foundations lack the necessary stability. Therefore, he will level his criticism against the two most current and most dangerous wrong motivations, viz. φιλοπλουτία and φιλοτιμία.

Plutarch's reflections are introduced by an apt comparison: gold is usually left outside some sanctuaries, while iron, generally speaking, is not taken into any sanctuary at all¹² (819E). Similarly, the politician should in his sanctuary too leave outside all iron, and only partly introduce some gold. Now the sanctuary of the politician is of course public life. Indeed, according to Plutarch, the speaker's platform is a sanctuary common to Zeus of the Council and of the City, to Themis and to Justice¹³ (819E). The iron which has to be left outside is the love of wealth (φιλοπλουτία) and of money (φιλοχρηματία). For it is an iron full of rust, and a disease of the soul¹⁴. Therefore, the politician should immediately throw it away into the market-places, among the retail-dealers and money-lenders, and turn away himself (819E). The reason is clear: a man who makes money

¹⁰ Cf. the motivation of Cato the Younger (*Ca. Mi.* 19.2).

¹¹ According to K. MITTELHAUS (1911), 55, n. 1, Plutarch's reflections about φιλοπλουτία in 819E belong to the following chapter 27.

¹² Cf. also Plato, *Leges* XII, 955e-956a.

¹³ Cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 50.1.

¹⁴ Cf. also *De gar.* 502E; *De cup. div.* 524DE; *De Stoic. rep.* 1050D; *Crass.* 14.4; *Agis* 13.1; Ps.-Longinus, *De sublim.* 44.6. See finally *Ca. Ma.* 18.4.

out of public life should be regarded as someone who steals from sanctuaries, from tombs, from friends, by treason and by false witness. He should be considered a faithless counsellor, a perjured judge, a corrupt office holder, in short a man who is not free from any kind of injustice¹⁵ (819E). Hence, the matter does not require a more circumstantial argumentation (819EF): it is perfectly clear that the politician should regard φιλοπλουτία as the source of much evil in politics, and reject it as a completely erroneous motivation¹⁶.

* * *

Love of honour (φιλοτιμία) requires a more differentiating attitude, and can

be compared in that respect with the gold that should be left outside some sanctuaries, but can be taken into other. Indeed, although a certain kind of φιλοτιμία will prove to be justified in some contexts, it should clearly not be introduced without question into the whole area of public life. For love of honour can be more imposing than love of gain¹⁷, to be sure, but it is no less pernicious in politics¹⁸ (819F). Indeed, it involves more daring, since it is not implanted in idle and low characters, but rather in the most vigorous and high-spirited ones¹⁹. Furthermore, the wave of popular praises often raises and puffs out this φιλοτιμία, and makes it uncon-

¹⁵ Cf. also Aristotle, *EN* IV, 1, 1122a3-7, and the position of Cicero, *De off.* 2.77; cf. also 2.75. According to Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 43.10, Socrates, too, was opposed to all politicians who made profit out of public affairs.

¹⁶ He can follow the example of men like Aristides (*Arist.* 5.5), Cimon (*Cim.* 10.8-9; 14.3); Phocion (*Phoc.* 18.1-5; 21.2-3; 30.1-2; *Arat.* 19.2), Numa (*Num.* 6.2), Coriolanus (*Comp. Alc. et Cor.* 5.2), Brutus (*Brut.* 29.2); Cicero (*Comp. Dem. et Cic.* 3.3 and 6); Manius Curius (*Ca. Ma.* 2.2; *Reg. et imp. apopht.* 194F); Aemilius (*Aem.* 4.3; 28.6; *Comp. Tim. et Aem.* 2.4); Pelopidas (*Pel.* 3.1-4); Aratus (*Arat.* 11.2; 19.1-3; 24.4); Appius Clodius (*Luc.* 21.7); Fabricius (*Pyrrh.* 20.1-2); Cato the Elder (*Ca. Ma.* 10.4; see, however, 21.5-8; *Comp. Arist. et Ca. Ma.* 4.5); Philopoemen –who imitated Epameinondas– (*Phil.* 3.1; 15.4-6); Agis (*Agis* 9.3; *Comp. Ag., Cleom. et Gracch.* 1.4); Cleomenes (*Cleom.* 11.1); the Gracchi (*Comp. Ag., Cleom. et Gracch.* 1, 4); Lysander (*Lys.* 2.4; 30.2; *Comp. Lys. et Sull.* 3.4); and Agesilaus (*Praec. ger. reip.* 809B), who were all above money.

¹⁷ Cf. also *De prof. in virt.* 83F and *Cleom.* 24.4.

¹⁸ Cf. *Comp. Arist. et Ca. Ma.* 5.3 and *Agis* 2.2.

¹⁹ For Plutarch's theory about great natures, cf. also *De sera num.* 552B-D; *Demetr.* 1.7; *Them.* 2.5; *Nic.* 9.1; *Cor.* 1.2; *Lys.* 2.2-3; *Cleom.* 2.3. The theory can be traced back to Plato himself; cf. *Republ.* VI, 491e; *Crito* 44d; *Hipp. Min.* 375e; *Gorgias* 525e-526a; cf. also Xenophon, *Memorabilia* IV 1.4; see further D. BABUT (1969), 326; T. DUFF (1999a), 47-49; 60-65; 205-208 and *passim*; Id. (1999b), 313-330.

trollable and hard to manage²⁰. Therefore, the politician should moderate his love of honour. By explicitly referring to a Platonic doctrine, Plutarch is able to reintroduce the imagery of gold and to connect it with φιλοτιμία, and at the same time succeeds in placing his reflections about love of honour in the framework of his comparison at the outset of the second part of chapter 26 (819E). Plato taught that young people should be told from childhood²¹ that they should never wear gold on their persons, nor possess it, since they have a gold of their own commingled in their souls²². Similarly, the politician should moderate his φιλοτιμία, since he has in himself, as a gold which is uncorrupted and pure, and undefiled by envy and blame, an honour

which increases together with his reasoning and comparative examination of his political actions²³ (820AB).

This primacy of internal honour apparently guarantees in the politician a kind of self-sufficiency that makes external honours unnecessary: the statesman has no need of honours which are painted or modelled or wrought in bronze²⁴ (820B). Plutarch presents different arguments to explain the politician's rejection of external honours. First of all, that which is admired in paintings or statues belongs to others (820B). Moreover, it is not always politically advantageous to have a statue. Even on the contrary, it often proves to be advantageous to have none, since the people believes that it owes a favour to those who have not received a statue²⁵,

²⁰ Cf. also *Cor.* 4, 1. On the corrupting influence of popular acclamations, see J.-C. CARRIÈRE (1984), 131, n. 5.

²¹ For then, they are most open to instruction; cf. Plato, *Republ.* II, 377ab; cf. also *Ca. Mi.* 1. 4, and Ps.-Plutarch, *De lib. educ.* 3EF. Accordingly, Cato usually bought young slaves, who were still capable of being educated (*Ca. Ma.* 21.1). See also Seneca, *De ira* II, 18, 2.

²² Cf. Plato, *Republ.* III, 416e-417a; on the opposition between internal and external wealth, cf., e.g., *De prof. in virt.* 78C-E; J.-C. CARRIÈRE (1984), 200; A. CAIAZZA (1993), 270. Plutarch takes the opportunity to insert his own interpretation of this Platonic passage: he believes Plato is hinting at virtue which comes into their nature by inheritance. One should note that Plutarch himself endorses this position; cf. *De ad. et am.* 63E; fr. 139 Sandbach. Still, it remains virtue itself, and not good birth, which makes virtue honourable (*Comp. Lys. et Sull.* 2.2). On Plutarch's position towards heredity, see also *De sera num.* 559C-E; 562F-563B; *Arat.* 1.1-3; *Ant.* 87.4; J.-C. CARRIÈRE (1984), 201; A. CAIAZZA (1993), 270; E. EYBEN (1996), 84-85; T. DUFF (1999a), 311.

²³ Cf. also *An seni* 786E.

²⁴ Cf. also Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 44.2.

²⁵ Therefore, Cato refused to let a statue be made for himself, saying that he preferred to have people ask why there was not a statue of himself rather than why there was one;

whereas it envies those who have received one, and considers them to be burdensome persons who demand back a recompense for their services²⁶ (820BC). In that way, a φιλοτιμία which aims at receiving external honours appears to enter the sphere of φιλοχρηματία, and should thus immediately be rejected as totally alien to the honourable political προαίρεσις and as leading to a bad reputation.

Plutarch's argumentation culminates in an at first sight somewhat enigmatic comparison: just as the man who has sailed past the Syrtis but is then wrecked in the strait has accomplished nothing great or dignified, so the man who has watched over the treasury or the office of revenue-leases, but is then caught in the privilege of the front seats or the prytany, has struck against a lofty cape, to be sure, but is sinking all the same (820C). A. Caiazza shows the way to a correct understanding of this difficult passage²⁷:

Pare piuttosto che qui il discorso sia allegorico di certe situazioni: la Sirti è il luogo basso, ma pericoloso, come lo sono l'erario pubblico e l'ufficio degli appaltatori; lo stretto e il promontorio sono luoghi pericolosi per la navigazione, ma sublimi, come la

proedria e la prytania. È perfetto il politico che non si lascia attrarre da interessi ignobili né da cariche onorifiche, ma cerca il solo vantaggio della patria.

The management of the treasury and the public revenues is compared with a voyage through the Syrtis. Both are quite dangerous indeed, and the politician runs the risk of being shipwrecked already here, by pursuing money instead of an honourable purpose. Plutarch's advice in chapter 26 has to help the politician in sailing safely past this Syrtis, by abandoning all φιλοπλουτία. However, when the politician indeed succeeds in throwing away his love of money into the market-place (819E), he still has to pass through the strait of the prytany. There, he has to face other dangers, the effects of which are no less pernicious. If he gives in to his love of honorary positions instead of aiming at τὸ καλόν, the politician will indeed strike against a more lofty cape (φιλοτιμία being more imposing than φιλοκέρδεια; 819E), but the disaster of his shipwreck will be equally great. Hence, the comparison should probably be interpreted as follows: the politician who abandons his φιλοπλουτία but is caught in his φιλοτιμία, can perhaps give evidence of high spirit,

Praec. ger. reip. 820B; *Ca. Ma.* 19.4; *Reg. et imp. apophth.* 198F; Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV 6.8.

²⁶ Cf. also *De se ipsum laud.* 539F and *Demetr.* 30, 5.

²⁷ Cf. A. CAIAZZA (1993), 271. Many scholars try to reconstruct the sea voyage Plutarch has in mind; see H. BLÜMNER (1916), 420; A. BARIGAZZI (1984), 61-62; J.-C. CARRIÈRE (1984), 132, n. 7 and D.A. RUSSELL (1993), 370.

but in the end is no less mistaken than his narrow-minded colleague who is eager to make money²⁸. Accordingly, the best politician will not ask for such honours, but will avoid and refuse them²⁹ (820C).

And yet, Plutarch avoids a too rigid philosophical course. He is aware that the politician will sometimes find himself in a situation where it is quite difficult to refuse some favour or expression

of goodwill on the part of the people when it is given to it (820CD). In such cases, too, the politician should stick to his basic convictions, to be sure, and regard political life not as a struggle for money or presents, but as a truly sacred contest in which the prize is a crown³⁰ (820D). But he can meet the wishes of his people by accepting a mere inscription or tablet³¹ or decree³² (820D). In

²⁸ Cf. Plato, *Republ.* I, 347b. A good example is Aristides (*Arist.* 3.3).

²⁹ He can imitate the example of Agesilaus (*Reg. et imp. apophth.* 191D; *Apophth. Lac.* 215A; *Ages.* 2.2; Xenophon, *Ages.* XI, 7; Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 37.43; Cicero, *Epist. ad Fam.* V12.7; Apuleius, *Apologia*, 15.1; Favorinus, *Corinth.* 43). Cf. also the attitude of Trajan (Pliny, *Panegyric.* 52.3-5; 54.7; 55.1-11) and of Tiberius (Tacitus, *Ann.* IV, 38. 1-2). Cf. finally the attitude of Cato the Younger (*Ca. Mi.* 8.2 and 39.3).

³⁰ Cf. also *An seni*, 785C.

³¹ On the term ΠΛΥΔΚΛΟΝ, cf. also *Per.* 30.1; J.-C. CARRIÈRE (1984), 133, n. 2; P. A. STADTER (1989), 274; A. CAIAZZA (1993), 272.

³² Plutarch once again obliges Menemachus by inserting various concrete examples (cf. *Praec. ger. reip.* 798C):

EPIMENIDES received a green branch from the Acropolis after purifying Athens; *Praec. ger. reip.* 820D; *Sol.* 12.4-6; Diog. Laert., I 110-111; cf. also Plato, *Leges* I, 642d; Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* I 1; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophist.* XIII, 602C; Strabo, X 4.14; Pausanias, I 14.4; Maximus of Tyre, XXXVIII 3; *Suida*, s.v. Ἐπιμενίδης (II 370.9-10); Eusebius, *Chronic.* II, p. 93 Schoene. Epimenides is also mentioned in *Sept. sap. conv.* 157DE; 158B; *De def. or.* 409F; *An seni* 784A; *De facie* 940C; fr. 26 Sandbach.

ANAXAGORAS refused the honours offered to him, and asked that one should allow the children to play and to be free from their lessons on the day of his death; *Praec. ger. reip.* 820D; Diog. Laert., II, 14.

To the SEVEN PERSIANS who killed the Magi, and to their descendants, the privilege was assigned to wear their tiara with the ends attached to the front of the head; for this they made, so it appears, their token when they undertook their act; *Praec. ger. reip.* 820DE; G. ROSKAM (2001), 354-356.

PITTACUS, too, gave evidence of a statesmanlike spirit. When he was invited to take as much as he wished of the land he had won for his fellow citizens, he took only so much as the javelin which he threw covered; *Praec. ger. reip.* 820E. In *De Her. mal.* 858AB, Plutarch sharply criticizes Herodotus for having omitted this story while describing the cowardly behaviour of the poet Alcaeus; cf. also Diog. Laert., I 75; Nepos, VIII 4.2; Valerius Maximus, 6, 5, ext. 1; Diodorus Siculus, IX 12.1.

The Roman COCLES, finally, took as much land as he could plough round in one day, and

that way, he can disconnect his honour from the field of payment: it is no longer a μισθός for his service, but a symbol, and it is precisely its symbolic aspect which guarantees its abidance (820E). Statues, on the other hand, are quickly pulled down³³, having become a source of annoyance, not only because of the depravity of the recipient, but also because of the greatness of the gift (820F). Similarly, great, excessive and weighty honours are quickly overturned, like ill-proportioned statues³⁴. In consequence, the most honourable and most stable preservative of honour turns out to be its inexpensiveness³⁵ (820F).

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It is clear that Plutarch is quite suspicious of φιλοτιμία: the best politician is he who generally refuses all honour (820C), and who, if he once proves unable to reject some honours, in any case takes care that they remain as limited as possible (820D-F). And yet, φιλοτιμία is not the iron which should be left outside each sanctuary, but the gold which can be allowed in some contexts (819E). It is thus not blameworthy as such, but should only be rejected when it is directed at those things which most people –erroneously– call honours. At the outset of chapter 28, such common conception of τιμή is explicitly rejected, and replaced by a true honour (ἀληθινὴν τιμήν; 820F) which can and should be pursued by the politician.

he was lame; *Praec. ger. reip.* 820E; *Publ.* 16.7; Livy, II 10, 12; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, V 35.1; on the gift, cf. Pliny, *Nat. hist.* XVIII, III-9; a similar attitude was adopted by Manius Curius; cf. Plutarch, *Reg. et imp. apoph.* 194E; Valerius Maximus, 4.3,5; Pliny, *Nat. hist.* XVIII, IV-18; Anonym., *De vir. illustr.* 33.6; Columella, *De re rust.* I, Praef. 14; I 3.10; Frontinus, *Strategem.* IV 3.12. Marcus, too, declined many recompenses which were offered to him, regarding them as pay, not honour (μισθόν, οὐ τιμήν ἡγούμενος; *Cor.* 10.2). It was at that occasion that he got his surname Coriolanus (*Cor.* 11.1; cf. also *Cor.* 23.2-3). Later, the Roman women on their part only asked the building of a temple, dedicated to Women's Fortune, as a recompense for their accomplishment (*Cor.* 37.2). Cf. finally the tomb of Otho (*Oth.* 18.1).

³³ The three hundred statues of Demetrius of Phaleron, for instance, were all destroyed in his own lifetime (820EF; cf. Nepos I, 6.4; Pliny, *Nat. hist.* XXXIV, XII-27; Diog. Laert. V, 75 and 77; [Dio Chrysostom], *Orat.* 37.41; Strabo, IX 1.20), and those of Demades were melted down into chamber-pots (820F). Plutarch –or his source; cf. K. MITTELHAUS (1911), 44– actually makes a mistake here, for it were the statues of Demetrius which met this fate. Demades probably received only one bronze statue, erected in the agora; cf. Dinarchus, I, 101. In this context, it is interesting to note that this honour was one of the causes of Lycurgus' attack against Demades (cf. his oration Κατὰ Κηφισοδότου ὑπὲρ τῶν Δημάδου τιμῶν; fr. IX, 1-4 Conomis).

³⁴ Furthermore, such excessive honours usually do not give evidence of real goodwill of those who bestow them (*Demetr.* 30.4).

³⁵ Cf. also the position of Theopompus (*Apoph. Lac.* 221F) and Nepos, VIII 4.2.

This true honour and true favour lies in the goodwill and disposition of those who remember (τὴν γ' ἀληθινὴν τιμὴν καὶ χάριν ἰδρυμένην ἐν εὐνοίᾳ καὶ διαθέσει τῶν μεμνημένων; 820F)³⁶. If the politician's φιλοτιμία is aiming at such an honour, he can clearly introduce is as gold in his sanctuary of public life. He will not disdain such an honour, nor will he disregard fame, avoiding to "please his neighbours", as Democritus demanded (820F-821A). In this way, true honour (τιμὴ) proves to coincide with a good fame³⁷ (δόξα), so that a good φιλοτιμία can be equated with an honourable φιλοδοξία. As a direct result, the constructive relevance of φιλοτιμία in politics can be argued by pointing to the advantages of a good fame.

This is what Plutarch will do in the rest of chapter 28. Even though the train of thought of his argumentation is sometimes confused by rather abrupt transitions, his general position is quite clear. Point of departure is a comparison with the attitude of human beings towards animals: hunters and horse-breeders

should not despise the greeting of dogs or the affection of horses, but it is both useful and pleasant to produce in domestic animals such a disposition towards oneself, as the dog of Lysimachus displayed³⁸, or Achilles' horses towards Patroclus³⁹. And also the bees would come off better if they were more prepared to greet their keepers and let them approach, than to sting them and be angry with them. But as it is, one makes use of smoke in order to punish them, and one leads unruly horses and runaway dogs by the force of bits⁴⁰ and dog-collars (821AB). It is obvious that this elaborated comparison has to illustrate the importance of εὐνοία and of the διάθεσις of the people in politics. Presumably, it is intended as (part of) an *a fortiori*-argumentation: if one should create such a disposition of goodwill even in animals, the politician should *a fortiori* try to produce it in his fellow citizens⁴¹. For this εὐνοία proves indeed advantageous to both politician and people. The former, in fact, who has to play the active part of rearing and serving his people (τρέφοντας καὶ θεραπεύοντας)

³⁶ Cf. also *Luc.* 23.1: τῆς τιμῆς ἡδίονα τὴν ἀληθινὴν εὐνοίαν; *Cim.* 5.3: δόξαν.[...] μετ' εὐνοίας; *Per.* 18.3: μετ' εὐνοίας δόξαν; *Comp. Alc. et Cor.* 3.2; *Nic.* 2.4; Cicero, *De off.* 2.31.

³⁷ Cf. also *Praec. ger. reip.* 817BC.

³⁸ *Praec. ger. reip.* 821A; *De soll. an.* 970C; Pliny, *Nat. hist.* VIII, LXI-143; Aelian, *De nat. an.* VI, 25; Appian, *Syr.* X-64; Tzetzes, *Chil.* IV, 252.

³⁹ Plutarch explicitly refers to Homer, *Il.* XIX, 409-412.

⁴⁰ Cf. also Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 48.13.

⁴¹ Cf. also *Comp. Cim. et Luc.* 2.3.

will consider it both useful⁴² and pleasant to create this goodwill. But also the latter, which has to be happy with the passive part of being reared (συντρόφοις), benefits from its own goodwill. As the bees, they will come better off if they welcome their leaders instead of angrily stinging them. Indeed, when εὐνοια remains absent, the only alternative turns out to be violence: the politician will have to lead them by force (ἀγουσιν ἠναγκασμένους).

Now it is precisely in order to bring about this disposition of goodwill that the politician should strive for some fame. This appears from the following sentence, which forms a crucial step in Plutarch's argumentation: there is nothing which can make a man voluntarily amenable and mild towards another, except the confidence of goodwill and the fame of nobleness and justice (821B). In this short sentence, two different arguments are linked. On the one hand, it contains elements of Plutarch's position at the beginning of the chapter, where true honour (τιμῆ) was connected with εὐνοια and διάθεσις, and with δόξα (although the precise place of the element δόξα was not yet clear in that context). On the other hand, it also introduces some new components, which form part and parcel of Plutarch's politi-

cal doctrine of good fame: the politician's δόξα will inspire confidence which will in turn create a willingness and thus add to his power⁴³.

[1]	true τιμῆ lies in εὐνοια and διάθεσις there is a certain connection with δόξα
	the politician should strive for a true τιμῆ
[2]	δόξα leads to πίστις, which will create willingness and add to the politician's power
	justification of a good δόξα in politics

In order to combine both perspectives, Plutarch will connect the component εὐνοια [1] with the component πίστις [2], which results in the quite enigmatic juxtaposition πίστις εὐνοίας, and in a further clarification of the relevance of δόξα. The politician's fame turns out to be the logical foundation of the whole argument: it has to be pursued since it is

⁴² The εὐνοια of the people is the most honourable and most stable protection for the politician (*Caes.* 57.5).

⁴³ Cf. *Agis* 2.1; *De se ipsum laud.* 539EF; *Maxime cum principibus* 777EF; *De lat. viv.* 1129C.

the only means to bring about a disposition of εὐνοία. This εὐνοία should itself be pursued, since it will create a confidence (πίστις) that in turn will lead to willingness⁴⁴ (cf. χειροήθη καὶ πρᾶον ἔκουσίως) (and thus to power⁴⁵). And since it is precisely in this εὐνοία that true honour should be sought (820F), the politician's attempts to create goodwill will at the same time justify and satisfy his φιλοτιμία.

In what follows, Plutarch first dilates on the complex place of πίστις in political life (referring to an opinion of Demosthenes; 821B) and then completes his argumentation by elucidating the importance of the politician's δόξα. The first and greatest good of the politician's fame is a confidence that gives access to political actions⁴⁶ (821BC). Besides, the politician's fame will bring about a goodwill that keeps off envy and gives power to the politician, effacing on this point the differences between men of humble origin and men of noble birth, between the poor and the rich, between the private citizen and the office holder⁴⁷ (821C). In that way, this goodwill on the part of the people can be used as a

weapon against worthless slanderers. Of course, this weapon is reserved to the good (τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς): it is only when the politician's fame, and thus the goodwill of the people, are justified, being attended by the politician's sincerity and virtue, that they will be a fair and stable wind wafting the statesman into political life⁴⁸ (821D). Then, he will gain a true honour, which will even keep upright *sub specie aeternitatis*, as appears from several concluding examples that diametrically oppose the good and the bad politician (821D-F).

* * *

In conclusion, it is clear that the chapters 26b-28 can be regarded as a further elaboration and argumentation of the negative part (ἔλεγχος) of chapter 2. At the beginning of the essay, several wrong motivations were rejected and opposed to the only good προαίρεσις of the true politician. Now the two most important and most dangerous bad motivations are put through a new critical examination. First of all, such repetition appears to fit in very well with the didactical intentions of the *Political precepts*: the broad outlines of Plutarch's

⁴⁴ Cf., e.g., *Flam.* 12.4-5.

⁴⁵ This last conclusion is only made explicit somewhat further; cf. *Praec. ger. reip.* 821CD. In that way, Cicero's prominent position was based on πίστις and εὐνοία (*Brut.* 12.2).

⁴⁶ Cf. also Cicero, *De amicitia* XVII-61; cf. also *De off.* 2.31-33.

⁴⁷ Cf. also Plutarch's reflections in chapter 23; 817D-F.

⁴⁸ Of course, the good politician will use his fame only for honourable purposes; cf. also the position of Philo of Alexandria, *De fug. et inv.* V-30.

political advice will better take root in the mind of Menemachus (and of every other reader), and the logical connection between the different themes and arguments will become more obvious when they return in various contexts. At the same time, such repetition will also contribute to the unity of the work: by means of significant catchwords, anticipations and cross-references, the different topics are gradually connected with one another into one coherent whole. Finally, this repetition also illustrates the paramount importance of the matter at stake: although the question of the politician's fundamental motivation has been raised explicitly, and discussed unambiguously, at the very beginning of the essay, Plutarch still deems it worthwhile to return to it once again: political life is a sanctuary which ought to remain pure at all costs.

The problem of φιλοπλουτία (cf. also 798EF; 808F-809B; 814D) is treated briefly but quite vehemently: the pernicious influence of love of money is perfectly clear, and appears to permeate all domains of political life. It proves to be diametrically opposed to the pure intentions of the good politician, and should as a source of all evil be banished complete-

ly from the sanctuary of political life.

The complex problem of φιλοτιμία is discussed much more in detail. The politician's attitude towards honour is apparently one of the central themes in Plutarch's political philosophy⁴⁹. Plutarch is looking for a pure φιλοτιμία which, of course, can only be directed at a pure τιμή. Now a classic example of such pure (love of) honour can be found in the Panhellenic games, where the athletes are competing for the honour of a crown⁵⁰. The politician should follow the example of those athletes, and should regard political life as his sacred race for a similar honour (820D). From the example of the Panhellenic games, Plutarch can thus derive a clear criterion: pure honour is totally free from each gift or recompense. Hence, a pure φιλοτιμία should be totally free from each φιλοχρηματία.

This criterion immediately excludes many things that are currently regarded as honours: statues, inscriptions, paintings etc. are no true honours, since they can be regarded (and indeed are currently regarded; 820BC) as a recompense for the politician's services. Such "honours" can hardly be reconciled with the politician's honourable motivation, and

⁴⁹ Cf. also his reflections on the politician's προαίρεσις at the outset of the essay (798C; 798E-799A), his discussion of the brilliant road towards fame (804C; 805B-D) and of the possibilities of the slow road (806A-C; 806E), his reflections on σεμνότης (811B-D; 813CD); cf. also *Maxime cum principibus* 777EF; *De lat. viv.* 1129C; J.-C. CARRIÈRE (1984), 234.

⁵⁰ Cato the Younger reintroduced this custom in Rome (*Ca. Mi.* 46.2-5).

moreover, they prove to entail some considerable pragmatic disadvantages (leading to envy and –quite paradoxically– even to a bad reputation; 820BC). In addition, they do not really belong to the politician himself (820B), and are not stable, but are quickly destroyed, after, and even before the death of the recipient (820EF; 821DE).

A true honour (ἀληθινὴ τιμὴ), on the other hand, consists in goodwill (εὐνοία) and confidence (πίστις) of the people, based on a good fame (δόξα) of the politician (820F-821D). Such an honour is totally free from each component of payment. It is true that it can be expressed in a symbol (820C-F) (which then has a *fundamentum in re*), but even then, the modesty and inexpensiveness of the gift guarantees that the honour is not a μισθός but really a symbol (820E). Such an honour, whether expressed in a symbol or not, is much more enduring, and will last even after the politician's death (821D-F).

Such an honour can and should be pursued by the politician, not as an end in itself, but as a mere means which will inspire confidence and thus will add to his power by making the people willing to follow him. Hence, the politician should strive for true honour primarily for strictly utilitarian reasons (the component χρήσιμον). It is interesting to ask

whether he also needs such an honour for himself. *Stricto sensu* not: just as a προκόπτων has no need of another's praise, being proud of his virtue, to be sure, but keeping his pride to himself⁵¹, so the politician should be satisfied with the uncorrupted and pure gold of the honour which he has in himself (820A). It is true that the striving for a pure honour can also be a source of pleasure (the component ἡδύ; 821A), but even this pleasure is presumably rooted in an altruistic perspective. In the end, the politician appears to have no need of true honour for himself. It is clear that such an ideal is aimed too high in the case of a beginning politician. First of all, he needs good fame also as a confirmation of his virtue⁵². Furthermore, the question remains as to whether he will be able to gain such a stable, true honour, even if he opts for the quick road towards fame⁵³. True honour appears in the first place the privilege of the powerful and experienced ruler by nature.

In this way, φιλοτιμία, a very dangerous force in political life (cf. 819F-820A), is in the end entirely neutralized. First of all, it is to a great extent interiorized: all external, tangible expressions of honour (such as statues etc.) are rejected as unfitting for the true politician. Secondly, φιλοτιμία is not

⁵¹ Cf. *De prof. in virt.* 80E-81B.

⁵² Cf. *Agis* 2.1.

⁵³ On the two possible roads, see *Praec. ger. reip.* 804C-806F.

approved as such, but only as a useful means which contributes to the public interest: personal honour can only be pursued if, and because, it serves the whole community. Hence, the self-centred and self-seeking aspect is completely removed from the notion of φιλοτιμία. Finally, true honour should be based on truth and virtue (821D), and thus proves to be the privilege of the good politician. The only statesman who can thus be allowed to strive actively for honour is also the only one who has in the end no need of it for himself. In that way, φιλοτιμία is not only neutralized, but even canalized entirely into the bounds of τὸ καλόν.

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