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Plutarchus



Plutarchus ein natürlicher maister vnd auffspringender geistlicher maister ein gepie-
ter vñ amichter des kaisers Craymo ist zu dieser zeit in dem Dolicates in fern-
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tapfretzet bey Craymo angenehme begabung erlangt.

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Plotting Alcibiades' Downfall Plutarch's Use of his Historical Sources in *Alc.* 35.1-36.5¹ by

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Abstract

Plutarch's account of the first stage of Alcibiades' final downfall (*Alc.* 35.1-36.5) is especially suitable for a study of the biographer's use of his historical sources because we can compare it not only with Xenophon's *Historia Graeca* and several texts that are directly related to Theopompus' *Hellenica* and/or Ephorus' *Historiae* (viz *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*; Diodorus Siculus; Cornelius Nepos' *Alcibiades*), but also with *Lys.* 5.1-4. By means of both kinds of comparisons, I try to demonstrate that Plutarch has carefully constructed his story so that *Alc.* 35.1-36.5 would constitute a coherent whole and Alcibiades' downfall would appear tragic.

1. Introduction

Plutarch's account of the first stage of Alcibiades' final downfall (*Alc.* 35.1-36.5) is especially suitable for a study of the biographer's use of his historical sources because we can compare it not

only with Xenophon's *Historia Graeca* and several texts that are directly related to Theopompus' *Hellenica* and/or Ephorus' *Historiae* (viz *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*; Diodorus Siculus; Cornelius Nepos' *Alcibiades*)², but also with *Lys.* 5.1-4. By means of both kinds of comparisons, I will try to demonstrate that

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² Theopompus, Ephorus and Xenophon are mentioned together in *Alc.* 32.2 and seem to have been Plutarch's main sources for *Alc.* 27-39; cf. PELLING, 1996, pp. xxxix-xl. I subscribe to the view that Ephorus drew upon the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (cf. e.g. BRUCE, 1967, p. 21; MCKECHNIE & KERN, 1988, p. 8) and constituted the principal source for the history of the Greek homeland in books 11-15 of Diodorus' *Bibliotheca historica* (cf. e.g. ANDREWES, 1985, p. 189; SACKS, 1990, p. 13; STYLIANOU, 1998, pp. 49-50). Cornelius Nepos names Theopompus as one of his sources for his *Life of Alcibiades* (*Alc.* 11.1-2) and probably used Ephorus as well, like he did in several other *Lives* (see BRADLEY, 1991; GEIGER, 1985, p. 56 n. 93).

Plutarch has carefully constructed his story³, so that *Alc.* 35.1-36.5 would constitute a coherent whole and Alcibiades' downfall would appear tragic.

2. *A Coherent Whole*

Within *Alc.* 35.1-36.5, we can distinguish three episodes: *Alc.* 35.1-4 deals with the expedition against Andros, *Alc.* 35.5-8 with the battle of Notium, and *Alc.* 36.1-5 with the replacement of Alcibiades as a general. Each of these episodes nicely links up with the immediately preceding section of the *Life*. Let us discuss the transitions one by one.

Alc. 34.3-7 deals with Alcibiades' restoration of the Eleusinian πομπή⁴. In *Alc.* 34.7, we are told that this exploit made the son of Cleinias so popular among the lower classes that they wanted him to install a tyranny. At the beginning of *Alc.* 35, the narrator contends that it is uncertain whether Alcibiades himself aspired to tyranny (*Alc.* 35.1). He adds, however, that the most powerful citizens of Athens were afraid of Alcibiades and precipitated his

departure at the head of a new expedition by voting everything he desired, including the colleagues of his choice (*ibid.*: οἱ δὲ δυνατώτατοι τῶν πολιτῶν φοβηθέντες ἐσπούδασαν αὐτὸν ἐκπλεῦσαι τὴν ταχίστην, τὰ τ' ἄλλα ψηφισάμενοι καὶ συνάρχοντας οὓς ἐκεῖνος ἠθέλησεν). This part of Plutarch's story has no parallel in other ancient texts. Xenophon simply indicates the chronological relation between the re-establishment of the procession to Eleusis and the departure of the fleet (*HG* 1.4,21: μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα). Diodorus and Nepos do report that Alcibiades got the colleagues he wanted for his new expedition (D.S., XIII 69.3: εἴλατο δὲ καὶ στρατηγούς ἑτέρους οὓς ἐκεῖνος ἠθέλειν, Ἀδείμαντον καὶ Θρασύβουλον⁵; Nep., *Alc.* 7.1: *totaque res publica domi bellique tradita, ut ... ipse postulasset ut duo sibi collegae darentur, Thrasybulus et Adimantus, neque id negatum esset*) but neither says that this was due to the fact that the leading citizens of Athens were afraid that Alcibiades would install a tyranny. In fact, they make no mention whatsoever

³ I use the term "story" to denote "the narrated events, abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order, together with the participants in these events" (RIMMON-KENAN, 1983, p. 3). On the applicability of the narratological distinction between story and narrative to historical texts, see ROOD, 1998, 9-10.

⁴ For a discussion of this passage, see VERDEGEM, 2001.

⁵ The manuscripts of Diodorus read "εἴλετο (ms. P: εἴλατο) δὲ καὶ στρατηγούς ἑτέρους ἐκεῖνος οὓς ἠθέλειν, Ἀδείμαντον καὶ Θρασύβουλον". I accept the conjectures of DINDORF and VOGEL because they make the sentence fit much better into Diodorus' text: the main verbs of all the preceding sentences in XIII 69.2-3 are in the third person plural of the aorist indicative; the next paragraph starts with "Ὁ δ' Ἀλκιβιάδης".

of the restoration of the Eleusinian πομπή. Did Plutarch himself attribute the conduct of Alcibiades' rivals to 'tyrannophobia'? We cannot answer this question with certainty. If not, he must have carefully selected his material with an eye to the continuity of his story.

The second episode in *Alc.* 35.1-36.5 is closely connected to the first through the notion of ἀχρηματία: in *Alc.* 35.4, Plutarch states that the Athenians who were disappointed because Alcibiades did not immediately recapture Andros, Chios and the rest of Ionia, never stopped to consider the precarious financial situation of their fleet (οὐχ ὑπολογιζόμενοι τὴν ἀχρηματίαν); in *Alc.* 35.5, we are told that this lack of resources was the ultimate cause of the defeat at Notium: the helmsman Antiochus could challenge Lysander because Alcibiades had left the camp to go and collect money for his troops in Caria (ἀπῆρεν ἀργυρολογήσων ἐπὶ Καρίας). This justification of Alci-

biades' absence from the battle of Notium is unique to the *Life of Alcibiades*. According to Diodorus, Alcibiades had gone to the aid of the allied city Clazomenae, which was suffering from attacks by some of its exiles (XIII 71.1)⁶, while Xenophon relates that Alcibiades set off when he heard that Thrasybulus had invested Phocaea (*HG I* 5.11). Plutarch even contradicts his own *Life of Lysander*⁷: in *Lys.* 5.1, he claimed without further explanation that Alcibiades had gone to Phocaea (εἰς Φώκαιαν ἐκ Σάμου διέπλευσεν). Whatever the reason for this divergence⁸, it seems likely that Plutarch wrote that the Athenians at home did not take Alcibiades' financial problems into consideration because he wanted to link his description of the battle of Notium with his account of the expedition against Andros. We cannot determine, however, whether he based his assertion on a source now lost or came up with it himself⁹. The fact that we do not find a sim-

⁶ This version seems to go back to the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (frag. 7, line 77 ed. CHAMBERS, 1993: ταῖς Κλαζομεναῖς); see a.o. BRUCE, 1967, 33; ANDREWES, 1982, 17.

⁷ The *Life of Lysander* is usually thought to have been written before the *Life of Alcibiades*; see e.g. MEWALDT, 1907, p. 575; JONES, 1966, pp. 67-68; DELVAUX, 1995, p. 102 and p. 105. It is cited in the *Life of Pericles* (22.4), which belongs to the tenth pair of the series (*Per.* 2.5), and the *Life of Nicias* (28.4), which seems to have been prepared simultaneously with the *Life of Alcibiades* (*Nic.* 11.2; cf. e.g. STOLTZ, 1929, p. 19 and p. 67; GOMME, 1945, pp. 83-84 n. 3; BROZEK, 1963, pp. 77-78).

⁸ On this question, see *infra*, p. 146.

⁹ Pace DIPPEL, 1898, p. 32 and MOMIGLIANO, 1935, p. 183, the singling out of Chios in *Alc.* 35.3 (ἤλπιζον δὲ καὶ Χίους ἐάλωκότας ἀκούσεσθαι καὶ τὴν ἄλλην Ἰωνίαν) does not prove beyond doubt that Plutarch followed Theopompus of Chios in *Alc.* 35.3-4: our author may have simply tried to recall Alcibiades' role in the Ionian revolt (cf. *Alc.* 24.2: Ἀλικβιάδῃ δὲ πεισθέντες εἶλοντο (sc. οἱ Σπαρτιάται) Χίους πρὸ πάντων βοηθεῖν. ἐκπλεύσας δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἀπέστησεν ὀλίγου δεῖν ἅπασαν Ἰωνίαν).

ilar statement in Cornelius Nepos, who also claims that Alcibiades fell out of favour with the Athenians because he did not live up to their unrealistic expectations (*Alc.* 7.1-3), is inconclusive, since the Latin biographer may himself have deviated from his source(s).

According to *Alc.* 36.1-4, it was a certain Thrasybulus son of Thraso who convinced the Athenians to elect new generals after the defeat at Notium. The man is said to have represented Alcibiades' enemies within the fleet (*Alc.* 36.1: τῶν δὲ μισούντων τὸν Ἀλκιβιάδην ἐν τῷ στρατοπέδῳ) and to have most sharply censured his departure from the camp (*Alc.* 36.2). In other words, the third episode of *Alc.* 35.1-36.5 is connected to the second through the content of the charges which bring Alcibiades down. Precisely in this respect Plutarch's version of the events differs from that of Diodorus, the only other author who relates that some of the soldiers at Samos denounced Alcibiades in Athens (XIII 73.6)¹⁰. According to the historian, Alcibiades' opponents accused him of favouring the cause of the Spartans and of forming

ties of friendship with Pharnabazus in the hope of oppressing his fellow-citizens after the war. In the light of this difference, it appears unlikely that *Alc.* 36.1-4 as a whole goes back to Ephorus¹¹. Perhaps Plutarch personally adapted Ephorus' account by elaborating Xenophon's assertion that the Athenians took the view that Alcibiades had lost the fleet at Notium "through negligence and incontinence" (*HG* I 5.16: οἰόμενοι δι' ἀμέλειάν τε καὶ ἀκράτειαν ἀπολωλέκεναι τὰς ναῦς; cf. *Alc.* 36.2: ἔλεγε πρὸς τὸν δῆμον, ὡς Ἀλκιβιάδης διέφθαρκε τὰ πράγματα καὶ τὰς ναῦς ἀπολώλεκεν κτλ.)¹². It is also possible, however, that he closely followed Theopompus' *Hellenica*¹³. But even in that case, he must have made a conscious choice, since it is difficult to imagine that he had banished all other accounts of Alcibiades' replacement as a general from his desk as well as his memory.

In sum, it appears that each of the three transitions under discussion at least partly depends on decisions which Plutarch made on the story-level¹⁴. No

¹⁰ In Xenophon (*HG* 1.5,16-5.17) and the *Life of Lysander* (5.3-4), the defeat at Notium directly leads to anger against Alcibiades in Athens, the end of his generalship and the loss of the support of the troops at Samos; no mention is made of any manoeuvres by Alcibiades' enemies. On the reason why Plutarch let them play a role in *Alc.* 36.1-5, see infra, pp. 147-148.

¹¹ Pace NATORP, 1876, pp. 43-44.

¹² Cf. PELLING, 2000, pp. 56-57.

¹³ Thus DIPPEL, 1898, p. 40.

¹⁴ For the transition between *Alc.* 34.3-7 and 35.1-4 and the one between *Alc.* 35.1-4 and 35.5-8, Plutarch also uses narratorial comments (*Alc.* 35.1: Αὐτὸς μὲν οὖν ἐκεῖνος ἦν

matter whether he followed some source(s) now lost or personally adapted his source material, he very carefully plotted his story, making sure that *Alc.* 35.1-36.5 would constitute a coherent whole.

3. *A Tragic Downfall*

Throughout *Alc.* 35.1-36.5, Alcibiades appears as a victim. Plutarch argues that Alcibiades was ruined by his own reputation (*Alc.* 35.3: ἔοικε δ' εἶ τις ἄλλος ὑπὸ τῆς αὐτοῦ δόξης καταλυθῆναι καὶ Ἀλκιβιάδης), explains that the defeat at Notium was ultimately due to the precarious financial situation of the Athenian fleet (*Alc.* 35.5), and emphasizes that the demos decided to elect new generals in a fit of anger (*Alc.* 36.4: οἱ δ' Ἀθηναῖοι πεισθέντες ἑτέρους εἶλοντο στρατηγούς, ἐνδεικνύμενοι τὴν πρὸς ἐκεῖνον ὀργὴν καὶ κακόνοιαν). In the remaining part of this paper, I will try to demonstrate that Plutarch also constructed his story in such a way as to make Alcibiades' downfall look tragic, i.e. to suggest that he did not deserve to fall from power¹⁵.

Let us start with the battle of Notium. In *Alc.* 35.5-8, Antiochus appears in a highly unfavourable light. Plutarch does not adopt the version of the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (frag. 8 ed.

CHAMBERS, 1993) and Diodorus (XIII 71), according to which Antiochus tried to lure Lysander into a trap, but Xenophon's (*HG* I 5.11-5.14), which makes the helmsman's crossing look like an 'unmotivated idiocy'¹⁶. Plutarch, however, more emphatically points the finger at Antiochus¹⁷. First of all, he introduces the man by means of a scathing character definition: Antiochus was a good pilot but utterly lacking in judgement (*Alc.* 35.6: ὁ δ' ἀπολειφθεὶς ἐπὶ τῶν νεῶν ἐπιμελητῆς Ἀντίοχος ἀγαθὸς μὲν ἦν κυβερνήτης, ἀνόητος δὲ τὰ ἄλλα καὶ φορτικός). Next, Plutarch relates that Alcibiades had insistently told Antiochus not to join battle, *even if Lysander sailed out against him* (*ibid.*: ἔχων δὲ πρόσταγμα παρὰ τοῦ Ἀλκιβιάδου μηδ' ἂν ἐπιπλέωσιν οἱ πολέμιοι διανουμαχεῖν). As a result, the reader will find it difficult to understand why the helmsman insulted the Peloponnesians through shouts and gestures as he sailed past the prows of their ships; (s)he will agree with the narrator when he qualifies this action as hubristic (*ibid.*: ἐξύβρισε καὶ κατεφρόνησεν). None of these negative elements is in Xenophon or any other non-Plutarchan text. Only the last one occurs in *Lys.* 5.1-2 (5.1:

εἶχε διάνοιαν περὶ τῆς τυραννίδος ἄδελόν ἐστιν, *Alc.* 35.5: καὶ γὰρ τὸ τελευταῖον ἔγκλημα διὰ ταύτην ἔλαβε τὴν αἰτίαν).

¹⁵ Cf. DUFF, 1999, p. 221; PELLING, 2000, p. 58.

¹⁶ ANDREWES, 1982, p. 19.

¹⁷ Cf. GIGANTE, 1949, p. 223; LANZILLOTTA, 1975, pp. 147-148; BREITENBACH, 1971, p. 163.

οἶον ἐφυβρίζων τῷ Λυσάνδρῳ καὶ θρασυνόμενος). The origin of the material is uncertain but its function within the *Life of Alcibiades* is clear: while Antiochus is blackened and made fully responsible for the defeat at Notium, Alcibiades is exculpated¹⁸. The statement that Alcibiades had left the Athenian camp to go and collect money in Caria adds to the same effect. As was said before, this idea is unique to the *Life of Alcibiades*. Several scholars have argued that Plutarch made a mistake when he wrote *Alc.* 35.5¹⁹ but in the light of the great affinity of *Alc.* 35.6-8 with both *Lys.* 5.1-2 and Xenophon's account of the battle of Notium, it seems more likely that he consciously made Alcibiades go to Caria in search of resources. If so, he was probably trying to give an entirely positive explanation for Alcibiades' absence: in Xenophon and Diodorus, the son of Cleinias acts with honourable motives but abandons his own troops in his desire to help the people of Phocaea or Clazomenae; by representing Alcibiades' departure as an attempt to provide his own men with money and rations (*Alc.* 35.4: ἠναγκάζετο πολλάκις ἐκ-

πλέων καὶ ἀπολείπων τὸ στρατόπεδον μισθοῦς καὶ τροφᾶς πορίζειν), Plutarch depicted his protagonist as a very considerate commander²⁰.

This portrait is in marked contrast with Thrasybulus' allegation that Alcibiades "entrusted the command to men who had won his confidence by drinking deep and spinning sailor's yarns, so that he was free to cruise around collecting money and to indulge in drunken orgies with courtesans from Abydos and Ionia, while the enemy's fleet was close at hand" (*Alc.* 36.2: ... παραδιδούς τὴν στρατηγίαν ἀνθρώποις ἐκ πότων καὶ ναυτικῆς σπερμολογίας δυναμένοις παρ' αὐτῷ μέγιστον, ὅπως αὐτὸς ἐπ' ἀδείας χρηματίζεται περιπλέων, καὶ ἀκολασταίνῃ μεθυσκόμενος καὶ συνῶν ἐταίραις Ἀβυδηναῖς καὶ Ἰωνίσι, ἐφορμούντων δι' ὀλίγου τῶν πολεμίων). As a result, the accusation appears to be false. Likewise, the reader who remembers that Alcibiades tried to draw Lysander out to a new battle after Antiochus' failure (*Alc.* 35.8) will probably reject the idea that the fact that he had built fortresses in Thrace should be seen as

¹⁸ Cf. BREITENBACH, 1971, p. 164; LANZILLOTTA, 1975, pp. 148-149 n. 1.

¹⁹ Most of them believe that Plutarch misdated the fund-raising mission that brought Alcibiades to Caria shortly before his return to Athens (X., *HG* 1.4,8); see SMITS, 1939, p. 89; ANDREWES, 1982, p. 18; KRENTZ, 1989, p. 138. ELLIS, 1989, p. 91, on the other hand, thinks that Plutarch confused Alcibiades' expedition against Phocaea (*HG* 1.5,11) with his raid on Cyme after the battle of Notium (D.S., XIII 73.3-5): either our author also misremembered the location of the foray or Caria entered the text through a scribal error.

²⁰ Cf. PELLING, 2000, p. 56.

an indication that he wanted to abandon his country's cause (*Alc.* 36.3: ἐνεκάλουν δ' αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν τῶν τειχῶν κατασκευὴν, ἃ κατεσκεύασεν ἐν Θράκῃ περὶ Βισάνθην ἑαυτῷ καταφυγὴν, ὡς ἐν τῇ πατρίδι μὴ δυνάμενος βιοῦν ἢ μὴ βουλόμενος). Alcibiades does not move to Thrace before his compatriots elect new generals (*Alc.* 36.5). In the next part of the *Life*, he is even said to have tried to help the Athenians at Aegospotami (*Alc.* 36.6-37.5). It seems that Plutarch deliberately created these divergences between Thrasybulus' allegations and the narrator's version of the events so as to make us conclude that Alcibiades did not deserve to fall from power²¹. That is not to say that all the elements that constitute the poles of the oppositions within *Alc.* 35.5-36.5 originated from Plutarch's own imagination. Our author may have come up with a new explanation for Alcibiades' absence from the battle of Notium and may have invented the content of the charges which bring the general down, but he certainly drew upon one or more historical sources in *Alc.* 35.8 and *Alc.* 36.5: Alcibiades' attempt to lure Lysander into battle again is mentioned by Xenophon (*HG I* 5.15), while his experiences in Thrace are reported by Cornelius Nepos (*Alc.* 7.4-5). The point is that Plutarch constructed his story in such a manner that his *Life* would derive part of its meaning from the interaction of different episodes.

These episodes do not always follow one another. By maintaining that the Athenians elected new generals because they had been stirred up by a man who was a personal enemy of Alcibiades and belonged to a faction who really hated him (*Alc.* 36.1-4), Plutarch has created a telling parallel between Alcibiades' final fall from power and the way his first exile came about (*Alc.* 18.6-22.5). Androcles, the man who produced the slaves and resident aliens who accused Alcibiades of having imitated the Eleusinian Mysteries in a drunken revel (*Alc.* 19.1), was, just like Thrasybulus, a personal enemy of the defendant (*Alc.* 19.3: ἦν γὰρ ἐχθρὸς οὗτος ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα τοῦ Ἀλκιβιάδου) and member of a faction who really hated him (*Alc.* 19.5: (sc. οἱ ἐχθροὶ) τεχνάζουσι τῶν ῥητόρων τοὺς οὐ δοκοῦντας ἐχθροὺς τοῦ Ἀλκιβιάδου, μισοῦντας δ' αὐτὸν οὐχ ἦπτον τῶν ὁμολογούντων, ἀνισταμένους ἐν τῷ δήμῳ λέγειν). At that time, too, Alcibiades' enemies deliberately stirred up the people against him (*Alc.* 19.3: τοῦ Ἀνδροκλέους ... παροξύνοντος, 20.5: τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἀπόντος αὐτοῦ καθαπτομένων σφοδρότερον, καὶ τοῖς περὶ τοὺς Ἑρμᾶς ὑβρίσμασι καὶ τὰ μυστικὰ συμπλεκόντων, ὡς ἀπὸ μιᾶς ἐπὶ νεωτερισμῷ συνωμοσίας πεπραγμένα) and succeeded in making them fly into a temper (*Alc.* 20.5-6) that would lead them to remove Alcibiades from power

²¹ Cf. e.g. PELLING, 1996, p. li; *idem*, 2000, p. 55; DUFF (1999), p. 238.

(*Alc.* 21.7). If one does not give credence to Thrasybulus' charges, this 'repetition of history' clearly demonstrates that the Athenian demos has not learnt from the past. So even before they regret their decision (*Alc.* 38.1-2; cf. *Alc.* 25.2; 32.4), we feel that Alcibiades suffers a tragic downfall.

The shaping of the story in *Alc.* 35.1-4 contributes to the same effect in an even more subtle way. In *Alc.* 35.2, Plutarch briefly and bluntly states that Alcibiades defeated the Andrians and their Spartan allies in battle but failed to capture the city (μάχη μὲν ἐκράτησεν αὐτῶν καὶ Λακεδαιμονίων ὅσοι παρήσαν, οὐχ εἶλε δὲ τὴν πόλιν). He thus describes the outcome of the attack in more negative terms than Xenophon and Diodorus: the former historian relates that Alcibiades erected a trophy after the Athenians had shut the Andrians up in their city and had killed all the Lacedaemonians that had been stationed there (*HG* 1.4,22-23)²²; the latter underscores the merit of the Athenian victory on the battlefield and asserts that Alcibiades left an adequate garrison in the fort which he had captured first (13.69,4-5). No matter whether Plutarch followed a source now lost or not, the explanation for this

difference in tone is not far away: only if he drew attention to the failure to capture the city, Plutarch could maintain that the events at Andros enabled Alcibiades' enemies to level a new charge against him (*Alc.* 35.2: τοῦτο τῶν καινῶν ἐγκλημάτων πρῶτον ὑπῆρξε κατ' αὐτοῦ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς). By representing the expedition against Andros as the beginning of Alcibiades' end rather than the last stage of his triumphant comeback, as do Xenophon (*HG* 1.4,21-5,1) and Diodorus (XIII 69.4-70.1), Plutarch made his protagonist's downfall follow immediately upon the height of his fame, i.e. the restoration of the Eleusinian πομπή. His statement that the most powerful citizens of Athens precipitated Alcibiades' departure because they were afraid that he would install a tyranny (*Alc.* 35.1) not only suggests that the interval between the re-establishment of the procession to Eleusis and the attack against Andros could hardly have been shorter, it also establishes a causal connection between the two events. In other words, the action that brings Alcibiades to the height of his glory at the same time initiates his downfall. Plutarch's protagonist suffers that kind of great μετάβασις ἐξ εὐτυχίας εἰς δυστυχίαν that is common in tragedy²³.

²² On the tenor of Xenophon's account, see BLOEDOW, 1973, p. 73; KRENTZ, 1989, p. 133. DUE, 1991, p. 49, finds criticism in the statement that few Andrians were killed (*HG* I 4.22: τινας ἀπέκτειναν οὐ πολλούς) but this seems rather meant to demonstrate Alcibiades' clemency (cf. *HG* 1.1,20; see also KRENTZ, 1989, p. 99); after all, it was not Alcibiades' mission to kill as many Andrians as possible.

²³ See also VERDEGEM, 2001, pp. 457-458. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle twice expresses tragedy's need for *great* changes of fortune. At 53a10, he explicitly states that a charac-

4. Conclusion

What are the implications of the foregoing observations for the value of *Alc.* 35.1-36.5 as a historical source? It should be clear that we have to be very careful when using Plutarch's account to reconstruct the history of Alcibiades' final downfall. It is beyond doubt that the central event of each episode in *Alc.* 35.1-36.5 is historical but there is reason to be sceptical about the details of Plutarch's story. The biographer need not have had an authority for each of his statements, and even if he did, not all the choices he made on the story level must be based on a critical evaluation of his sources' reliability. Unless we pay sufficient attention to Plutarch's moralistic and literary aims, it is dangerous to make use of his *Lives* as historical sources.

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ter who suffers a μετάβασις εἰς δυστυχίαν should, at first, be "ἐν μεγάλῃ δόξῃ καὶ εὐτυχίας". Secondly, he defines the tragic recognition as "ἐξ ἀγνοίας εἰς γνῶσιν μεταβολή, ἢ εἰς φιλίαν ἢ εἰς ἔχθραν τῶν πρὸς εὐτυχίαν ἢ δυστυχίαν ὠρισμένῳ" (52a30-32); ELSE, 1967, pp. 351-352 has argued convincingly that the italic phrase does not imply an idea of destiny, but simply refers to the "determinate status with respect to 'happiness'" of the characters when entering the action. See also HALLIWELL, 1987, p. 81.

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