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# A COMPANION TO PLUTARCH

*Edited by*  
Mark Beck

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*To my wife, Pia.*

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- Wardman, A. (1974). *Plutarch's Lives*. London.
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### GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

For Plutarch as a moralist in general see Flacelière's brief survey ((1987) LXXXVIII–CXX). Gréard's *De la morale de Plutarque* (1866) can still be consulted with profit. The most recent work dealing with various aspects of Plutarchan ethics (mostly in connection with his *Moralia* treatises) is Roskam and Van der Stockt (2011), where Martin (133–150) and Opsomer (151–173) are outstanding for the theoretical questions they raise and discuss. For the influence of previous thinkers on Plutarch's moral (and philosophical) thought, see A. Bellanti, "La teoria plutarchea della virtù tra platonismo, pitagorismo e aristotelismo," in P. Volpe Cacciatore and F. Ferrari (eds.), *Plutarco e la cultura della sua età* (Naples, 2007) 223–264, and most contributions in Pérez Jiménez et. al. (1999). For Plutarch's moralism in the *Lives* Pelling ((1995) = (2002) 237–251) and Duff (1999a: 52–71 and (2007/2008)) offer particularly insightful approaches; both believe that Plutarch's moralism is implicit and descriptive rather than explicit and protreptic. Stadter's (2000 and 2003/2004) discussion of virtue in the *Lives* is also relevant here, and so is Duff's ((1999a) 13–51) thorough examination of Plutarch's programmatic statements. On the other hand, Gill (1983) and (1990) breaks new and fertile ground with his crucial distinction between character and personality, the former being directly connected with moral judgments and societal norms, and the latter, being ethically neutral, with one's individuality. Pelling ((1990b) 213–262 = (2002) 301–338) is a convincing response to Gill's theory; see also Ingenkamp (1992). Finally, as to Plutarch's ways of characterization, see Dihle ((1970) 57–103, including the Peripatetic background), Bucher-Isler (1972), Pelling ((1988b) = (2002) 283–300 and (1990a)) and Beck (forthcoming).

## CHAPTER 25

# Childhood and Youth

*Carmen Soares*

### 1. Introduction: Terms Used to Designate Children and Youths

As with any literary genre, biography has its traditional themes. When we read works of a biographical nature we have the legitimate expectation of approaching the life of the subject from his/her birth until his/her death. Over a period of time that varies from person to person, a life proceeds from infancy to adulthood, or, in the best-case scenario, to old age. The individual experiences a process of physiological, psychological, and social development that coincides with the different stages in the life cycle. From a reading of those passages, wherein Greek and Latin writers identify between three to seven distinct phases of life, we arrive at the following conclusion: there is disagreement regarding either the designation of age categories or the age categories themselves established to differentiate each stage (Golden (1990) 12–22; Eyben (1996) 80–82; Harlow and Laurence (2002) 15–17; Rawson (2003) 134–145). Our investigation will focus on the two main phases in which life is divided before the adult age – in English they are designated "childhood" and "youth." From a methodological standpoint, we will begin by examining the usage of certain words by Plutarch to refer to children and young men in the *Lives*. Our aim will be to establish some idea of the variations in terminology and meanings associated with childhood and youth that were available to the author at the time. Moreover we will undertake to clarify the semantics of the words in question: *brephos*, *nepios*, *paidion*, *paidarion*, *pais*, *antipais*, *meirakion*, *neos*, *neanias*, *neaniskos*, *ephebos*. At the outset it should be understood that not all terms have a uniform meaning. In fact, as we will observe, the author employs, in most cases, different terms to designate the same reality.

A study of the passages in which *brephe* (pl. *brephe*) is used reveals that it always means baby when it refers to the newborn twins Romulus and Remus (*Rom.* 2.7, 3.5, 4.1, 2, and 4, 6.1) and to the child born to the widower of the Spartan king Polydectes (*Lyc.* 3). More specifically, because in this last passage it refers to a baby in its mother's womb, the term *brephe* can also be understood as "fetus." The most common meaning ("baby") is also attested in the following contexts: when Plutarch describes the care provided by the nurses of Laconia to the babies they raise (*Lyc.* 16.4); when he mentions the babies of Spartan mothers (*Lyc.* 17.8), the son of Cato the Elder, whom his wife washes and wraps (*Cat. Mai.* 20.4), and the newborn son of Pompey, the grandson of Julius Caesar (*Caes.* 23.6).

*Nepios* (fem. *nepia*) has a broader meaning; it is defined as "small child" because it is used to mean both "baby" and "children of young age." The first meaning can be observed in the following references: the twins nursed by the wolf (*Rom.* 21.8); Dionysus, the newborn god, bathed by the nurses after his birth (*Lys.* 28.7). In this case, it is also a synonym for *brephe*. The understanding of the term "children of young age" is unequivocal when it is used as an adjective (a), or as the synonym of a noun having the same meaning (b). This happens when: (a) Plutarch adds the adjective *nepia* to the diminutive *paidia* ("little children") to identify the sons whom the Sabines carried in their arms (*Rom.* 19.2) – in other words, a *nepios* is an infant; the noun *tekna* (pl. of *teknon*, "son") is qualified as *nepia* (*Cam.* 21.1) or determines the neutral quality of the noun (*ta nepia ton teknon*, *Mar.* 27.2) – an expression used to mean "small sons"; the word *nepios* helps to clarify the meaning denoted by the more general term *pais* (*Sull.* 37.6; *Luc.* 31.3); (b) Pyrrhus is referred to in the same passage (*Pyrrh.* 2.1) as a *nepios* and a *paidion* who requires the care of nurses.

*Paidion* (pl. *paidia*) is the diminutive formed from *pais* and the suffix *-ion*. It is a synonym of the two aforementioned words, *brephe* and *nepios*. It means "baby," as is evident in its employment, in the same passage, as a synonym of the word *brephe* (*Rom.* 2.7) and in its association with the verb *tikto* ("to give birth") (*Per.* 1.1; *Pom.* 53.5). The meaning "small children" is reinforced in various ways: in its conjunction, previously mentioned, with *nepion* (*Rom.* 19.2) or with the adjective *mikron* ("small") (*Ages.* 25.11; *Brut.* 31.4); its usage in the same passage as a synonym of *nepios* (*Aem.* 33.6) or of the diminutive "little daughter" (*thygatrion*, *Aem.* 10.6); as it refers to *paidia* as "children that must be carried" (*Cor.* 33.4) or those whom their mother could carry about suspended from her neck (*Brut.* 31.5).

*Paidarion* (pl. *paidaria*) is another diminutive of the word *pais* that refers to *paidion*, but also refers to older children. It means "baby" when it refers to the twins Romulus and Remus when they were exposed (*Rom.* 8.2); to the newborn orphan of king Polydectes and nephew Lycurgus (*Lyc.* 3. 5); to the Spartan babies whose robustness and right to life were evaluated by a council of elders (*Lyc.* 16.1); to the sons of slaves nursed by the wife of Cato (*Cat. Mai.* 20.5); to the baby a woman gives birth to (*Lys.* 26.1); to the newborn (*to gennethen*) of Agesilaus' spouse (*Ages.* 3.1). The meaning "small child" is a result of the use with the adjective *mikron* (*Cat. Min.* 3.8). We speculate that this is also the word's meaning when it refers to a child who had enough strength to hit his mentor (*Lyc.* 30.7). Obviously none of the two previous occurrences allows us to argue an age limit to a *paidarion*. However, the following passages seem to suggest that the term was also used to refer to children older than the ones we already referred to because they seem to be capable of escaping an enemy camp and bringing vital information to improve

morale (*Luc.* 9.7), of participating in naval combat, leading small fleets, and returning insults to their adversaries (*Nic.* 24.1), and of dragging a cadaver through the city and promoting the public humiliation of the deceased (*Dion* 35.6).

The usage of *pais* (pl. *paides*) indicates that it is a polysemy word *par excellence*. The truth is that it functions as a synonym to all other terms used in denoting individuals who are between infancy and youth. One of its broadest meanings is that of "son of."<sup>1</sup> We maintain that the general application of this term means "the one who is not yet an adult (*aner*)," as if the cycle of life was divided into three main stages: *pais*, *aner*, and *geron* ("elder"). Using as an example the bravery of the Spartan Isidas during the surprise attack of the Thebans (*Ages.* 34.9), Plutarch affirms that Isidas was "at an age when human beings blossom most appealingly, as they pass from boyhood (*ek paidon*) to manhood (*eis andras*)." We can observe the same dichotomy in children/adults in the *Life of Phocion* (7.3), when, after the death of his friend Chabrias, the protagonist takes upon himself the post of educator of the orphan Ctesippus, hence moving from being a "boy" (*ton paida*) to a "good man" (*andra poiein agathon*). To these two stages, we must add the phase of old age to form the tripartite suggested by Plutarch when he mentions the Roman leaders in the war (*Marc.* 1.5). In this passage he refers to them as "when they were young" (*hoi neoi ontes*) they battled the Carthaginians in Sicily, and "when they were mature" (*akmazontes*) they battled the Gauls, and finally "in old age" (*ede de gerontes*) they faced Hannibal and the Carthaginians again.

Furthermore, a subdivision between the period that precedes adulthood and old age frequently may be undertaken. For example, the observation made about the physical beauty of Alcibiades (*Alc.* 1.4), i.e. that it was always present in all ages and stages of his development, addresses the following sequence: *pais*, *meirakion*, *aner*, and *metoporon* ("late autumn"). These four stages correspond to childhood, youth, adulthood, and old age. The same sequence of ages, with the exception of the last one, appears in the *Life of Alexander* (11.6).

There was a distinction between age groups regarding the physical ability to fight. As we read in the *Life of Eumenes* (1.2), because the *pankration* was more violent, it was practiced by the eldest youths, known as *meirakia* (*pankratata meirakion*), while the fight maneuvers (*pala*) could be executed by the youngest, the *paides* (*palaismata paidon*).

In his *Lives* Plutarch does not offer an answer to the exact moment when an individual crosses the threshold from childhood to youth, but they do reveal general conceptions of the time. As a *pais* (translation for the Latin term *puer*), the Roman child wears a toga with a purple belt (*toga praetexta*) and carries around his neck a locket called a *bullula* (*Sert.* 14.4). The abandonment of these two articles of clothing and their replacement with a new all-white garment (*toga virilis*) symbolize the passage into youth. According to the Greek tradition, this transition from childhood to youth was signaled by the enrollment of the individual into the military training program, when he would then become an *ephebos*.<sup>2</sup> Rawson ((2003) 142) observes that in the Roman tradition, there was no fixed age at which this transition would take place, since it occurred sometime between the ages of thirteen and eighteen years old. Parents were free to choose the most opportune time, and celebrate this transition in the manner they saw fit.<sup>3</sup> We have already pointed out that, at twenty years of age, Alexander is called both *pais* and *meirakion* (*Alex.* 11.6). Augustus assumes a post as a consul, an exceptional concession for someone "who was considered just a *meirakion*" (*Brut.* 27.3). From a legal point of

view "the young Roman was [...] a minor until he had completed his 25th year" (Eyben (1981) 329). Moreover, in public life a young man had to "wait" until the age of twenty-seven (from 180 BCE on, according to the *Lex villia annalis*), thirty (under Sulla), or twenty-five (from the time of Augustus on) before starting his political career, the *cursus honorum* (Eyben (1981) 332). There were exceptions to the rules, as the later case of Augustus illustrates.<sup>4</sup>

*Antipais* (pl. *antipaidēs*) is formed by the attachment of the prefix *anti-* ("opposite, facing, instead") to the noun *pais*; it refers to the individual who finds himself on the transitional edge of boyhood, i.e. who is no longer really a boy anymore, and is entering the phase known as adolescence (*Aem.* 22.4; *Pomp.* 76.7; *Cic.* 7.7; *Dion.* 55.4). A passage in the *Life of Philopoemen* (1.2) confirms that the age group that follows childhood is denoted by the term *antipais*. This passage refers to the formation of a philosophical character (under the guidance of two disciples of the Academy, Ekdelos and Demophanes) and to the type of knowledge that a "child" (*pais*) did not have access to, but an individual who was "more than a child" (*antipais*) did.

*Meirakion* (pl. *meirakia*), as we have seen above (*Alc.* 1.4), corresponds to a noun used to mean "youth." The main aspect of this age group is physical strength (*tou somatos rhome*, *Thes.* 6.2). As a result, it refers to the stage of life that begins with service in the military (*Cor.* 3.1), at around the age of seventeen (*Cat. Mai.* 1.8), as the individual is found at the height of his abilities (*meirakioi kath' horan akmazonti*, *Pyrrh.* 26.18). Although we cannot establish fixed temporal boundaries, Plutarch, in designating the beginning or the end of youth, gives us some precise numbers. Both young Augustus at twenty years of age (*Brut.* 27.3) and Cato the Elder at seventeen, then again at twenty-five (*Cat. Mai.* 2.3),<sup>5</sup> were referred to by the term *meirakion*. Both were individuals who successfully held command and engaged in battle, and who were evidently recognized as "young men" (*neoi andres*), which in a military context means "warriors." Some of the passages that confirm this semantics are the following: *Cic.* 45.1–2 (Augustus is simultaneously named *meirakion* and *neon andra*); *Philop.* 7.5 (Philopoemen inspires military pride in "each one of the young men," *kat' andra ton neon hekaston*); *Caes.* 45.3 (the cavalry of Pompey is referred to as "young men," *andras ... neous*); *Arat.* 36.5 (Cleomenes, in contrast with his adversary Aratus, was at the height of his vigor and was known as "a man who was daring and young," *pros andra tolmeten kai neon*).

*Neos* (masc. pl. = *neoi*) can also be used to indicate the age of a young man; this was the case of Demetrius (*Demetr.* 5.3), son of Antigonus Monophthalmus of Macedonia, who at twenty-two years old, though "young and inexperienced" (*neos kai apeiros*), commands for the first time an army against a "man" (*andri*), Ptolemy. The following passage illustrates the opposition of the two adversaries and the conflict that was intensified by age differences. The loser is no more than just a *neos*, while the winner finds himself in the next stage of "adult male" (*aner*). Among the numerous occurrences of the adjective *neos*, we highlight the instances where the word is deliberately presented in opposition to "old," in both the forms *presbyteros* (*Aem.* 39.8; *Mar.* 46.7; *Agis* 6.1–2; *Cleom.* 12.4; *Nic.* 11.3; *Pomp.* 8.3 and 5; *Alex.* 53.1) and *geron* (*Cic.* 46.1; *Nic.* 12.1). *Meirakion* (*Cim.* 4.4) and *neanias* (*Cic.* 46.2) are also terms with equivalent meaning that are employed as synonyms of *neos*.

*Neanias* (noun from the adjective family of *neos*) and/or the respective diminutive *neaniskos* (pl. *neaniskoi*) are recurrent forms used to indicate "youth." They frequently

serve as synonyms for other words with the same meaning: *meirakion* (*Mar.* 14.5–6; *Arat.* 6.4–5; *C. Gracch.* 16.1–2; *Cam.* 15.3–4; *Phoc.* 20.1 and 4) and *neos* (*Cat. Mai.* 22.2–3). With regard to the term *neaniskos*, there is evidence that its usage differs from the term used to designate the stage that precedes it, i.e. the *pais* stage (*Aem.* 33.6: *neaniskoi* and *paidēs* are identified as distinctive elements that are part of the same sacrificial procession), and from the stage that succeeds it, the *aner* stage (*Cat. Mai.* 22.4: Carneades, an academic philosopher, and Diogenes, a Stoic, are both introduced as Greek *andres* who awaken great enthusiasm among the Roman "youth" – *neaniskoi/neoi*). As noted above, when we focused on *neos*, *neaniskos* can be also used as an opposite of "old man" (cf. *presbyteros*, *Lyc.* 12.12).

*Ephebos* (pl. *epheboi*) corresponds to the stage immediately following childhood, as we saw in the passage of Caesaron from *pais* to *ephebos* (*Ant.* 71.3) and confirmed by various passages where *epheboi* and *paidēs* are distinguished (*Pelop.* 33.5; *Phil.* 16.8; *Pomp.* 40.3; *Cat. Min.* 13.1; *Arat.* 53.6). At around the age of eighteen boys began their military preparation, which lasted about two years. This was a probationary period in which the young man, after going through the training known as *ephebia*, was deemed able to perform the primary functions of a full-fledged citizen in the splendor of his physical power: to become a soldier. In practical terms, the *epheboi* are those preparing themselves for combat, and the *neaniskoi* are the young soldiers (*Phil.* 11.2; *Aem.* 17.3; *Fab.* 22.3; *Thes.* 26.3 and 5–7; *Pyrrh.* 30.6, 33.2; *Phoc.* 7.4). Although there is a distinct difference between the two groups (which also relates to another word that means youth, *neos*: *Cleom.* 2.2), both *epheboi* and *neaniskoi*, because they are required to maintain themselves in good condition, are obligated to share the same space for physical exercises, the *stoa*, "colonnade" (*Cim.* 16.5).

To this vast number of terms used to designate individuals, it is necessary to add two fundamental expressions that address basic and abstract notions of childhood and youth. The first term is called "age of childhood" (*paidike helikia*: *Alc.* 7.1; *Cim.* 1.3; *paidike hora*: *Cat. Mai.* 17.2), and the second is referred to as "youth" (*neotes*: *Them.* 2.7; *Comp. Cim.-Luc.* 1.4; *Cic.* 10.4; *Marc.* 1.4). From a sociological point of view, an analysis of the feminine universe is not possible because our source, Plutarch's *Lives*, has imposed that choice on us. Women and girls are mentioned infrequently.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Methodology

Even though there are over a hundred passages where children and the young are mentioned, the reader should not expect to find a systematic approach to the subject in the *Lives*. References to the subject or any individual can appear at any moment in the narrative (though, for chronological reasons, they occur more often in the early chapters). The information this chapter provides is more sociological than ethical in nature. In other words, I sought data relevant to the condition of children and youths in the social group they belong to. Therefore, this chapter is not interested in an analysis of the text within the text (which would consider the character and actions of children and the young as part of the heuristics of the respective *Life*), but within its context (which makes it possible to perceive some of the main ideas that concerned Plutarch, an author from the second century CE).

Consequently, the image we trace from Plutarch's *Lives* allows us to observe that these two initial periods of life are conditioned not only by cultural factors, but also by a principle that is methodological in nature – the principle of qualitative selectivity. As we read in Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* (1.2), the narrative does not address all the famous feats of the protagonist (a method used by historiography) but, above all, emphasizes some deeds (not necessarily the greatest), dictums, and anecdotes that may reveal his character in greater depth (a method used by the genre of biography). As the passage referred to illustrates, the principle of qualitative selectivity is applied in each of the *Lives* considered in its totality. Plutarch manages to be more specific about his principle by applying it to the two main stages that a man's life is divided into, the adult age and what precedes it. For example, an athlete who gains a prize in the adult category (*en andrasi*) stops talking about his victories in his youth (*tas paidkas ... nikas*) because these are overshadowed by the multitude and magnitude of the contests and wars that come later (*Pomp.* 8.7). Although youth can present itself as a fertile period for the accumulation of biographical data, it can easily be overlooked to allow room for more mature feats.

Beyond considerations of methodology, Plutarch perceived that his knowledge of the childhood and youth of his biographical subjects was limited by the sources themselves. Pelling ((1990) 216) argues that the abundance or lack of data about these periods of life depended on what the sources revealed. That means that when a certain aspect is not mentioned in the biography, it is because it was unavailable to Plutarch and not due to deliberate exclusion on his part.

The analyses of the vocabulary that relates to childhood and youth revealed that the same term (*pais*) describes someone from birth until his twenty-fourth birthday, and, despite the exclusive aspects of each age, the two periods confront the individual with similar realities. Therefore, I chose to avoid a traditional bipartite dichotomy and instead explored the two most important aspects of the psychosomatic identity of each individual in these two phases of life: the physical portrait and the psychological portrait.

An in-depth study of the education of children and youths in the *Lives* is the subject for another work (Soares 2011). In the present analysis of the psychological portrait, education is a theme that appears in the background since *physis* (one's natural endowment) and *nomoi* (customs and traditions, a generic term that includes education) act as tools that mold the psyche of the individual.

### 3. The Physical Portrait

The physical condition of a baby is taken into account even before the baby is born. It seems that the mother's diet influences the outcome of the fetus. A light diet (*oligositia*) is the key to give birth to lean and well-formed babies (*Lyc.* 17.8). And this could be vital because among the Spartans, good build and robustness in the newborn were requirements that determined his right to life (*Lyc.* 16.1). The elder council was responsible for deciding whether the baby would live or die based on these physical criteria. A "flawed and deformed" baby (*Lyc.* 16.2) was condemned to die.<sup>7</sup>

To have a well-built figure and vigor are characteristics that are emphasized when addressing children and youth, but not the elderly. The "beauty of the body" (*to kallos tou somatos*) is an attribute that does not endure into old age. With the passing of the

years the "beauty of the *pais* dies" (*Arist.* 2.4). Plutarch finds the exception that confirms the rule in the figure of Alcibiades, who was gifted with "natural beauty and physical perfection" (*Alc.* 1.4), throughout his entire life. Also, regarding the physical vigor of the individual, twice in similar contexts – the funeral procession of a Greek general (Pelopidas) and of a Roman (Aemilius) – the event is conducted with a demonstration of strength and homage for the deceased. In the first case, the young men, as sacred figures (*epheboi kai paides kai hierais, Pelop.* 33.4), transport the dead general; in the second case, the allusion to strength is more evident as Plutarch writes that those "who possess the robust bodies and youth" (*Aem.* 39.8) carry the deceased, in contrast to the elders (*hoi de presbyteroi*) who follow, and recite the titles the deceased bore and the glorious deeds he accomplished.

The reference to beauty and strength is shown in the text as another element of the characterization of the individual or as a decisive factor of the individual's behavior in history. Plutarch refers to the beauty of a *pais*, without this characteristic having any effect on historical events in the following passages: the beautiful appearance of Cleonymus, with whom the son of the Spartan king Agesilaus II (*kalou ten opsin, Ages.* 25.1) fell in love; Agesilaus himself was in love in another instance with a boy of extraordinary beauty (*kalliston*, 11.2); Panteus identified as the "most handsome" (*kalliston*) of the young men with whom king Cleomenes (*Cleom.* 37.14) falls in love; Anthipates, a *meirakion*, "one of many with such natural beauty," who initially rejects the rival Themistocles (*Them.* 18.2); the weakness of Gaius Lucius, nephew of Marius, for "handsome youth" (*meirakion kalon, Mar.* 14.4); the youngest son of the consul M. Fluvius Flaccus, a *neaniskos*, who is "particularly attractive" (*kallistos, C. Gracch.* 16.1). If we continue with the neutral description of physical aspects, it is important to consider, for example, the height (*megethos*) and strength (*rhome*) of the young Remus (*Rom.* 7.5).

We will now evaluate the passages wherein beauty and/or possession of a good physique have served to trigger events, or to influence their outcome. In societies where homoerotic relationships, in general, and pederasty, in particular, were practiced and accepted,<sup>8</sup> physical attractiveness captivates both men and women. A series of episodes present the same common denominator: the physical beauty of a child or youth stimulates the passion of an adult. In terms of the consequences this may have for the lives of those involved, the results differ:

- Political hostilities in adulthood: two famous Athenian statesmen, Themistocles and Aristides (*Them.* 3.2; *Arist.* 2.2–4), transferred into their political activities a juvenile rivalry born from the attraction both felt for the same handsome boy, Stesilaus.
- Condemnation of the suitor by the senate: accused by Marcellus, the father of the beautiful boy who suffered the annoyance Capitolinus was condemned to pay a fine for his behavior (*Marc.* 2).
- Suicide of the "boy of young age" (*pais anebos, Demetr.* 24.3) when he is surprised alone by a suitor whose attentions he repeatedly avoids, and as a result sacrifices himself in the name of his country (*patria*) and beauty itself (*axia ... tou kallous phronesas, Demetr.* 24.5).
- Homicide of the suitor who, as in the previous case, was willing to use force to attain the favors of a young man who possessed "physical good looks and nobility of spirit" (*somatos kallei kai phyches phronemati, Cim.* 1.2).

- Military defeat: it is also because of beauty that the cavalry of Pompey is defeated in the battle of Pharsalus against Caesar; due to fear of becoming disfigured by the attacking enemy, they withdraw (*Caes.* 45.3-4; *Pomp.* 69.5-6).
- Freedom: the good looks of young Marius awaken the compassion and love of one of the concubines of the king of Numidia who lets him escape captivity (*Mar.* 40.11-12); another form of freedom that can be achieved through beauty and status is that given by Nicias to a beardless slave, whose physical attributes made him deserving of warm applause after his performance as Dionysus in a chorus (*Nic.* 3.4).

If this last passage illustrates certain social benefits brought about by beauty, let us consider a case where the opposite is true. In other words, a case in which the military service performed by a *neanias*, the Spartan Acrotatus, that saved his city results in the clear embellishment of his physical portrait. According to Plutarch (*Pyrrh.* 28.5), when returning to his post covered in blood but victorious, he seemed to the women of Sparta "taller and more beautiful" (*maizon ... kai kallion*). *Paidēs* of extraordinary beauty, who become tempting to others, become a "product" that can be sold or offered as a gift to important adult men (allowing those men to consider the transaction offensive or not, cf. *Alex.* 22.1).

In a context where beauty has a particular emphasis, it is not surprising that its opposite, an ugly and ridiculous appearance, serves as a counterpoint in the presentation of Alexander's servant, who is a gracious singer (*Alex.* 35.6). Weakness and softness can also explain what happened to Demosthenes, who was prevented from receiving the physical preparation proper to his age (*Dem.* 4.4). The titles and nicknames received during childhood can equally reflect those contrasting realities. His "good physical condition" (*eumorphia*) gave Damocles, who was harassed by Demetrius, the nickname of "beautiful" (*Demetr.* 24). In the case of Demosthenes, it was his fragile physical appearance that prompted other children to nickname him Batalus (*Dem.* 4.5). Moreover, the tradition of assigning nicknames and titles is presented as an act "characteristic of youth" (*meirakiode ... prosynymian*, *Per.* 39.2) and not of adults (who supposedly achieved full rationality).

We could conclude that good appearance is nature's gift (or not), hence the importance of maternal diet during pregnancy and the motivation of Spartans to eliminate babies with overt defects or abnormalities. This would be a precipitous conclusion because Plutarch acknowledges belief in education exerting an influence on the formation of the body. For Alexander (*Alex.* 71.1) the education he demanded be given to the Persian *paidēs* (in training as much as in studies) produced visible physical effects: virile bodies and handsome features. It is equally important to consider that we also find in the *Life of Alexander* (72.2) the idea that diet adjusts itself to one's age and professional activity. Young people and soldiers have an identical relationship with food, i.e. because they burn many calories, their bodies require a greater intake of nutrients. That is why they are said to find it too hard to follow a rigorous regime. If a sick man acts like these people such behavior can cost him his life. The example presented by Plutarch tells the story of a man who died because, immediately after he left Alexander's company, he devoured a boiled fowl and drank fresh wine in abundance.

If the virility of the body is something that can be achieved through training, this implies that other young men may not have a virile body and for this reason they resemble

young maids (*parthenoi*). In other words, they have a feminine appearance (*thebyphanneis*), as in the case of two of Theseus' companions (*Thest.* 23.2). These female resemblances can be illustrated by natural or artificial characteristics. A fresh aspect (*nearous*, *Thest.* 23.2) and beardless face (as with Clodius, cf. *Caes.* 10.1 and *Cic.* 28.2, and the Athenians instructed by Solon, cf. *Sol.* 8.5) are natural characteristics that easily help men disguise themselves as women, or as it is referred to in the Greek text, "to resemble young maids" (*parthenois homoiousthai*, *Thest.* 23.3). Other adjustments are required in order for a young man to resemble a "young girl." In his *Life of Theseus* Plutarch offers, in an indirect way, some details concerning this cosmetic procedure of transformation. These data help us to apprehend the physical stereotype of the *parthenos*. In order to acquire feminine features it is necessary to have soft white skin (as dictated by the practice of keeping young girls out of the sun and the custom of taking warm baths) and treated hair (with the application of lotions), as well as the adoption of a feminine tone of voice, mannerisms, and women's clothes (*Thest.* 23.3). This may include, as we read in the *Life of Solon* (8.5), the use of a headband and sandals. The voice is in fact an essential aspect of the feminine identity, as was proved by the failure of Clodius' disguise as lute-girl when he spoke (*Caes.* 10.3; *Cic.* 28.3).

#### 4. The Psychological Portrait

Before we commence with an identification of the most important psychological traits in children and young men, it is important to address the fact that there are two contradictory opinions about the relation between body (*soma*) and spirit (*psyche*). The physical portrait either reflects the characteristics of the mind or differs completely from it. Plutarch presents the first argument in the following passages: the bodies of Romulus and Remus, which were great and beautiful, reveal that the children will turn into manly, bold, high-spirited individuals (*Rom.* 6.3); when Plutarch writes that it is by "looking into the face (*prosopon*)" of Remus that Numitor detects "the courage and boldness of his soul (*psyche*)" (*Rom.* 7.5), this reflects the idea that the face is the mirror of the soul; beyond the face, there are also the voice and the actions (even if they occur in a children's game) that express the character of the individual (*Cat. Min.* 1.3). The contrary opinion, i.e. that physical appearance has nothing to do with the soul, is taken from *Thest.* 23.2: the *neaniskoi* of feminine appearance have "manly spirits" (*androdeis de tas psychas*).

Our discussion will begin with the main psychological characteristics of those who have not yet achieved adulthood. There are a great variety of psychological profiles. Comparing the lives of Cimon and Lucullus, the biographer concludes that the *neotes* of Cimon could be described as "blameworthy and licentious" whereas Lucullus' was "disciplined and moderate" (*Comp. Cim.-Luc.* 1.4). Before we begin to look into the most important examples of behavior, it should be observed that while bad conduct is criticized, good conduct is praised. We perceive a clear reference to this when *parthenoi* sing praises (*enkomia*) to the *neaniskoi* who possess manly qualities (*andragathia*) just as they jest (*skommata*) with those who do not (*Lyc.* 14).

The tendency toward licentious behavior can be associated with the young, but adults interested in captivating their support explore it. Catiline corrupts the Roman youth by

providing them with “pleasures (*hedonas*), drinks (*potous*), and women’s love (*gynaikon erotas*)” (*Cic.* 10.4). Readily susceptible to the influence of the eldest, young men could easily lose their way by choosing the path of a bad life (i.e. over-indulgence in *hedonas* and *potous*) because of the lessons they received from inappropriate masters (for this reason Cicero distanced his son from the company of the master of rhetoric Gorgias, *Cic.* 24.8). The young Mark Antony was also corrupted by the influence of others. Curio “introduced him to drinking-sessions, women, and all kinds of extravagant and immoderate expenses” (*Ant.* 2.4). From these two examples we can infer that they were also susceptible to the influence of third parties. The murderer of Philip II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, corresponded to this type of susceptible youth because he was enticed by Olympias (*Alex.* 10.6). Because these encounters take place in a phase of life in which they are still learning, these individuals strike one as being rather impressionable or, as we see in the *Life of Cato the Younger* (1.9), they allow themselves to be easily persuaded by the older individual. However, the inverse situation is also true: that of a father or mentor who succumbs to the influence of a son or protégé due to the emotional bonds that exist between them. For example, Augustus persuades Cicero, at that time an old man, to assign him the consulship (at twenty years of age, he was too young to legally assume this office, *Brut.* 27.3).

Let us return to the hedonism of youth. Aratus, who had been in exile in Argos, intended to deceive the spies of Nicocles, tyrant of Sicyon, in order to depose him from his native city, and he pretended to be a rich young man on a typical day (*Arat.* 6.4). After some time conversing with his friends and exercising, he then pretended to have surrendered himself to “pleasures and drinking” (*eis hedones kai potous*). In order to make it believable, the *meirakion* went home with some young men and their servants who bought garlands and lamps, and contracted harp and flute players who were responsible for the musical entertainment of the banquet. The spies were convinced that Aratus was harmless because he totally surrendered to the preoccupations of his age. The members of Dionysius’ court in Sicily also surrounded the young tyrant with the habitual entertainment for his age: drinks, women, and activities that were generically referred to as “other unseemly pastimes” (*Dion* 7.4).

Plutarch uses a composed noun, *philedonia*, to refer to the “fondness for pleasure” that is a characteristic accepted in youth but not in old age. This is illustrated when he observes that the Roman general Sulla, even after becoming old, did not abandon “his susceptibility to love and his powerful sensuality” (*Sull.* 2.6). Moreover, *philedonia* can emerge during childhood (*ek paidon*), as happened with the emperor Otho (*Galb.* 19.1). The daily consumption of wine can become an addiction. To become *philopotes* (“fond of wine”) and *ataktos* (“undisciplined”) are two of the flaws ascribed to the son of Phocion (*Phoc.* 20.1). Cimon (*Cim.* 4.4) is also characterized in the same way, but is referred to as *polypotes* (“hard drinker”). The clarification that this behavior “resembles that of his grandfather” indicates a belief in inherited genetic behavior. Plutarch also suggests that in certain situations the ingestion of *akratos*, pure wine (contrary to the Greek and Roman tradition of mixing it with water), makes young people more undisciplined (*akolaston neon*) and more inclined to acts of violence (*Alc.* 18.8). It is easy to assume that, given the enthusiasm of youths for fighting in general and between cocks in particular (*Lyc.* 20.14), they would foster a more volatile temperament. The young are different from their elders because they are *polemopoioi* (“war makers”), while the latter

are *eirenopoioi* (“peace makers”) (*Nic.* 11.3). Even during childhood recourse to violence serves to relieve anger, as we see in the attitude of Cassius who, while “still a boy” (*eti pais on*), gives the son of Sulla a beating, because he celebrated the power of his father (*Brut.* 9.1–2).

Depending on the character of the individual or the process of maturation over the years, there are non-violent ways that rage can manifest itself. For example, Cato the Younger (*Cat. Min.* 7) found in poetry an escape from “the anger of youth” (*orgei kai neoteti*) that was ignited by his rival, who stole his bride. Nevertheless, broadly speaking, children and young men demonstrate a lack of courage that distinguishes them from adults. Two typical demonstrations of this “moral incompetence” (Golden (1990) 5) are the fear babies have of being alone in the dark (*Lyc.* 16.4) and the tremors felt by young men when experiencing a ritual of initiation (*Cic.* 22.2). Less honorable but worth mentioning is the fear experienced by soldiers in the battlefield. When Phocion rebuked Leosthenes, a pretentious young man, about involving the Athenians in the Lamian war (*Pyrrh.* 1), he said that this day would only come when the youth no longer demonstrated the desire to leave their posts (*Phoc.* 23.3). These words illustrate the general’s deep contempt for cowardice. In fact the octogenarian Phocion accused a *meirakion* of cowardice for abandoning his post without authorization and advancing against the enemy full of pride, only to immediately retreat. Indiscipline (*ataxia*, literally “abandonment of one’s post”) and “moral weakness” (*malakia*) – semantic groups that include cowardice – are considered crimes in Greek and Roman law. This idea is confirmed in the *Life of Cicero* (6.2) by the story that when he was quaestor Cicero acquitted some young Romans of good families charged with dishonorable conduct in military service.

The reverse of cowardice – courage – is also a character trait of children and young men, often revealed in the context of war or revolution. Let us begin our discussion with those children who are younger in age – “little children” (*ta paidia ta mikra*) – from the city of Xanthos in Lycia. Evidently, the age group they belong to suggests that most of the decisions underlying their actions originated with their progenitors. On the other hand, Plutarch describes their participation in the collective suicide of the inhabitants surrounded by Brutus, which reveals a great deal of autonomy on the part of the children (*Brut.* 31.4). It is in the participle form of the verb “to ordain, exhort” (*keleuo*) that we note the active participation of the children in such a violent act; though in the moral light of the author, it represents the courage to die free in the face of the alternative of becoming slaves as soon as the city is taken over. Plutarch mentions that, as well as the men and women, the children also found death in the following manner: jumping into fire, jumping from the walls surrounding the city, and lastly (which clarifies beyond a doubt their volition and courage) by following their parents to their death, with their necks naked and pressed against the swords of their parents begging (*keleuonta*) them to strike. Even though we cannot overlook the circumstances that contributed to the phenomenon of collective hysteria (note the allusion in the text to the yelling and noise at the time of the suicide: *meta krauges kai alalagmou*), the truth is that faced with being captured, many took it upon themselves to kill even the children. Against the Gauls, Caesar had to fight hard to capture them. It was not the walls that protected the city against the enemies and served as an obstacle but the chariots that formed the fortress (*Caes.* 18.4). In order to mount a defense, the barbarians counted on the help of their women and “sons” (*paides*).

Moving into the pre-adult category, we turn to the *neoi*. They are described as impulsive and gifted with strength and wisdom; some of them are distinguished by the wittiness of their actions. Under this heading we should include the Theban Pelopidas. Although he was one of the youngest to be exiled to Athens for opposing the tyranny of the regime in his own city, he was able to devise a plan to depose the government (*Pel.* 7.1–2). The coup was based on a group of younger men (*oligous de ton neotaton*, *Pel.* 8.1) coming into the city where they would find support. The rebels disguised themselves as hunters in order to pass by without raising suspicion and avoid failure. The allusion to disguise reveals a characteristic that is more common in youth than adults: the flexibility to adapt to new situations. When successful, these acts of bravery receive full recognition with crowns, processions of the city's most distinguished members (e.g. priests, *Pel.* 12.6), and other forms of public recognition described by Plutarch. Marcellus, "though young" (*onti men eti neoi*, *Marc.* 2.2), fought bravely without avoiding a challenge (note to the censorship of cowards!), and this earned him recognition for his military service (he is offered crowns and prizes) as well as the award of civil and religious offices (he gained the post of curule aedile and augur).

Returning to the topic of youth's fondness for pleasures (*philedonia*), we see that not all young men live their lives in a search to satisfy sensual desires. Observe, for example, the case of Agis, the reformist king of Sparta who came to the throne and immediately renounced all fleeting pleasures (*Agis* 4.2). Attracted by the oratorical power of the Academic Carneades, young intellectual Roman men abandoned their "other pleasures and pastimes (*allon hedonon kai diatribon*)" in favor of philosophy (*Cat. Mai.* 22.3).

Other characteristics deriving from the semantics of the stem *phil-* ("to be fond of") are associated with youth: *philoneika* ("love for victory, competition, contentiousness") and *philotimia* ("love of honor, ambition, rivalry"). Plutarch mentions (*Num.* 8.21) that *philoneikia* is a typical trait of youths (*meirakiodous*). In the *Life of Pompey* (29.5), he also says that Achilles did not play the part of a man (*poiein andros ergon*) but of a youth (*alla meirakiou*) when he prevented the Greeks from reaching Hector, because he wanted the fame. In planning his military strategy, Pompey, like Achilles, is motivated by envy (*phthonos*) and rivalry (*philotimia*) with Metellus.

"Fondness of learning" (*philomathia*) and "fondness of wisdom" (*philosophos*) are traits not easily found in everyone, but, as in contemporary society, we have what are known as gifted children. They often stand out in school and in their circle of friends, possibly becoming the center of attention (and sometimes contempt) of their companions and their respective families. Cicero was one of these children who, as a very young child, wrote a poem (*Cic.* 2.3). Alexander also exemplifies two innate qualities (i.e. that are constitutive of his *physis*): "fondness of learning" (*philologos*) and "fondness of reading" (*philanagnostes*) (*Alex.* 8.2).

In undertaking a semantic analysis of *phil-*, we shall explore its application in the terminology used to refer to father, mother, and brother (the preferential receiver of affection of children, young men, and adults). To demonstrate affection for the father is to be *philopator* (*Demetr.* 3.1), to the mother *philometor* (*Sol.* 27.7; *Sert.* 2.1), and to the brother *philadelphos* (*Sol.* 27.7; *Cat. Min.* 3). The stories of Sertorius and Cato the Younger suggest that the loss of one or both parents during early infancy results in an intensification of emotional bonds with another family member as a way to compensate for that loss. Children do not restrict the expression of their emotions to people. They

pay attention to the importance of domestic animals in the household, as the desperate cries of Aemilius Paulus' little daughter over the death of the dog Perseus illustrate (*Aem.* 10.7–8).

The desire to please is also another typical trait of children's characters. The courtiers of Dionysius, the young tyrant of Syracuse, consistently advised him with thoughts that were pleasing to him instead of those that could help protect his interests. For this reason the tyrant's uncle, Dion, referred to this type of behavior as "a typical way for children to think" (*phronesei paidas*, *Dion* 6.4). Comparisons between adults and children clearly illustrate that the latter were thought to be "mentally incapable" (Golden (1990) 5). Hence the word for "little children" (*paidarioi*) is employed as an effective way to insult adversaries, as Caesar did to the young (*neoi*) sons of Pompey who valiantly confronted him (*Caes.* 56.3). Children were also associated with other intellectually incapable figures because of their intellectual inferiority, such as women, the sick, the insane, and others (Golden (1990) 7; Harlow and Laurence (2002) 34). According to the *Life of Dion* (2.4), the mind of young children (*paidaria*) is compared to those of "women" (*gynaia*) and "disturbed people" (*paraphorou anthropous*) who suffer from an aberration of the soul or distemper of the body. It was this frailty of their rational faculty that allowed them to see ghosts and apparitions.

Cato the Elder, who was known as an exemplary father and was named a "good father" (*pater agathos*, *Cat. Mai.* 20.1), demonstrates another essential attribute of children's personalities: innocence. The avoidance of indecent words as well as bathing with one's children preserves the soul of the infant, which at this point is closest to the divine (Golden (1990) 10). This august advice is given twice in the *Life of Cato the Elder*. Plutarch writes that he considers his wife and son "the holiest of holy things" (20.3). Later on (20.7), he also compares them to the sacred virgins, the Vestals, when he carefully chooses the words he uses in their presence. The recognition of children's divine abilities was also another way to address their proximity to the gods. For example, general Aemilius Paulus understood the death of his daughter's dog Perseus as a good omen since Perseus was named after his enemy (*Aem.* 10.8).

Plutarch also suggests (*Dion* 4.7) that the young think differently from adults by joining the verb *prosdokao* ("to expect, think, suppose") to the adverbial form *neoterikos* ("in a young manner"). Because Dion was a young man and thought like one, he hoped that Plato's teachings would have an effect on the tyrant of Syracuse as they had upon him. Immaturity leads the individual to make bad decisions. However, once they mature, they become capable of recognizing their mistakes and justify them with reference to their inexperience (*apeiros*). Immaturity was the reason why Brutus criticized the suicide of Cato (*Brut.* 40.7). It is mostly in the military that the lack of experience can be a risk to the young man, compromising his good name. Military service began around seventeen years of age (*Cat. Mai.* 1.8; Eyben (1981) 345), and the first few years were dedicated to instruction in fighting and military tactics. Plutarch gives various examples of generals who were more than just military commanders, serving also as "kindly teachers" to their students both during training and while on campaigns (*kai didaskalos eumenes ton polemikon en tais strateias*, *Cor.* 15.7). They were taught the values of modesty and virtue, i.e. not to envy others' success and boast of their own. Aemilius Paulus was another general who fits this description (*Aem.* 17.4, 27.1). Many of the protagonists in the *Lives* participated in military campaigns led by famous generals because the battlefield

was the place for military training. Some of those who participated in their youth in military combat are Coriolanus, by the side of Tarquinius (*Cor.* 3); Cato the Elder, at twenty-five, under the command of Fabius Maximus (*Cat. Mai.* 2.3); the son of Cato at the side of Aemilius Paulus (*Cat. Mai.* 20.10); Pyrrhus with Demetrius (*Pyrrh.* 4.4); Pompey at the side of his father (*Pomp.* 3.1); and Cicero, who served under Sulla (*Cic.* 3.2).

Of the two sons Aemilius Paulus brought with him to war, he favored the youngest, the future Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus, who would destroy Carthage (preference for one son can be seen as another timeless characteristic of humankind). Initially the father thought he had died in combat and explained his death as a result of his inexperience (*hyp'apeirias*), which was responsible for his capture by the enemy (in fact he was to reappear covered in blood and rejoicing at his first victory: *Aem.* 22.8). Among the Greeks, Demetrius was another "inexperienced young man (*neos kai apeiros*)," who at twenty-two suffered a terrible defeat in Gaza against Ptolemy (*Demetr.* 5.3). In the following chapter in the *Life of Demetrius* (6.1), it becomes clear that the prestige of victory is directly related to the age of the defeated combatants. This was illustrated by the reply sent by Demetrius' father, Antigonus, after the loss to Ptolemy wherein he says that the general won a victory over "beardless men" (*ageneious*), but that the following battle would take place against men (*andras*). The tone of defiance is obvious in this passage.

Aratus negotiates many difficulties because of his age and inexperience (*os apeirai*, *Arat.* 5.2) in rallying support in an effort to depose the tyrant of Sycion. In fact, it was general knowledge that it was in bad taste and highly inappropriate (*atopon*) to give advice to a leader (in this case, the emperor Galba) who was older than oneself (*hegemonia presbyten*), as if he were a *meirakion* (*Galb.* 13.4).

Analysis of these passages in Plutarch's *Lives* indicates that youth is conceived as a formative process that is contingent on experience. This was the case of the young Phocion, who was helped through his acquisition of military experience (*eis empeirian polemikon*, *Phoc.* 6.1). He was such a clever pupil (we suppose) that he was in charge of correcting his commander's nature when he became capricious and violent. In examining Chabrias' attitude, we come to another timeless truth about men and their age: it is not only the oldest who possess reason, and not all young men fail the first time. After the death of Chabrias, Phocion became the tutor of the orphan Ctesippus, whose main and unbearable quality was his attitude (which was evident during a campaign where he insisted on correcting the commander and divided his leadership in the field, *Phoc.* 7.3–4). Pompey represents the opposite example of Ctesippus where a young man demonstrates knowledge of a natural hierarchy based on age, even in the military (*Pomp.* 8.5). An individual who also manifests a great awareness of this principle is Brutus (*Brut.* 3.3). Because he is young, Brutus tries to refuse being nominated general but does not disobey the commands of Cato the Younger, and he returns to Rome with all of Ptolemy's treasures.

There are those of outstanding capacity who acquire the qualities required of a commanding general on the battlefield at an early age. Volunteerism was one of the most sought-after qualities in recognizing military genius. The best known young military geniuses are the following. Fabius Maximus, son of Aemilius Paulus, volunteered to command a mission against king Perseus of Macedonia, despite his *meirakion* status (*Aem.* 15.4). At twenty-three years of age, Pompey decided to violate military protocol and, without being proclaimed commander (*strategos*), started to act like one and headed

an army formed by three legions (*Pomp.* 6.5). His expertise was no less because of his youth, and after he had defeated three offensives by generals of Marius' side, Plutarch calls him a "young adult" (*andri neo*),<sup>9</sup> who was distinguished by Sulla with the supreme military title of *Imperator* (unheard of for someone who was not a senator). Though Pompey did not refuse the honors, he recognized that at his age a position as an assistant would be more appropriate, and he volunteered to assist Metellus in Gaul (*Pomp.* 8.5). Were his intent and reasoning merely a façade? This is, in fact, a pertinent question if we take into consideration that Pompey had the courage to request that he be allowed to enter Rome in triumph, a concession that was granted only to members of the senate and not even made to Scipio when he defeated the Carthaginians. The references to Pompey's youth and the dismissal of his pretensions are obvious: his beard was barely growing, which means that he was not old enough to be a senator or to wish for himself the honors attached to such officers (*Pomp.* 14.2).

Amongst the Greeks, in particular, the young reformist king Agis distinguishes himself by his charisma and talent, commanding, by order of the magistrates, a Spartan contingent with the mission to assist the commander in chief of the Achaean League, Aratus. This happened when, as Plutarch says (*Agis* 14), he was just a *meirakion*, *neaniskos*, and the youngest of *neoi*. It is by adducing the argument of age and greater experience that the Spartan king delegates to Aratus the decision on how to proceed with maneuvers in Corinth (*Agis* 14.3).

In coming to the close of this list of gifted commanders, I have saved Alexander the Great for last. This is not so much because of his feats – which were of such an extent that he received the name of Alexander the Great – as because what interests us here is the youth of the *hegemones* and confirmation of their military talents. Alexander became the regent leader, even though he was only sixteen, because of his father's absence during an expedition to Byzantium (*Alex.* 9.1). Although he belonged to an age group that today we consider teenagers, he nevertheless was able to quell a rebellion and confront the Greeks in Chaeronea, where he is said to have been the first to challenge an elite force of 300 Thebans known as the Sacred Band.

Imprudence in actions and words are also qualities associated with youth. To the experienced ears of Phocion, the inflammatory words used by Leosthenes, a *meirakion*, to incite war when he addressed the people of Athens demonstrated arrogance and vanity (*Phoc.* 23.2). In the *Life of Alexander* (48.5) we come across the idea that impulsive words are an inherent characteristic of young men that recurs particularly when they are under the influence of wine and are attempting to brag about their military achievements to their beloved women.

In the *Life of Themistocles* (2.7) Plutarch registers that young men are by nature impulsive (i.e. surrender to the impulses, *hormai*), which is emphasized in the *neotes* stage of life. This natural tendency transforms Themistocles into an erratic (*anomalos*) and unstable (*astathemos*) individual, whose behavior can only be rectified by reason (*logos*) and education (*paideia*). Another characteristic of boyhood (*ek paidon*) is the lack of moderation. According to Plutarch, the Theban legislators soothed the young men's characters (*ethe ton neon*) by two different means: through listening to flute music (*aulos*) and stimulating homoerotic relationships in the *palaistra* (*Pelop.* 19.1).

If, as we saw at the beginning of our exploration of this topic, physical traits reveal the soul from infancy, we can question whether maturity might or might not result in

alterations of the *psyche*. When we consider the following two examples, it is clear that Plutarch gives us both a positive and a negative answer. The negative answer is illustrated by the case of Cato the Younger who, from an early age (*ek paidion*), showed an “unchangeable, impassive, and constant” character (*Cat. Min.* 1.3). The positive answer is encountered in the analysis of psychological traits that are revealed in youth and are subject to change over time. Alcander was living proof of this as he passed from “insubordinate, badly behaved young man to a very well-mannered and responsible adult” under Lycurgus (*Lyc.* 11.6).

## 5. Final Observations

Having at his disposal a variety of terms that refer to childhood and youth, Plutarch relates and describes with realism and a strong moralizing spirit, at times with hints of idealism, the universal and particular characteristics of individuals in each stage of life.

One of the qualities that make a writer a “classic” is that he produces a timeless and relevant work. This is very evident in Plutarch’s vision of childhood and youth. During his lifetime, he was able to detect patterns (characteristics that repeat themselves) and single out unique traits, just as we may today. Even with the passage of twenty centuries, we can still find in the *Lives* accounts of babies, boys, adolescents, and young men who are described in a manner that elicits empathy in the modern reader.

## NOTES

- 1 The term *pais* is broadly used with this meaning throughout the *Vitae*. It appears regularly in the opening chapters where the genealogy of the subject is explained. As clarified by Golden (1990) 15: “When it does not mean ‘child of,’ it refers to a male child before his enrollment in a deme and his consequent entry into civil life, and (less strictly) to a female child before her corresponding change in status, her marriage.” The boys would be around seventeen or eighteen years old.
- 2 Greek and Roman traditions are mentioned side by side, both imposed by the same progenitor or tutor, Mark Antony to two adolescents: Antyllus, born of his union with Fluvia, and Caesarion, son of Cleopatra and Caesar (*Ant.* 71.3).
- 3 Depending on the possessions of the progenitors, the end of childhood could be celebrated with more or less magnitude. According to the life of luxury lived in Egypt, Mark Antony celebrates the integration of young Antyllus and Caesarion in the adult world by promoting processions and parties for many days in Alexandria (*Ant.* 71.3).
- 4 For a more detailed discussion of the various changes introduced affecting the established age at which one was required to present oneself in the different stages of the *cursus honorum* between the second century BCE and the first century CE, see Harlow and Laurence (2002) 104–116.
- 5 Age calculated by the indication that Cato the Elder (born in 234 BCE) was a *meirakion* when Fabius Maximus took Tarent (in 209 BCE, during the second Punic War).
- 6 On women in Plutarch’s works see Le Corsu (1981), Nikolaidis (1997) and (2008), Stadter (1999), Walcot (1999), Castellani (2002), and McInerney (2003). According to Golden ((1990) 3), the author’s interest in emphasizing the differences between children and adults is a factor responsible for putting the characterization of girls on a second plane.

- 7 There were exceptions, mainly in the royal lineage. In fact, king Agesilaus II was lame (*Ages.* 2.3). Huys ((1996) 48–56) discusses the role of the elder council of Sparta in infanticide. On the exposure of babies in the Greek and Roman worlds, see Russel (1943), Patterson (1985), Harris (1994), Haentjens (2000), Corbier (2001), and Ingals (2002).
- 8 On pederasty, see Lear and Cantarella (2008), D’Ippolito (2007), Hubbard (2006), Skinner (2005) 118–124, Younger (2005) s.v. “paiderastia” and “boy-love,” Williams (1999) 63–82.
- 9 We should not forget that the barrier between being young and a young adult is very tenuous and unstable, as Pompey’s case exemplifies. Although Plutarch called him an *aner neos* (“young adult”), when Sulla became suspicious of Pompey’s independent movements while commanding the army, he attributed to him and his soldiers the designation *paides*, which could be derogatory or not (*Pomp.* 13.5). Even more deprecatory, or even false, was when Caesar called Pompey’s sons “little children” (*tois paidariois*, *Caes.* 56.2). The youngest was twenty-nine, and the oldest a little older (Stadter, in Plutarch (1999) 516 n. 346). As we read it, “even though they were young (*neos men ontas eti*),” they managed to gather a great army and, due to their bravery, deserved the position of command.

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### GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

There are several useful contributions on age categories: Golden (1990) 12–22; Eyben (1996) 80–82; Harlow and Laurence (2002) 15–17; Rawson (2003) 134–145. For the general opinion that children are a minor subject in Plutarch's *Lives* see Pelling (1990) and Bradley (1999). Golden's essay (1990) continues to be a reference for the study of childhood in Classical Athens. Although not considering Plutarch's writings as a reliable source of knowledge on the Roman way of thinking about childhood, Rawson (2003) offers a general view of the subject (and pays particular attention to "rearing" in ch. 2, and education in ch. 5). Also focusing on Romans (200 BCE–200 CE), Harlow and Laurence (2002) propose a different approach; they assume that relationships between young people and adults always result in bonds of dependency. The Spartan *agoge* represents a *sui generis* standard of rearing children and youths in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds and is very well discussed by Kennell (1995). Cohen and Rutter (2007) present a résumé of the bibliography on childhood and Vuolanto (2010) offers an impressive list of titles on this topic.

## CHAPTER 26

# Death and Other Kinds of Closure

Craig Cooper

*And it came to pass as they still went on, and talked, that behold there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up in a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horseman thereof." And he saw him no more.*

(2 Kings 2.11–12 KJV)

A spectacular ending to a spectacular life. The difficulty with writing a biography of Elijah is that there is no death to point to, to signal that the life had actually come to an end. There was in Jewish lore always an expectation that the prophet would someday return, and so the life could never be brought to a satisfactory conclusion. For there to be a biography, a life must at some point end, and death would seem to be the natural point of conclusion. Momigliano defines biography as "an account of a man's life from birth to death" (Momigliano (1993) 11). According to this simple definition, the natural ending point for any life is death itself. With Plutarch, however, it is not quite so straightforward. Often an account of a life does not actually end with the death of his subject but with the death of someone else, who was intimately linked to the fate of the hero, or with a description of posthumous honors paid to the hero after his death, or with both. Since Plutarch composed not single biographies but pairs of lives, one Greek and one Roman, at the end of each pair, though not in every case, there was a *synkrisis* that concluded the parallel lives with a formal comparison.<sup>1</sup> Pelling (Pelling (2002b) 365–386) has provided a useful summary of the ways in which Plutarch concludes his lives, outlining the various terminal devices that the biographer employs.<sup>2</sup> As he notes (p. 366), "Plutarch has no rules for ending a Life, and he can carry on the story until it reaches several different sorts of rest." Pelling's article provides a good starting-point for any discussion of closure in Plutarch's *Lives*. There is little to add in terms of a general

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