

Gylippus in Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*: Intratextuality and Readers*

by

Michele Lucchesi

Facoltà Teologica di Torino

michelelucchesi@gmail.com

Abstract

Plutarch's portrayal of Gylippus is consistent both in the *Moralia* and in the *Parallel Lives*. In particular, Gylippus' main traits clearly recall the Spartans' virtues and vices described in the five Spartan *Lives*. Furthermore, the presence of Gylippus as a secondary character in the *Life of Pericles* and in the *Life of Nicias* creates a strong link between these biographies and the *Lives of Lycurgus* and *Lysander*. Different types of readers can variously actualise such intratextual connections. We can infer that the *Parallel Lives* require attentive readers willing to engage actively in the reading process and to interpret the narrative fruitfully, following the author's indications embedded in the texts and activating their history recollection.

Key-Words: Gylippus, Intratextuality, Readers, Aemilius Paulus-Timoleon, Pericles, Nicias, Sparta, *Parallel Lives*, Plutarch.

Introduction
Ancient Sparta is one of Plutarch's favourite topics in the *Parallel Lives*. Five biographies are

devoted to Spartan heroes (*Lycurgus*, *Lysander*, *Agésilas*, and *Agis and Cleomenes*) and discuss in detail the Spartan constitution, society, religion, and politics. In these *Lives*, Plutarch

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narrates the most crucial phases of the history of Sparta: the origin of the city and the foundation of its main political institutions, the end of the Peloponnesian War and its hegemony over the Hellenic world, the crisis in the fourth century BC and the attempt to restore its greatness in the third century BC. After reading these five Spartan *Lives*, one can reasonably infer that Plutarch tried to project a consistent image of ‘Spartanness’.

Sparta and illustrious Spartans, however, are present in other *Lives* too. In particular, in some biographies the narrative ‘features’ Spartan political leaders and rulers as secondary characters in historical episodes ‘starring’ other (Spartan and non-Spartan) protagonists. In these cases, the relevance of the Spartan characters in the plot may not necessarily correspond to whether they played an important and yet subordinate role in the actual events or to whether they were only marginally involved in them. Sometimes, famous Spartans are even simply mentioned

in comparison with the protagonist or some other character of a *Life*, without having any part in the storyline.

In this article, I examine the case of Gylippus, the great Spartan general who won glory against the Athenians during the Sicilian expedition in the fifth century BC, but was later forced into self-exile for embezzling part of the silver (or coined silver money) gained by Lysander as war booty after numerous victories in Asia and Greece¹. In addition to the probably spurious *De liberis educandis* (10 B), Plutarch refers to Gylippus and his actions in several *Lives*, including the *Life of Lysander* (16-17.1), within both narrative passages and edifying comparisons. I aim to analyse these texts in order to understand which aspects of Gylippus’ story are emphasised the most and the readers are more frequently prompted to think of. I will also discuss to what extent, from Plutarch’s perspective, Gylippus’ behaviour was consistent with the Spartan values portrayed in the

¹ On Gylippus, apart from Plutarch, the main historical sources are Thucydides (6.93.2-3, 104.1-2; 7.1-7, 11.2, 12.1, 21.1-5, 22.1, 23.1-4, 37.2, 42.3, 43.6, 46, 50.1-2, 53.1, 65.1-69.1, 74.2, 79.4, 81-83, 85-86, 8.13.1) and Diodorus Siculus (13.7.2-8.4, 28, 34.3-4, and, especially for the scandal and its consequences, 13.106.8-10), who was certainly influenced by Ephorus. Gylippus is also mentioned by Aelian (*VH* 12.43), Aelius Aristides (*Or.* 5 364, 366, 367, 372, 375; *Or.* 6 379 L.-B.; *Rh.* 1.13.2.1 S.), Isocrates (*Archid.* 6.53), Lucianus (*Hist. Conscr.* 38), Maximus Tyrius (21.3, 23.2), Polyaeus (*Strat.* 1.39.4, 42.1-2), Posidonius (in *Ath.* 233e-234e=*FGrHist* 87 F 48c), and Seneca (*Nat.* 1.1.14). See J.-F. BOMMELAER, 1981, pp. 36-37 and 201-202, P. CARTLEDGE, 1987, pp. 88-90, 2002², pp. 221-225 and 269-270, J. CHRISTIEN, 2002, pp. 174-179, T.J. FIGUEIRA, 2002, pp. 142-144, S. HODKINSON, 1994, p. 198, 2000, pp. 155-157, 165-167, and 172, A. POWELL, 1988, pp. 189-191.

five Spartan *Lives*. I shall investigate, therefore, whether Plutarch considered Gylippus a typical Spartan leader or an exceptional figure, different from the other rulers of Sparta, and how he presented his interpretation to the readers. In this regard, I will try to distinguish between Plutarch's actual readers and the ideal reader, as far as they can be reconstructed from the texts². First, I will focus my attention on some 'isolated' references, which appear in texts whose main subject is neither Gylippus nor Sparta. Subsequently, I will concentrate on Gylippus as a secondary character in the *Lives of Pericles, Nicias, and Lysander*, where his presence acquires more considerable significance.

'Isolated' references

Gylippus' dramatic downfall made him look a tragic figure, a paradigmatic example of how a single wrongful act could ruin one's outstanding reputation, earned in years of heroic deeds and tremendous success. In this respect, Posidonius added an even more dramatic dimension to Gylippus' ruin by recording his suicide by

starvation, a story unknown to the other literary sources and probably fabricated at Sparta for propaganda purposes (Ath. 233f-234a). As David thoughtfully commented, not only was the episode meant to be a warning against greed, but it also reaffirmed Gylippus' ultimate respect for the Spartan values, since he acknowledged his fault and inflicted capital punishment on himself, as decreed by the Spartan court³. In Posidonius' view, then, Gylippus embodied Spartanness despite his sad fate.

Plutarch, too, often portrayed Gylippus as emblematic of men's rise to prominence and fall into disgrace. We can begin our analysis of this approach to Gylippus' vicissitudes with the *De liberis educandis*, although this work is usually considered spurious by the majority of modern scholars (10 B):

By putting their hands to wrongful gains, some men have wasted the good repute of their earlier lives, just as it happened to Gylippus the Spartan, who was banished from Sparta as an exile, because he had secretly undone the bags of money⁴.

² With ideal reader I indicate the image of the ideal recipient of Plutarch's works; the ideal reader "understands the work in a way that optimally matches its structure, and [...] adopts the interpretive position and esthetic standpoint put forward by the work" (W. SCHMID, 2010, p. 55). On the ideal reader, see U. ECO, 2006¹⁰, pp. 50-66, W. ISER, 1978, pp. 27-38, W. SCHMID, 2010, pp. 51-57.

³ E. DAVID, 2002, p. 30.

⁴ Plu. *De lib. educ.* 10 B: Τὰς χεῖράς τινες ὑποσχόντες λήμμασιν ἀδίκους τὴν δόξαν τῶν προβεβιωμένων ἐξέχεαν· ὡς Γύλιππος ὁ Λακεδαιμόνιος τὰ σακκία τῶν χρημάτων παραλύσας φυγὰς ἀπηλάθη τῆς Σπάρτης.

As one can notice, there is no introduction to Gylippus. The “bags of money”, too, are taken as familiar to the readers: the misappropriation of money, that is, briefly summarised in one single sentence without any detail, is meant to be sufficient to identify the famous Spartan commander and to make him be recognised as an exemplary case of good repute destroyed. The text, then, demands the readers’ ability to expand on the very limited data provided and to unpack Gylippus’ story once the recollection of Spartan history has been triggered.

In the *Parallel Lives*, another passage in which not much information is given about Gylippus is *Dio.* 49.6. The Spartan Gaesylus’ arrival in Sicily to assume command of the Syracusans and to join the admiral Heracleides in fighting against Dion is compared with Gylippus’ very similar mission: the defence of Syracuse against the Athenians. In this case too, Plutarch employs a very brief formula: “As Gylippus had formerly done” (ὥς πρότερόν ποτε Γύλιππος). Yet these few words were evidently thought to be enough to remind the readers of Gylippus and to suggest that the Syracusans run the risk of facing the same situation created by the Spartan intervention in the fifth century BC.

The parallel with Gylippus implies that the readers activate their prior knowledge of Greek history so as to ‘decode’ Plutarch’s words. Conversely, uninformed readers might not be able to grasp the sense of Plutarch’s reference due to its extreme conciseness, so that the sentence would remain obscure.

Analogous succinctness is used again in the formal *synkrisis* between Aemilius Paulus and Timoleon, where Plutarch, loosely citing Timaeus (*FGrHist* 566 F 100c), writes that the Syracusans dismissed Gylippus due to his love of riches (φίλοπλουτία) and greediness (ἀπληστία) (*Comp. Aem.-Tim.* 41(2).4)⁵. Gylippus’ greed is seen in correspondence with that of other commanders such as the Spartan Pharax and the Athenian Callippus in order to prove that at that time the Greeks, unlike the Romans, had corrupted military leaders who lacked discipline and did not follow the laws (*Comp. Aem.-Tim.* 41(2).2-6). In Plutarch’s view, Sicily was the place where such moral weakness was completely exposed when the Greeks became directly involved in military interventions. By contrast, therefore, Timoleon’s rule distinguished itself as much more virtuous than that of his predecessors (*Comp. Aem.-Tim.* 41(2).7).

⁵ Plu. *Comp. Aem.-Tim.* 41(2).4: “Furthermore, Timaeus (*FGrHist* 566 F 100c) says that the Syracusans sent away Gylippus in ignominy and dishonour, as they found him guilty of love of riches and greed while he was general” (Τίμαιος δὲ καὶ Γύλιππον ἀκλεῶς φησι καὶ ἀτίμως ἀποπέμψαι Συρακουσίους, φίλοπλουτίαν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπληστίαν ἐν τῇ στρατηγίᾳ κατεγνώκότας). See n. 34, n. 39, and n. 41 of this article.

Thus, in the final comparison between Aemilius Paulus and Timoleon the reference to Gylippus aims to illustrate a tendency displayed by all of the Greek commanders of a historical period, and does not allude to a specifically Spartan trait. Interestingly, however, Plutarch uses the word φιλοπλουτία, which is employed again at *Lyc.* 30.5 and *Lys.* 2.6, where the reasons for Spartan decadence are thoroughly discussed. In both passages, Plutarch explains that, by sending to Sparta vast sums of silver and gold obtained in war, Lysander filled the city with love of riches and luxury (τρυφή), acting against Spartan society's long-established distaste for wealth (incidentally, Gylippus' scandal of booty is not cited). In *Agis/Cleom.* 3.1, moreover, even though without mentioning Lysander and Gylippus,

Plutarch offers the same analysis of Spartan decay and applies the same or equivalent terms as in the other *Lives*⁶. In Plutarch's view, therefore, the concept of φιλοπλουτία is closely related to Sparta, a topic to which we shall return later in this article⁷.

Yet, once again, an uninformed audience, reading only the text of *Comp. Aem.-Tim.* 41(2).4, can hardly regard Gylippus' φιλοπλουτία as a moral fault linked to Lysander's unwise decision and Sparta's decline. Rather, it is plausible to think that the actual readers may *primarily* (though not exclusively) consider the general moral implications of the remark concerning the Spartan *strategos*, without necessarily noticing Plutarch's adaptation of a typically Spartan argument to a broader (non-Spartan) context⁸. The *synkrisis* between

⁶ Plu. *Agis/Cleom.* 3.1: "After the desire for silver and gold first crept into the city, and also, on the one hand, greed and stinginess followed along with the acquisition of wealth, and, on the other hand, luxury, softness, and extravagance, too, with the use and enjoyment of it, Sparta fell away from most of her noble traits" (ἐπεὶ παρεισέδου πρῶτον εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἀργύρου καὶ χρυσοῦ ζῆλος, καὶ συνηκολούθησε τοῦ πλούτου τῇ μὲν κτήσει πλεονεξία καὶ μικρολογία τῇ δὲ χρήσει καὶ ἀπολαύσει τρυφή καὶ μαλακία καὶ πολυτέλεια, τῶν πλείστων ἐξέπεσεν ἡ Σπάρτη καλῶν). See p. 16.

⁷ On φιλοπλουτία connected with Sparta or other Spartan characters, see also Plu. *Comp. Lys.-Sull.* 41(3).7, *Agis/Cleom.* 13.1; cf. *Apophth. Lac.* 239 F. Other literary sources on φιλοπλουτία at Sparta: Ar. *Resp.* 8.550d-551b, D.S. 7.12.8, X. *Lac.* 14. In the *Parallel Lives*, the only other figures characterised by φιλοπλουτία are Crassus (*Crass.* 1.5, 2.1-2, 14.5) and Seleucus (*Demetr.* 32.7-8). Note that Gylippus, the Spartans, and Sparta are never mentioned in the *De cupiditate divitiarum* (in Greek, Περὶ φιλοπλουτίας). See also n. 14 of this article.

⁸ Plutarch may have followed his typical method of work, using notes (*hypomnēmata*) and preparatory drafts about Sparta and the Spartan characters to write about Gylippus on multiple occasions. Cf. n. 34, n. 39, and n. 41 of this article. On Plutarch's method of work and *hypomnēmata*, see M. BECK, 1999, C.B.R. PELLING, (1979) 2002, 2002, pp. 65-68, P.A. STADTER, 2008, 2014a, 2014b, L. VAN DER STOCKT 1999a, 1999b, 2002, 2004, 2014, pp. 329-330, B. VAN MEIRVENNE, 1999.

Aemilius Paulus and Timoleon, nonetheless, also presupposes that the ideal reader can recognise the wider relevance of love of riches associated with Gylippus and Sparta, exploring it as a recurrent theme that runs through the series of the *Parallel Lives*, especially in the biographies of the Spartan heroes.

To sum up, these first passages, which we have discussed, recall very concisely the defining moments of Gylippus' life (particularly his role in the Sicilian expedition and his later fall), presenting him as a paradigm of military expertise and covetousness. The references to Gylippus can be concretely read with different degrees of understanding (depending on the readers' acquaintance with ancient history, the various literary sources, Plutarch's biographies, and so forth), but do not create *strong* intratextual connections within the *Parallel Lives*, not even with regard to the Spartan *Lives*⁹. Nonetheless, the way in which the comparisons and the comments

involving Gylippus are framed postulates that the ideal reader is able to interpret so iconic a historical figure on the basis of a profound historical knowledge and in light of Plutarch's interpretation.

The Life of Pericles

In other *Lives*, Plutarch's comments on Gylippus assume greater significance. Let us take the case of the *Life of Pericles*, where Plutarch recounts the crucial episodes of Gylippus' existence (22.4):

Cleandrides was the father of Gylippus, who made war against the Athenians in Sicily. Nature, as it were, seems to have passed love of riches on to him as a congenital disease, because of which he, too, being caught acting badly, was shamefully banished from Sparta. These facts, therefore, we have explained in the *Life of Lysander*¹⁰.

The digression about Gylippus is inserted into a narrative section where Plutarch discusses Pericles' strategy against the Spartans. In particular,

⁹ In reference to the *Parallel Lives*, I prefer the term intratextuality to intertextuality, since I consider the whole series a macrotext, that is, a complex semiotic unit formed by different texts (the *Lives* and the pairs), which maintain their autonomy, but, simultaneously, are in close thematic and formal interrelationship with one another. This definition of macrotext is inspired (with major modifications) by that which M. CORTI, 1975, applied to Italo Calvino's *I racconti di Marcovaldo* and then G. D'IPPOLITO, 1991, applied to the entire Plutarchan corpus.

¹⁰ Plu. *Per.* 22.4: οὗτος δ' ἦν πατήρ Γυλίππου τοῦ περὶ Σικελίαν Ἀθηναίους καταπολεμήσαντος. ἔοικε δ' ὥσπερ συγγενικὸν αὐτῷ προστρίψασθαι νόσημα τὴν φιλαργυρίαν ἢ φύσις, ὅφ' ἤς καὶ αὐτὸς αἰσχροῶς ἐπὶ κακοῖς ἔργοις ἁλοῦς ἐξέπεσε τῆς Σπάρτης. ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἐν τοῖς περὶ Λυσάνδρου δεδηλώκαμεν. Cf. n. 34, n. 39, and n. 41 of this article.

Plutarch claims that Pericles had success in avoiding going into open battle when the Spartans, led by Pleistoanax and his advisor Cleandrides, invaded and occupied Attica. By bribing the two Spartan leaders, Pericles made them retreat from the plain of Eleusis (446 BC) (*Per.* 22.1-3). According to some authors, Plutarch adds, this was a recurrent stratagem and every year Pericles used to pay ten talents to induce the Spartans to postpone the war, so that the Athenians could have more time to prepare for the conflict (*Per.* 23.2).

While celebrating Pericles' political shrewdness, Plutarch also directs the readers' attention towards the consequences faced by the Spartan rulers. The Spartans levied a very heavy fine on Pleistoanax, who could not pay it and was consequently exiled¹¹. Cleandrides, on the other hand, fled from Sparta and received the death sentence in absentia (*Per.* 22.3). By mentioning Gylippus, Cleandrides' son, Plutarch places emphasis on the continuity between different generations of Spartan political and military leaders,

who suffered from love of money (φιλαργυρία) – another key term, synonymous with φιλοπλουτία, which we encountered earlier in this article – as a congenital disease (συγγενικὸν νόσημα)¹². In this case, therefore, love of money (or love of riches) is not viewed as a moral fault attributed to all of the Greek commanders, as in the *Life of Timoleon*, but as a family characteristic common to Cleandrides and Gylippus.

The cross-reference to the *Life of Lysander*, however, also opens up the possibility of a broader and deeper analysis of φιλαργυρία/φιλοπλουτία as the primary cause of Sparta's moral decadence and subsequent political and social weakness. For Plutarch does not seem to inform the readers only about the completion of an earlier biography where they can find more details about Gylippus, but encourages them to examine *Pericles* and *Lysander* in light of one another as complementary texts¹³.

In the *Life of Lysander*, as we will see in the last section of this article, Plutarch offers a more exhaustive

¹¹ On Pleistoanax' levy, cf. Ephorus, *FGrHist* 70 F 193 (at *Scholia Ar. Nu.* 859).

¹² Plutarch often described Spartan politics through medical metaphors and images of the body: e.g. *Plu. Comp. Agis/Cleom.-T.G./C.G.* 44(4).3, *Ages.* 3.7, 21.10, 30.1-2, 33.3, *Comp. Ages.-Pomp.* 81(1).2, 82(2).1-3, *Lyc.* 4.4, 5.3, 8.3, *Lys.* 22.11, *Comp. Lys.-Sull.* 39(1).2.

¹³ On the cross-references inviting to examine the *Lives* and the pairs in close connection with one another, see T.E. DUFF, 2011b, pp. 259-262. On cross-references, cf. also A.G. NIKOLAIDIS, 2005, C.B.R. PELLING, (1979) 2002, pp. 7-10. Attempts to read *Lives* and pairs together or against one another: J. BENEKER, 2005 (*Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus* together), B. BUSZARD, 2008 (*Pyrrhus-Marius* against *Alexander-Caesar*), J. MOSSMAN, 1992 (*Pyrrhus* against *Alexander*), C.B.R. PELLING, 2006, 2010, P.A. STADTER, (2010) 2014.

account of how Gylippus tried to steal a large sum of the money that Lysander dispatched to Sparta, after establishing Spartan supremacy in Asia and Greece. He also explains how silver coinage (which bore the forgery of an owl because of the Athenians) was found in Gylippus' house thanks to a tip-off from a servant (*Lys.* 16). More importantly, in addition to Gylippus' exile after the eruption of the scandal, Plutarch describes the reaction of the Spartans (*Lys.* 17). Being worried that Lysander's silver and gold would ruin the entire Spartan body politic, altering irremediably Sparta's traditional aversion to luxury (which was reflected in the Lycurgan constitution), the most prudent (φρονιμώτατοι) of the Spartiates convinced the ephors to introduce an iron currency, which only the state could possess, and to threaten the death penalty to the citizens who accumulated money for private use. Plutarch, howe-

ver, comments that Lycurgus was not concerned about money per se, but about the greed (φιλαργυρία) caused by it. The Spartans' solution, therefore, was useless, since it was merely based on the fear of the law, while they should have sought to strengthen their souls¹⁴.

By reading *Pericles* in connection with *Lysander*, then, one can plausibly infer that the reference to Gylippus and the Sicilian expedition alludes to the Athenians' change of military strategy in a later phase of the Peloponnesian War and to their inability to exploit the Spartan rulers' love of riches and corruption, something that Pericles managed to do effectively. In Plutarch's view, that is, considering the later crisis of Sparta, Pericles' measures were wiser and more far-sighted than those of his successors, and gave Athens more chances of victory. Furthermore, Pericles was right in restraining the Athenians' immoderate desire to

¹⁴ On the Spartans' radical rejection of wealth and Lycurgus' reforms in this matter, see Plu. *Agis/Cleom.* 5.2, 9.4, 10.2-5, 10.8, 31(10).2, *Lyc.* 8-10, 13.5-7, 19.2-3, 19.11, 24.2-4, *Comp. Lyc.-Num.* 23(1).7, 24(2).10-11, *Lys.* 30.7. On the attempt of Agis and Cleomenes to restore the Lycurgan austerity and to redistribute the land, see Plu. *Agis/Cleom.* 4.2, 6.1-2, 7.2-3, 8, 19.7, 31(10).7-11, 33(12).4-5, *Comp. Agis/Cleom.-T.G./C.G.* 42(2).4. On Sparta and luxury, cf. also n. 7 of this article. In general, on property and wealth in Sparta, cf. *Alc. I* 122d-123b, *Ar. Pol.* 2.1269b21-32, 2.1270a11-29, 2.1271a3-5, 2.1271b10-17, *Pl. Lg.* 3.696a-b, *R.* 8.547b-d, 8.548a-b, 8.549c-d, 8.550d-551b, *Plb.* 6.45.3-4, 6.46.6-8, 6.48.2-8, *X. Lac.* 7. Among modern scholars, however, there is no consensus on the literary evidence regarding Sparta's disdain for coinage. S. HODKINSON, 2000, especially pp. 155-182, has very convincingly argued that the literary sources (even retrospectively) 'invented' the tradition of Spartan prohibitions against currency because of the political turmoil at the beginning of the fourth century BC. A reassessment of this complex question suggests a situation of increasing inequality in property ownership and wealth among the Spartiates. Cf. also J. CHRISTIEN, 2002, pp. 172-185, T.J. FIGUEIRA, 2002, pp. 138-160. On Plutarch and wealth, see P. DESIDERI, 1985, C.B.R. PELLING, forthcoming.

conquer new territories (*Per.* 21.1-2), an impulse that proved disastrous on the occasion of the enterprise in Sicily (cf. *Nic.* 12.1-2)¹⁵.

On the other hand, by highlighting that both Cleandrides and Gylippus had the same vice of φιλαργυρία and met the same fate, Plutarch also seems to urge the readers to reflect on how differently the Spartans responded to the same type of threat, which came from outside the city. While Pericles' money only influenced Cleandrides' decisions, in the case of Gylippus foreign money (perhaps even Athenian money) produced a major modification of the Spartan customs and broke the unity among the citizens, which Lycurgus' polity had maintained for centuries¹⁶. Thus, in Pericles's time Spartan society was stronger and readier to defend its values than in the

fourth century BC. Yet, this also suggests that Sparta's decline, which was not unavoidable, derived from the Spartans' difficulty to adjust to their new role as hegemonic leaders of the Greek world, a theme that Plutarch develops in the *Spartan Lives* and may be further expanded through the comparison with fifth century Sparta as much as with Periclean Athens.

The analysis of *Per.* 22.4 allows us to draw some conclusions. While in the passages examined in the first part of this article the references to Gylippus have the nature of examples and a moralistic tone, in the *Life of Pericles* Gylippus' vicissitudes are viewed more closely in their historical context, though still from a moral perspective. In this case too, it is difficult to imagine whether and to what extent the concrete audience of the *Lives*

¹⁵ As P.A. STADTER, (1975) 1995, p. 160 thoughtfully noticed, honesty and caution in war are two of the qualities that characterised Pericles as much as Fabius, on which Plutarch based the parallelism of the two *Lives*.

¹⁶ In the *Spartan Lives*, the use of foreign money to conduct military operations abroad, even at the cost of betraying the traditional Spartan values, constitutes an extremely important issue with regard to the fourth century BC. See, Plu. *Ages.* 9.5-6 (the creation of a cavalry force at Ephesus with the help of the rich), 10.6-8 (the satrap Tithraustes gave Agesilaus money to leave Lydia), 11 (the controversial relationship with Spithridates), 35.6 (Agesilaus' search for money to continue the war against Thebe), 36.2 (Agesilaus fought as a mercenary for the Egyptian Tachus), 40.2 (Agesilaus accepted money from Nectanebo II), *Lys.* 2.8 (the anecdote of the dresses offered by Dionysius), 4 (Cyrus granted the 'economic means' for the Spartan fleet), 6.4-8 (Callicratidas' request for money from Cyrus), 9.1 (Cyrus gave Lysander money for the fleet). On the same topic, cf. also Plu. *Agis/Cleom.* 27(6).2 (Cratesicleia financed Cleomenes' campaign against the Achaeans), 40(19).8 (Cleomenes offered Aratus money to leave the custody of Acrocorinth), 44(23).1 (Cleomenes freed numerous Helots in exchange for money so as to continue the war), 48(27).1-4 (importance of money for war).

was capable of a careful and nuanced reading of the text, remembering and taking into account Plutarch's evaluation of Gylippus' actions and their effects in the *Life of Lysander*. We may assume that some actual readers did have a previous knowledge of fifth-fourth century Sparta as much as of Plutarch's opinion about its hegemony and later economic, social, and political difficulties, but others may not have had the same level of competence. Besides, the same applies to modern readers too. The cross-reference, moreover, does not provide any certainty about the publication of the *Life of Lysander* or the actual readers' real chance of reading it before the *Life of Pericles*, since it simply seems to indicate the phase of writing up. Indeed, the *Lives*' period of composition does not necessarily coincide with the time of their release¹⁷.

Just as *Comp. Aem.-Tim.* 41(2).7, however, the text of *Per.* 22.4 also implies an ideal reader who is perfectly able to interpret and develop the correlation between Cleandrides and Gylippus, gleaning Plutarch's insight into the later development of Spartan history in order to make a more accurate assessment of the *Life of Pericles*. The employment of key words and

concepts such as φιλαργυρία helps the implied reader recognise Gylippus' function as 'intratextual connector' between different *Lives*, which can stimulate the recollection of historical information as much as of Plutarch's reading of it. The cross-reference, in this respect, might even appear redundant. Its presence, nonetheless, can also make us reconstruct a second type of abstract reader in addition to the ideal recipient of the *Life*: a virtual addressee, a narratological category that implies the Roman politician Sosius Senecio (cf. *Dem.* 1.1, *Dion* 1.1, *Thes.* 1.1), but is certainly broader than the historically determined addressee of the *Parallel Lives*¹⁸. Indeed, as already suggested, it seems unlikely that such an addressee is someone who does not know anything about the *Life of Lysander* and needs to be advised to read it. Rather, the first person plural verb δεδηλώκαμεν appears to bind together the author and the addressee ('I' and 'you'), and serves as a reminder of the common reflection made elsewhere rather than as a form of *pluralis maiestatis* meaning the author's self¹⁹. The presumed addressee, then, will activate the intratextual connection established by the cross-reference and will combine Plutarch's analysis of

¹⁷ See A.G. NIKOLAIDIS, 2005, 286-287, C.B.R. PELLING, (1979) 2002, p. 9.

¹⁸ On the presumed addressee, see W. SCHMID, 2010, pp. 54-56.

¹⁹ In this case, the presumed addressee merges with the extradiegetic narratee; cf. G. GENETTE, 1983, pp. 260. C.B.R. PELLING, 2002, pp. 267-282 has examined many examples of complicity between extradiegetic narrator and narratee.

Gylippus in the *Life of Lysander* with that of Cleandrides in the *Life of Pericles*.

This, on the one hand, confirms that the various *possibilities* (considering the ideal reader and the presumed addressee) of reading the two *Lives* in light of one another are embedded in Plutarch's text. On the other hand, the relationship between author and implied addressee is not merely informative or didactic, nor includes step-by-step instructions, but leaves the addressee ample freedom to verify and investigate further the results of the author's historical research and moral evaluation. Such a strategy is confirmed by the choice of not contrasting explicitly the Spartans' handling of wealth before and after the Peloponnesian War.

The Life of Nicias

We can now turn to the *Life of Nicias*, where Gylippus is portrayed as Nicias' antagonist during the Sicilian expedition²⁰. Gylippus is introduced into the narrative *in medias res*, while Plutarch discusses Nicias' initial

successes as the only *strategos* of the Athenians, after Alcibiades' departure and Lamachus' death (*Nic.* 18.9):

At that time, Gylippus, too, who was sailing from Sparta to help the Syracusans, as he heard during his journey their being walled off and their difficulties, even so completed the rest of the route, thinking, on the one hand, that Sicily had already been taken and, on the other hand, that he would guard the cities of the Italiotes, if that could happen in some way²¹.

Gylippus' 'sudden' appearance in the *Life* is no surprise, considering that also in other biographies secondary characters who play an important role in the events narrated are presented in a similar fashion (e.g. Alcibiades in *Ages.* 3.1 and *Lys.* 3.1). In the *Life of Nicias*, moreover, one may safely assume that some knowledge of Thucydides seems to be taken for granted in the audience, as Pelling has convincingly argued²². Nonetheless, there is a correspondence

²⁰ According to C. JONES, (1966) 1995, pp. 106-111 (cf. also A.G. NIKOLAIDIS, 2005, pp. 285-288) the *Lives of Nicias and Crassus* were probably published late in the series, after *Lycurgus-Numa*, *Lysander-Sulla*, and *Agesilaus-Pompey*, more or less in the same period as *Aemilius Paulus-Timoleon*. On Gylippus as Nicias' antagonist, see G. VANOTTI, 2005, pp. 452-453. On Plutarch's interpretation of Nicias, see C.D. HAMILTON, 1992, pp. 4213-4221, A.G. NIKOLAIDIS, 1988, L. PICCIRILLI, 1990, F. TITCHENER, 1991, 1996, 2000, 2016. For a comparison between the *Life of Nicias* and Plutarch's historical sources, see L. PICCIRILLI, 1993, pp. XII-XIII and XVI-XXVIII, G. VANOTTI, 2005.

²¹ Plu. *Nic.* 18.9: ὅπου καὶ Γύλιππος ἐκ Λακεδαιμόνους πλέων βοηθὸς αὐτοῖς, ὡς ἤκουσε κατὰ πλοῦν τὸν ἀποτερισμὸν καὶ τὰς ἀπορίας, οὕτως ἐπλεῖ τὸ λοιπὸν ὡς ἐχομένης μὲν ἤδη τῆς Σικελίας, Ἰταλιώταις δὲ τὰς πόλεις διαφυλάξων, εἰ καὶ τοῦτό πως ἐγγένοιτο.

²² See C.B.R. PELLING, (1992) 2002, pp. 117-134. Cf. also F. TITCHENER, 2016, pp. 105-106.

between Nicias' indifference towards such a quiet 'entrance on stage' and his absolute confidence that he would soon obtain the capitulation of Syracuse, an atypical moment of courage that Plutarch does not hesitate to define as contrary to Nicias' nature (cf. *Nic.* 18.11: ὁ δὲ Νικίας εὐθὺς αὐτὸς καὶ παρὰ φύσιν ὑπὸ τῆς ἐν τῷ παρόντι ῥύμης καὶ τύχης ἀνατεθαρρηκῶς), which was usually characterised by defeatism and cowardice (cf. *Nic.* 1.2, 2.5, 7.3, 8.2, 10.6, 11.1, 12.5, 14.2, 16.9). Being completely ignored, Gylippus could land in a secure location and could start assembling a large army, something that greatly surprised even the Syracusans, who were no longer expecting to receive help (*Nic.* 18.11-12).

Not only Nicias, however, but also the Athenian troops and the Siceliotes underestimated Gylippus. When first Gongylus from Corinth and then a messenger from Gylippus himself announced that the Spartan general was coming in support of Syracuse, the Syracusans found new hope and took up their arms, preparing themselves for fighting again (*Nic.* 19.1-2). Yet, when Gylippus sent a herald to the Athenians, asking them to leave Sicily,

the reaction of the Athenian soldiers was of sarcastic derision. In particular, they mocked Gylippus' being alone with his threadbare cloak (τρίβων) and staff (βακτηρία), and made fun of his hair, which was shorter than that of the Spartan prisoners of Sphacteria, who were also stronger than him (*Nic.* 19.4)²³. The Siceliotes, too, initially held Gylippus in no esteem (*Nic.* 19.5-6):

Timaeus (*FGrHist* 566 F 100a) says that the Siceliotes, too, made no account of Gylippus, later on, indeed, when they accused his despicable covetousness and stinginess, and, on the other hand, when they jeered at his threadbare cloak and hair as they saw him for the first time. Then, however, Timaeus says that, as Gylippus appeared like an owl, many flew to him, joining the army willingly. And this latter statement is more truthful than the first one. For perceiving the symbol and the reputation of Sparta in the staff and the cloak, they banded together. Not only Thucydides, but also Philistus, who was a Syracusan and an eyewitness of the events, says that the whole achievement is due to him²⁴.

²³ Cf. *Plu. Nic.* 7.1, 8.1, and especially 10.8: the captives were members of the noblest and most powerful Spartan families.

²⁴ *Plu. Nic.* 19.5-6: Τίμαιος δὲ καὶ τοὺς Σικελιώτας φησὶν ἐν μηδενὶ λόγῳ ποιεῖσθαι τὸν Γύλιππον, ὕστερον μὲν αἰσχροκέρδειαν αὐτοῦ καὶ μικρολογίαν καταγνόντας, ὥς δὲ πρῶτον ὤφθη, σκόπτοντας εἰς τὸν τρίβωνα καὶ τὴν κόμην. εἶτα μέντοι φησὶν αὐτὸς, ὅτι τῷ Γυλίππῳ φανέντι καθάπερ γλαυκὶ πολλοὶ προσέπτησαν ἐτοίμως <συ>στρατεύόμενοι. καὶ ταῦτα τῶν πρώτων ἀληθέστερά εἰσιν· ἐν γὰρ τῇ βακτηρίᾳ καὶ τῷ τρίβωνι τὸ σύμβολον

As one can notice, in chapter 9 of the *Life of Nicias* Plutarch draws Gylippus' portrait, but he does it indirectly from his opponents' point of view. Through the focalisation of the narrative on the Athenians the readers are reminded of some typically Spartan features²⁵. In antiquity, both a threadbare cloak and a staff represented the symbols of the Spartan soldiers' frugality and moral strength, as is often pointed out in the *Parallel Lives*²⁶. Similarly, the custom of keeping long hair and beard was first prescribed by Lycurgus to the soldiers (later it became a tradition) in order to make "the handsome more comely and the ugly more terrible" (τοὺς μὲν καλοὺς εὐπρεπεστέρους, τοὺς δὲ αἰσχροὺς φοβερωτέρους), as we can read in the *Life of Lycurgus* (22.2) and in the *Life of Lysander* (1.1-3)²⁷. One

can infer, then, that Plutarch shows the Athenians misreading Gylippus' signs of 'Spartanness' or, worse, not worrying about them at all, a mistake for which they later paid a huge price.

By describing the reaction of the Siceliotes, conversely, Plutarch summarises Gylippus' story. As in other texts scrutinised in this article, here too the usual topic of Gylippus' greed is mentioned. The terms employed by Plutarch are again very significant, as they echo the *Spartan Lives*. While in Plutarch's works αἰσχροκέρδεια (despicable covetousness) is not exclusively associated with Spartan characters, on the contrary, μικρολογία (stinginess) – a concept on which Plutarch often concentrates his attention – is repeatedly related to the image of Sparta and the Spartans²⁸. In the *Life of Age-*

καὶ τὸ ἀξίωμα τῆς Σπάρτης καθορῶντες συνίσταντο, κάκεινον τὸ πᾶν ἔργον γεγονέναι φησὶν οὐ Θουκυδίδης μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ Φίλιστος, ἀνὴρ Συρακούσιος καὶ τῶν πραγμάτων ὁρατῆς γενόμενος. See n. 34, n. 39, and n. 41 of this article.

²⁵ Other instances of Plutarch's use of focalisation to explore cognition (what the characters see and understand) and emotion (how they react) and to encourage the readers' interpretative reflection is examined by C.B.R. PELLING, 2009, pp. 512-515 and 522-526.

²⁶ On the threadbare cloak as a Spartan symbol, see Plu. *Ages.* 14.2, 30.3 (the dirty cloaks of the Spartan 'fearful'), *Agis/Cleom.* 37.7, *Lyc.* 30.2. On the staff, see Plu. *Lyc.* 11.2 and 11.10, *Apophth. Lac.* 227 A (Lycurgus hit Alcander with his staff). Cf. also Plu. *Phoc.* 10.1: Archibiades the 'Laconizer' always had long beard and wore a threadbare cloak. On other historical sources for these Spartan symbols of command, see L. PICCIRILLI, 1993, p. 293. Cf. also S. HORNBLLOWER, (2000) 2011.

²⁷ See also Plu. *Apophth. Lac.* 228 E and X. *Lac.* 11.3. Cf. the ephors forbidding the Spartans to wear moustache: Plu. *Agis/Cleom.* 30(9).3, *De ser. num. vind.* 550 B.

²⁸ Apart from the *Life of Nicias*, αἰσχροκέρδεια occurs only in Plu. *Cat. Min.* 52.8 and *De Stoic. rep.* 1046 C. Historical figures characterised by μικρολογία: Plu. *Aem.* 12.6, 23.9 (Perseus), *Alex.* 69.2 (Artaxerxes III Ochus), *Brut.* 39.2 (the Caesarians) *Cat. Ma.* 5.1, 5.7 (Cato the Elder), *Cat. Mi.* 22.3 (Catiline), *Crass.* 6.6 (Crassus), *Galb.* 3.2 (Galba), 19.3

*silau*s, we can read that, after losing Spithridates' support in Asia, Agesilaus was ashamed of the poor reputation of stinginess and illiberality (μικρολογία καὶ ἀνελευθερία), which was attached to him as much as to Sparta (*Ages.* 11.5). Similarly, as we have already anticipated, in the *Life of Cleomenes* stinginess (μικρολογία) and greed (πλεονεξία) are considered among the main causes of the crisis of Sparta in the fourth century BC. Finally, the resemblance with an owl, too, can be considered a veiled reference to the scandal of the silver coins, which Gylippus stole from Lysander's booty²⁹.

Indeed, by placing the signs of Gylippus' moral ambiguity together with the symbols of the Spartans' authoritative power and rigorous virtue (once again, the cloak and the staff), which the Siceliotes, unlike the Athenians, recognised and trustfully followed, Plutarch allusively evokes in a few lines a theme explored in greater detail in the *Spartan Lives*: Sparta's controversial hegemony over the Hellenic world. This hypothesis can be confirmed by

the image of the Siceliotes joining Gylippus just as birds flying to an owl. Considering that the owl is one of the few animals that attack and eat their own kind, as Plutarch argues in the *Life of Romulus* (9.6) and, less clearly, in the *Life of Demosthenes* (26.6), this can be regarded as a powerful metaphor for Sparta's aggressive imperialism, its unwitting victims among the other Greek states, and its collapse provoked by the same factors that had made it rise.

Before Lysander or Agesilaus, that is, Gylippus too moved from Sparta to undertake an enterprise abroad (cf. *Lyc.* 30.5), which was successful from a military perspective, but had also negative consequences for the Greeks as much as for Sparta³⁰. The values of the Lycurgan tradition, which permeated Spartan society, and the Spartan lifestyle could not be maintained intact and pure in non-Spartan contexts nor could be imposed to non-Spartan populations. Especially in times of war, the strict Spartan code of conduct could even be counterproductive to Sparta itself. For instance, in Asia the unscrupulous and

(Nero), *Luc.* 17.6 (the Roman soldiers), *Them.* 5.1 (Themistocles). Critical reflection on μικρολογία: *Plu. Comp. Arist.-Cat. Ma.* 31(4).3, *Pel.* 3.2, *De adulat.* 56 C, 60 E, 74 B, *De Alex. fort. virt.* 333 F, 337 C, *Amat.* 762 C, *De cup. div.* 525 E-F, 526 C, *De cur.* 515 E, *De Herod. mal.* 859 E (reference to Sparta), *Plat. quaest.* 1002 E, *De prof. virt.* 82 B, *Quaest. conv.* 634 B, 703 B, 706 B, *De tuend. san.* 123 C, 125 E, 137 C, *De virt. mor.* 445 A.

²⁹ See pp. 23-25.

³⁰ In this regard, it is noteworthy that in the *Life of Nicias* Plutarch omits to discuss how the Spartans, following Alcibiades' suggestion, decided to send Gylippus to Sicily; cf. *Alc.* 23.2. In the *Life of Nicias*, then, the narrative leaves it unclear whether Gylippus' intervention was only due to his decision or whether it was part of a Spartan strategy.

in many respects un-Spartan attitude of Lysander and Agesilaus about raising funds for war, establishing alliances with the Persians, and subjugating other Greek cities through the oligarchic regimes of the harmosts certainly contrasted with Callicratidas' virtuous (and perfectly Spartan) style of command (cf. *Lys.* 3-4, 6-9, 13-14, and *Ages.* 9-12). Yet, unlike Callicratidas, Lysander and Agesilaus – as much as Gylippus – were successful³¹. In Plutarch's view, this proves that Lycurgus' aim was not to make Sparta govern other cities, despite the Greek cities' desire to be ruled by the Spartans and to have Spartan leaders (ἡγεμόνες) (*Lyc.* 30.4-31.1). Indeed, from the beginning Sparta's hegemony's "taste was unpleasant and bitter" (εὐθὺς γὰρ ἦν τὸ γεῦμα δυσχερὲς καὶ πικρόν, *Lys.* 13.9).

Thus, in the *Life of Nicias* the description of the first impression created by Gylippus provides already an interpretive key to some critical issues that are developed in the course of the narration. In particular, it seems to suggest that in a crucial phase of the Peloponnesian war, which changed

the destiny of the Greeks, Gylippus' vicissitudes anticipated the major political and cultural transformations of the period of Lysander and Agesilaus as much as Sparta's later decadence. Furthermore, by focusing on the point of view of Nicias, the Athenians, and the Siceliotes, Plutarch highlights their fault of misjudging Gylippus, without fully understanding the risks that his involvement in the Sicilian conflict posed³². As we shall see, the narrative will elucidate these topics in the last part of the *Life of Nicias*.

Thanks to his great military experience (ἐμπειρία), Gylippus managed to reorganise the Syracusan troops and led them to a first victory by simply modifying their tactics. Subsequently, he went from city to city to create a large coalition against the Athenians (*Nic.* 19.7-10). Despite the first successes (especially the conquest of Plemmyrium), however, many Syracusans were tired of and annoyed with Gylippus (*Nic.* 21.5). In fact, these difficulties of relationship, which remained present on the Syracusan side throughout the hostilities (cf. *Nic.* 26.1),

³¹ On the successes and moral ambivalence of Agesilaus and Lysander in Plutarch, see E. ALEXIOU, 2010, C. BEARZOT, 2004a, pp. 15-30, 2004b, pp. 127-156, 2005, J.M. CANDAU MORÓN, 2000, T.E. DUFF, 1999, pp. 161-204, E. LUPPINO, 1990, C.B.R. PELLING, (1988) 2002, pp. 292-297, P.A. STADTER, (1992) 2014a, pp. 258-269.

³² In *Lys.* 1 and *Ages.* 2, too, the portraits of Lysander and Agesilaus respectively are presented through internal focalisations and are characterised by the observers' difficulty in pinning down the two protagonists' exterior qualities (e.g. see the difficult identification of Lysander's statue at Delphi and Agesilaus' lack of images). These initial false impressions correspond to the Greeks' inability to understand and oppose the rule of Lysander and Agesilaus; cf. T.E. DUFF, 1999, pp. 162-165.

did not make Nicias and the Athenians avoid their reverse.

Towards the end of the final battle between Athenians and Siceliotes, while the Athenians are being slaughtered at the river Asinarus, Nicias and Gylippus come into direct contact for the first time in the *Life*. Plutarch writes that Nicias pleaded for mercy and begged Gylippus to treat the Athenians with moderation and gentleness (μετρίως καὶ πράως), just as the Athenians had previously done with the Spartans when they concluded the peace treaty (*Nic.* 9.4-9). Despite being moved by Nicias' words, Plutarch adds, the real reason that drove Gylippus to spare Nicias' life and to stop the massacre was a craving for personal glory (δόξα) (*Nic.* 27.5-6).

Indeed, throughout the *Lives of Nicias and Crassus* the theme of the search for glory is inextricably intertwined with that of the self-images and façades which the various characters project to or create of one another, generating a net of reciprocal hopes, ambitions, false expectations, and frustrations³³. As we saw earlier in respect to his arrival in Sicily, Gylippus' exterior image conveyed an erroneous impression to the observers. His longing for δόξα too, then, continues this thematic thread. The reference to keeping alive the Athenian

strategoi and bringing them to Sparta, moreover, forms a correspondence with the episode of the prisoners of Sphacteria, something that reveals how different motivations were from Nicias' desire of peace and what different an outcome similar situations produced for the Athenians and the Spartans (*Nic.* 7-9). Gylippus, therefore, fits well in the *Life* as Nicias' Spartan counterpart: his behaviour also displays problematic traits analogous to those of the other characters.

Gylippus could not carry out his plan about the Athenian captives as he would have desired, since the Syracusans harshly rejected his proposal. As Plutarch claims, not only did they become arrogant after defeating the Athenians, but also they did not easily tolerate Gylippus' roughness (τραχύτης) and the Spartan style of authority (τὸ Λακωνικὸν τῆς ἐπιστασίας) during the war (*Nic.* 28.3). By focalising again the narrative on the Syracusans, therefore, Plutarch completes the outline of Gylippus' 'Spartanness', which started at *Nic.* 19, and emphasises how the Spartan code of conduct was incompatible with a different culture. Indeed, in non-Spartan environments such as Syracuse and Sicily, the traditional Spartan virtues were perceived as unbearable and were consequently rejected.

Interestingly, Plutarch follows up on the Syracusans' criticism against

³³ See Plu. *Nic.* 4.1, 5.3, 6.1-2, 6.7, 8.5, 9.8, 11.1, 11.3, 12.5, 15.2, 18.10, 20.7, 21.6, 23.5, 26.5, 30.3, *Crass.* 6.5, 7.2, 7.7, 10.1, 10.8, 11.10, 21.6, 21.9, 23.7, 24.1, 26.6, 33.8, *Comp. Nic.-Crass.* 36(3).5, 38(5).3.

Gylippus with the scandal of Lysander's booty and Gylippus' embezzlement of money (*Nic.* 28.4):

As Timaeus (*FGrHist* 566 F 100b)³⁴ says, the Syracusans accused Gylippus of a certain stinginess and greed, an inherited infirmity because of which his father Cleandrides too, being convicted of bribery, fled the country, and he himself, having abstracted thirty out of the thousand talents that Lysander sent to Sparta, and having hidden them under the roof of his house, after being later denounced, most shamefully forfeited everything. These things, however, are ex-

amined with greater precision in the *Life of Lysander*³⁵.

Plutarch resumes the idea of Gylippus' greed, which is present already at *Nic.* 19.4, as we saw earlier. In this case too, Plutarch's focus of attention is not only Gylippus but also Sparta. For the conclusion of Gylippus' story is narrated to discuss the aftermath of the Sicilian expedition, as is proven by the fact that at *Nic.* 28.5-6 we also learn about the death of Demosthenes and Nicias, and at *Nic.* 29-30 about the fate of the Athenian soldiers and the reaction of the Athenian citizens to the news of their army's annihilation. Furthermore, by recalling to memory

³⁴ In the *Life of Nicias* as much as in the *synkrisis* between Aemilius Paulus and Timoleon, as seen earlier in this article, Plutarch mentions Timaeus' historical work, whose negative tone probably reverberates across the *Lives*. Yet Timaeus' *FGrHist* 566 F 100c at *Comp. Aem.-Tim.* 41(2).4, *FGrHist* 566 F 100a at *Nic.* 19.5, and *FGrHist* 566 F 100b at *Nic.* 28.4, despite expressing very similar ideas and moral judgment on Gylippus and his relationship with the Syracusans, also show substantial differences of content (Gylippus banned from Syracuse vs Gylippus exiled from Sparta) and present different key terms (in particular, note φιλοπλουτία and ἀπληστία in *Comp. Aem.-Tim.* 41(2).4 vs αἰσχροκέρδεια and μικρολογία in *Nic.* 19.5 vs μικρολογία and πλεονεξία in *Nic.* 28.4). Similarly, *Nic.* 28.4 and *Per.* 22.3-4 (for which, too, Plutarch probably used Timaeus), the two passages that narrate Cleandrides' conviction, differ markedly: Cleandrides' escape vs Cleandrides' escape and death sentence in absentia; ἀρρώστημα πατρῶν vs συγγενικὸν νόσημα. This suggests that Plutarch re-elaborated Timaeus' text and variously adapted it to his biographies, depending on the context and purpose of each target section. The Timaeian fragments within the *Lives*, therefore, should be considered quite loose references rather than verbatim quotations. See also n. 39 and n. 41 of this article. On Plutarch's knowledge and use of Timaeus, see J.M. CANDAU MORÓN, 2004/2005, 2009, 2013, pp. 30-35, F. MUCCIOLI, 2000.

³⁵ *Plu. Nic.* 28.4: ὥς δὲ Τίμαιός φησι, καὶ μικρολογίαν τινὰ καὶ πλεονεξίαν κατεγνωκότες, ἀρρώστημα πατρῶν, ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ Κλεανδρίδης ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ δώρων ἀλὸς ἔφυγε, καὶ οὗτος αὐτός, ἀπὸ τῶν χιλίων ταλάντων ἃ Λύσανδρος ἔπεμψεν εἰς Σπάρτην ὑφελόμενος τριάκοντα καὶ κρύψας ὑπὸ τὸν ὄροφον τῆς οἰκίας, εἴτα μηνυθεὶς, αἰσχιστὰ πάντων ἐξέπεσεν. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ἐν τῷ Λυσάνδρου βίῳ μᾶλλον διεκρίβωται.

Gylippus' father Cleandrides, Plutarch aims to explain the motivation behind Gylippus' behaviour, whereas at *Per.* 22.3-4 he places more emphasis on Cleandrides and the charge of bribery, which Gylippus also had to face. Indeed, Cleandrides' conviction and the definition of Gylippus' μικρολογία and πλεονεξία as inherited (πατρῴον, which can also mean 'of the fathers' or 'ancestral') hint that the causes of Gylippus' moral weakness concerning money derived from and were embedded in Spartan culture, a theme that the readers are encouraged to explore further by reading the *Life of Lysander*. Gylippus' trajectory, then, if inserted into the broader context of Spartan history, as the cross-reference invites the readers to do, can be considered the symbol of the ephemeral nature of Sparta's imperialism, which was destined to cause Sparta's social, political, and institutional crisis because of its intrinsic nature. Sparta was not well equipped to use money and riches nor to become a hegemonic state³⁶. Ultimately, then, put in a wider perspective, the victory against the Athenians in Sicily did not yield the Spartans any long-term benefit.

Analogously to the *Life of Pericles*, the analysis of the *Life of Nicias* performed so far also shows that the numerous references to Gylippus imply an ideal reader capable of activating his/her prior knowledge of the facts so as to understand all of the aspects of the

connection between Gylippus' story and Spartan history, and Plutarch's interpretation of them. Furthermore, the lack of background information on Gylippus, the employment of key words and concepts specifically related to Sparta's society, culture, and politics, the presence of signs and metaphors evocative of the Spartan world, the reference to Cleandrides and the cross-reference to the *Life of Lysander* are all textual elements that invite a process of 'decoding' and interpretation in light of Plutarch's view of Sparta. The various possibilities offered by such a process can be fully actualised by the ideal reader, as s/he is completely familiar with the *Parallel Lives* and is able to read them in combination with one another, following the intratextual links established by the character Gylippus.

As in the similar case of *Per.* 22.4, nonetheless, the cross-reference also entails a virtual addressee, whom Plutarch advises to continue studying Gylippus and Sparta through the *Life of Lysander*. In this regard, the passive verb δηκρίβωται conveys a lower sense of complicity between the narrator and the narratee than that of the cross-reference in the *Life of Pericles*, where Plutarch uses the plural form δεδηλώκαμεν. Yet δηκρίβωται expresses a greater need for the addressee to elicit the information contained in the *Life of Lysander* so as to integrate his/her supposedly imperfect

³⁶ Cf. pp. 10-11 and 22-25.

knowledge. Plutarch's text, therefore, creates a distance between the virtual addressee and the ideal reader, which corresponds to two slightly different levels and modes of reading and understanding.

The Life of Lysander

Finally, let us move to the *Life of Lysander*, the biography where Plutarch provides a more detailed account of Gylippus' involvement in the scandal of Lysander's booty (*Lys.* 16-17.1):

After settling these matters, Lysander himself sailed away to Thrace, but what remained of the money and all the gifts, and crowns which he had himself received (since many people, as was natural, offered presents to a man who had the greatest power and was, in a manner, master of the Hellenic world), he dispatched to Sparta by Gylippus, who had held command in Sicily. Gylippus, however, as it is said, having undone the seams of the sacks at the bottom and hav-

ing taken a large amount of silver from each, sewed them up again, not knowing that there was a small tablet in each sack indicating its sum. After coming to Sparta, he hid what he had stolen under the tiling of his house, but handed over the sacks to the ephors and showed the seals. When, however, the ephors opened the sacks and counted the silver, its amount did not match the written notes and the fact perplexed them, until a servant of Gylippus, speaking in riddles, pointed out to them that many owls were sleeping under the tiling. For because of the Athenians the mark of most of the coinage of the time, as it seems, was owls. Gylippus, therefore, having committed so disgraceful and ignoble an act in addition to his previous brilliant and great deeds, went into voluntary exile from Sparta³⁷.

We have already illustrated the political and social repercussions of Lysander's decision to send to Sparta the

³⁷ Plu. *Lys.* 16-17.1: ὁ δὲ Λύσανδρος ἀπὸ τούτων γενόμενος, αὐτὸς μὲν ἐπὶ Θράκης ἐξέπλευσε, τῶν δὲ χρημάτων τὰ περιόντα, καὶ ὅσας δωρεὰς αὐτὸς ἢ στεφάνους ἐδέξατο, πολλῶν ὡς εἰκὸς διδόντων ἀνδρὶ δυνατωτάτῳ καὶ τρόπον τινὰ κυρίῳ τῆς Ἑλλάδος, ἀπέστειλεν εἰς Λακεδαιμόνα διὰ Γυλίππου τοῦ στρατηγήσαντος περὶ Σικελίαν. ὁ δὲ ὡς λέγεται τὰς ῥαφὰς τῶν ἀγγείων κάτωθεν ἀναλύσας, καὶ ἀφελὼν συχνὸν ἀργύριον ἐξ ἐκάστου, πάλιν συνέρραψεν, ἀγνοήσας ὅτι γραμματίδιον ἐνῆν ἐκάστῳ τὸν ἀριθμὸν σημαῖνον. ἐλθὼν δὲ εἰς Σπάρτην, ἃ μὲν ὑφῆρητο κατέκρυπεν ὑπὸ τὸν κέραμον τῆς οἰκίας, τὰ δὲ ἀγγεῖα παρέδωκε τοῖς ἐφόροις καὶ τὰς σφραγίδας ἐπέδειξεν. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀνοιζάντων καὶ ἀριθμούντων διεφώνει πρὸς τὰ γράμματα τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ ἀργυρίου καὶ παρείχε τοῖς ἐφόροις ἀπορίαν τὸ πρᾶγμα, φράζει θεράπων τοῦ Γυλίππου πρὸς αὐτοὺς αἰνιζάμενος ὑπὸ τῷ κέραμῳ κοιτάζεσθαι πολλὰς γλαῦκας· ἦν γάρ ὡς ἔοικε τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ πλείστου τότε νομίσματος διὰ τοὺς Ἀθηναίους γλαῦκες. ὁ μὲν οὖν Γύλιππος αἰσχρὸν οὕτῳ καὶ ἀγεννὲς ἔργον ἐπὶ λαμπροῖς τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν καὶ μεγάλῳ ἐργασάμενος, μετέστησεν ἑαυτὸν ἐκ Λακεδαιμόνος.

war booty captured during his military campaigns and how insufficient Plutarch judged the Spartiates' countermeasure, that is, the iron currency³⁸. Now we can concentrate our attention on some aspects of the text and the way in which Gylippus is portrayed.

As in all of the other passages that we have examined, in the *Life of Lysander* too Plutarch introduces Gylippus into the narrative without providing many background details, except for the brief mention of his command in Sicily and the generic "previous great deeds". Once again, then, the readers are expected to have a sufficient historical knowledge to be able to identify Gylippus. Yet, while the sequence of Gylippus' actions and his theft of the booty money are described with great accuracy, Plutarch does not attribute to the Spartan *strategos*

vices such as μικρολογία, πλεονεξία, φιλαργυρία, or φιλοπλουτία, which constitute his defining traits in other *Lives* (*Comp. Aem.-Tim.* 41(2).4, *Per.* 22.4, *Nic.* 19.4 and 28.4). This can be elucidated by the fact that, as we saw earlier in this article, in the Spartan *Lives* these concepts are employed to determine what causes and effects Lysander's actions had on Sparta. In the *Life of Lysander*, that is, the focus remains on Sparta and the Spartans' problematic relationship with money and wealth. Unlike the non-Spartan biographies, here Plutarch does not need to represent Gylippus with specifically Spartan characteristics nor to make him recognisable as a symbol of 'Spartanness', since he is already an integral part and expression of Spartan society. Indeed, the Spartans' faults and weaknesses are *naturally* Gylippus' too³⁹.

³⁸ See pp. 10-11 and 20. For an analysis of Plutarch's *Lives of Lysander and Sulla*, see E. ALEXIOU, 2010, J.M. CANDAU MORÓN, 2000, T.E. DUFF, 1999, 161-204, F. MUCCIOLI, 2005, C.B.R. PELLING, (1988) 2002, pp. 292-297, D.A. RUSSELL, (1966) 1995, pp. 90-94, P.A. STADTER, (1992) 2014a, pp. 258-269.

³⁹ With regard to the terminology used by Plutarch to identify Gylippus, we might also try to view the differences between the *Life of Lysander* and the non-Spartan biographies as due to the composition process of the *Lives*. First came the analysis of the crisis of Sparta in the Spartan *Lives*, where Plutarch closely related (and 'bound') certain words and concepts to the Spartan protagonists and Spartan society, but not to Gylippus, who only has a marginal role in the narrative of *Lysander*. Then came the connection between Gylippus and Sparta in non-Spartan biographies through meaningful terms already employed in the Spartan *Lives*. This would entail that the Spartan *Lives*, in particular *Lycurgus* and *Lysander*, were prepared before or roughly in the same period as the other biographies where Gylippus is mentioned, possibly with the use of preliminary notes on Sparta and Spartan characters and pre-publication drafts. The variations between the non-Spartan biographies, conversely, may be due to memory lapses or simple stylistic preferences. The complexity of Plutarch's method of work, however, and its many stages do not allow us to prove this hypothesis conclusively. The relative chronology of the release of *Lycurgus-Numa*, *Lysander-Sulla*, *Pericles-Fabius*, *Nicias-Crassus*, and *Aemilius Paulus-*

This interpretation can be confirmed by another remarkable difference between *Lys.* 16 and the other references to Gylippus in non-Spartan biographies: the absence of explanation for the stealing. Plutarch's moral evaluation of Gylippus is quite generic and there is no attempt to illuminate Gylippus' true motivations or the influence of his nature and character flaws upon his decisions (the adjectives αἰσχροῦς and ἀγεννής do not reveal the exact causes of ethically bad behaviour). Despite Gylippus' undeniable responsibility, moreover, in *Lys.* 17.2 we learn that the Spartiates placed the highest blame on Lysander. Indeed, the second part of the *Life* is devoted to scrutinise what passions drove the protagonist's political actions (e.g. *Lys.* 19.1-6). Thus, since Lysander and his relationship with Sparta are the centre of attention, Gylippus' embezzlement of money becomes an episode functional to this topic, without being investigated in its own right.

Gylippus' presence in the *Life of Lysander*, however, is still very significant. The ideal reader of the *Lives* cannot fail to notice that in Plutarch's view Gylippus represented an especially noteworthy antecedent of Lysander as a leader who successfully conducted military campaigns abroad and, more importantly, expanded the Spartan influence outside the Peloponnese at the expense of the Athenians. As we have already recalled, in the *Life of Lycurgus* Plutarch stresses the continuity between Gylippus, Lysander, and all of the other Spartan leaders who guided Greek cities (*Lyc.* 30.5). In the narrative of *Lysander*, then, the involvement of both Lysander and Gylippus in a political affair that radically changed Sparta is in itself emblematic of the strong similarity between their policies. Indeed, Lysander's conquests in Asia mirrored Gylippus' success in Sicily⁴⁰.

Timoleon is not of great help either. While *Lycurgus-Numa* probably preceded the other pairs, it is not clear which position in the series was occupied by *Lysander-Sulla*. C. JONES, (1966) 1995, pp. 106-111 placed it before *Pericles-Fabius*, *Nicias-Crassus*, and *Aemilius Paulus-Timoleon*, but his solution is disputed; cf. A.G. NIKOLAIDIS, 2005, pp. 307-308, who believes that *Lysander-Sulla* was one of the last pairs to be published. Cf. n. 8 and n. 41 of this article.

⁴⁰ Gylippus and Lysander may have truly shared similar political views, because they were both mothaces, but this hypothesis cannot be confirmed only by Plu. *Lys.* 16. Cf. U. BERNINI, 1988, pp. 145-146 n. 477, followed by G. VANOTTI, 2005, pp. 460-461: their arguments in favour of a political conflict between Lysander and Gylippus, as if Gylippus' embezzlement were part of a strategy to undermine Lysander's authority, seem highly speculative. The common origin and social status of Lysander and Gylippus, which is mentioned by Aelian (*VH* 12.43), is accepted by J.-F. BOMMELAER, 1981, p. 36, P. CARTLEDGE, 1987, pp. 28-29, 2002², p. 269, G.L. CAWKWELL, 1983, p. 394, but is rejected by L. PICCIRILLI, 1991.

On the other hand, the very fact that Gylippus was the first Spartan 'contaminated' by Lysander's foreign money warns the readers that, according to Plutarch, all of the Spartans run the serious risk of compromising, if not losing, their traditional identity. In this sense, considering that in Plutarch's view the owl is an animal who eats his own kind (as we saw in regard to *Nic.* 19.5), the image of many owls sleeping under Gylippus' roof can be considered a metaphor for the Spartans in danger of starting a struggle for riches against one another. To strengthen the idea that Gylippus was attacked by the power of

the money *destined to Sparta* (*Lys.* 17.2), Plutarch significantly omits Cleandrides' bribery and Gylippus' previous contrasts with the Syracusans, suggesting that Gylippus' greed, no matter whether it instilled an aggressive attitude towards the allies or whether it was useful to the Spartan interests abroad, could disrupt the balance among the citizens *at Sparta*. The menace lurking in Gylippus' house, therefore, may lead to the conclusion that in Plutarch's opinion, although Lysander was to blame, Gylippus' command in Sicily started the series of events (that is, the Spartan hegemony) that could alter the intrinsic nature of Sparta⁴¹.

⁴¹ Plutarch's account of Gylippus' scandal in *Lys.* 16-17 poses several historical problems: the time of the events (that is, Plutarch places the scandal after the end of the Peloponnesian war), Gylippus' unawareness of the tablets, the real amount of money stolen, the role of the servant; see J. CHRISTIEN, 2002, pp. 174-175, S. HODKINSON, 2000, pp. 172-173, L. PICCIRILLI, 1997, pp. 256-257. There are also remarkable discrepancies between *Lys.* 16-17, the other passages of the *Lives* where Plutarch writes about Gylippus (*Nic.* 19.5-6 and 28.4, *Per.* 22.2-4, *Comp. Aem.-Tim.* 41(2).7), and Diodorus' version (13.106.8-10). S. ALESSANDRI, 1985 – followed by L. PICCIRILLI, 1993, pp. 309-310, 1997, pp. 256-257, G. VANOTTI, 2005, pp. 460 n. 38 – formulated the hypothesis that both *Lys.* 16-17 and D.S. 13.106.8-10 derive from Ephorus. Diodorus, however, places the booty affair at the time of the siege of Samos, adds a digression on Gylippus' father (whom he calls Clearchus), does not narrate the intervention of the servant, and records the stealing of a much larger sum than in Plutarch. In Alessandri's view, such differences are due to Diodorus' insertion of a Timaeus *excerptum* (p. 1087) into his work. According to Alessandri, moreover, *Plu. Per.* 22.2-4 would primarily follow Ephorus (on the basis of *FGrHist* 70 F 193 and D.S. 13.106.8-10), but the connection between Gylippus and Cleandrides would be Plutarch's reworked supplement. Finally, *Plu. Nic.* 19.5-6 and 28.4, and *Comp. Aem.-Tim.* 41(2).7 would primarily follow Timaeus, as Plutarch explicitly says (in particular, the reference to Cleandrides at *Nic.* 28.4 would be similar to the Timaeus *excerptum* in D.S. 13.106.8-10). C.B.R. PELLING, (1992) 2002, 135 n. 6, argues that for the *Life of Nicias* Plutarch may have drawn from Timaeus more information and details than is usually believed, so that Timaeus' influence would not be simply limited to the citations. Both these theories are convincing and compatible with one another, *pace* L. PICCIRILLI, 1993, p. 309. In addition to them, one can stress that Plutarch's use of historical sources was not mechanical. In fact, it involved a considerable degree of selection and re-elaboration, and the ability to adapt the same or

Indeed, as for the other passages where Plutarch writes about Gylippus, the analysis of *Lys.* 16-17.1 too shows that the text requires a minimum level of historical knowledge. Otherwise, one can easily assume that an uninformed audience would find it difficult to identify Gylippus correctly or to understand completely his involvement in Lysander's story. Similarly, we can hypothesise that the ideal reader of the *Parallel Lives* is able to grasp the underlying meaning of the scene involving Gylippus, the theft, and the 'owls' through his/her general history recollection and acquaintance with the other Plutarchan *Lives*. Unlike the *Life of Pericles* and the *Life of Nicias*, however, in the passage of the *Life of Lysander* discussed above the intratextual connection with other *Lives* is not established by special 'memory triggers': as already said, key words or concepts, and a characterisation that highlights typically Spartan features or personality traits are absent. Rather, it is Gylippus the character himself that can direct the readers towards previous historical works as much as other Plutarchan biographies where he is mentioned. His presence in the *Life*

of *Lysander* can allow the ideal reader to interpret the crucial episode of the crisis of Sparta in light of one the most important phases of Spartan history – the Spartan intervention in Sicily – and Plutarch's interpretation of it.

Conclusion

Coming to some conclusions, one can plausibly claim that in the *Parallel Lives* Gylippus is portrayed as a character coherent with the image of Sparta developed in and conveyed by the *Spartan Lives*. To be more accurate, overall Gylippus displays the same combination of purely Spartan traits and inconsistencies in 'Spartanness' as the other great Spartan leaders of his time, whom Plutarch examines in his biographies. His virtues and vices, that is, were ultimately not too different from those of Lysander, and for that matter of Agesilaus too.

Through Gylippus' presence as a secondary character in the *Life of Pericles* and in the *Life of Nicias*, Plutarch creates a strong connection between these biographies and the *Spartan Lives*, inviting the readers to examine them in light of one another. Thus, Pericles' strategy against the Spartans as much as Nicias

analogous contents to different contexts. This may have already happened in the early phases of the composition of the *Lives*. Thus, as we have tried to show in this article, the presence or absence of references to Cleandrides, the use of moral terms specifically related to Sparta, the employment of the medical metaphor, the emphasis on the image of owls, are all elements that, once found in Timaeus and Ephorus as described by Alessandri, Plutarch may have decided to integrate into the narrative of the various *Lives* so as to offer a characterisation of Gylippus as credible, nuanced, and apt to each narrative situation as possible. On Plutarch's use of historical sources, see C.B.R. PELLING, (1980) 2002, pp. 91-115.

and the Athenians underestimating Gylippus can be better evaluated against Gylippus' quintessentially Spartan nature and the later crisis of Sparta. Similarly, the political and institutional changes that Sparta underwent because of Lysander can be more deeply understood by considering at the same time the involvement of Gylippus in Sicily and the very beginning of Spartan hegemony consequent to the victory against the Athenians.

This shows that in Plutarch's view history is a complex subject, which requires attentive readers willing to engage actively in reading and interpreting the texts so as to form personal views and to learn from the events assessed. Accordingly, the *Parallel Lives* imply a wide spectrum of readers. At one end, as repeatedly suggested in this article, one can assume that there are readers with a minimum level of historical knowledge, without which the references to Gylippus and Spartan history become hardly comprehensible. At the other end, as one can infer from the passages analysed earlier, one can find the ideal reader, who is fully able to actualise all of Plutarch's intratextual connections and to interpret the narrative fruitfully, having a thorough knowledge of ancient history as much as of Plutarch's views on it. One can reasonably presume that

the actual readers of the *Parallel Lives* stand in between these two opposite poles. Following the author's indications embedded in the texts and activating their history recollection, the actual readers may be able to recognise the intratextual links between the *Lives* and to read the various biographies in combination with one another. Their competence may vary depending on their prior familiarity with Greek and Roman history as much as with Plutarch's works, but it can also gradually improve as the reading process continues. Indeed, the less prepared are the readers, the more necessary Plutarch's textual indications become.

As the cross-references can prove, however, Plutarch neither merely imposed his vision of the historical facts on the *Parallel Lives* nor restricted the readers' freedom of interpretation. In this regard, one cannot but agree with the recent scholarship that has emphasised how the collaborative effort between the readers and the author entailed by the *Parallel Lives* does not involve Plutarch's purely expository didacticism or explicit advices on how to approach the text, not even in places where one might expect them such as the prologues or the final *synkriseis*⁴². This aspect of the relationship between Plutarch and the readers, which has been usually related to the *Lives*' moralism and the readers' willingness and capability to draw moral lessons from them, can be extended

⁴² See, in particular, T.E. DUFF, 2007/2008, especially pp. 13-15, 2011a, P.A. STADTER, 2003/2004.

to the analysis of history. Just as the readers, as they can be reconstructed from the texts, in general appear to share Plutarch's philosophical principles as a starting point for their own moral assessment of the characters, which they are called to conduct through a critical reading of the *Lives*, so by following Plutarch's interpretation of the historical events they are also encouraged to form their own judgment on the Greek and Roman past and on the complex interaction between great individuals and their cities and states.

Indeed, the case study of Gylippus' presence in the *Parallel Lives*, even in occasional 'isolated' references, shows the importance of intratextual connectors to make it easier to the readers the examination of history within and across the *Parallel Lives*.

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