

The Representation of Heroic Episodes in Plutarch's *Life of Pyrrhus*

The use of heroic episodes as a tool by the ancient authors was both commonplace and a convenient method by which the commendable qualities of a character could be emphasised by the author. However, these episodes could also be used as a means of emphasising the not-so commendable qualities of the main character as well, depending upon the literary context and the intentions of the author. Plutarch frequently used such examples in the *Parallel Lives* so he could continue the moralising theme inherent in many of the biographies (Duff 1999, 52-71). Plutarch made his motivation for writing quite evident in the *Life of Timoleon* (1.1), where he clearly states that the examples of great men affected his own behaviour (Stadter 1992, 1).

Plutarch used a variety of sources (both literary and oral) (Pelling 1995, 125-54), and consistently sought to instruct the audience on the correct form of behaviour (Russell 1995, 79-80). He did not intend to reach an all-encompassing audience (see Wardman 1974, 37-48), but he still attempted to make the *Parallel Lives* enjoyable to read (see Duff 2004, 279-80). However, it is the 'parallel' nature of these biographies that makes Plutarch's writings distinctive, but also problematic. The nature of comparing two lives in order to establish their similarities frequently affected the fashion in which various characters were portrayed by Plutarch, and, in turn, detrimentally influenced his choice of subject matter in the *Lives*. Nevertheless, it is clear that he aimed to provide moral examples to encourage (or discourage) certain forms of behaviour (see Stadter 2000, 493), which was frequently employed within episodes that were intended to further highlight the qualities of the central character. In relation to the *Pyrrhus*, this was most typically used in relation to the heroic qualities of this Hellenistic leader.

The Recollections of Pyrrhus in the Second Century AD

In order to fully understand the fashion in which Pyrrhus was portrayed by Plutarch, it is initially important to briefly contextualise him within the historical context of the Second Century. Pyrrhus was an important Hellenistic monarch within the Roman mindset because he was a significant figure within their history, considering that he had been the first major Hellenistic monarch defeated by them. It had also been an epic struggle between Roman and the Epirote, including a few major

defeats of the Romans, which added to the glory of the whole affair from a Roman perspective. This occurred during the Tarentine Wars (Lévêque 1957, 295-450), which was glorified by several ancient authors such as Cicero, Livy, and Florus (Cic., *Fin.*, 3.11.2, 4.43; *Pro Murena*, 14.31; Livy, 22.59, 31.7; Florus, 1.13). The *Strategemata* by Frontinus makes several complimentary references to the strategic and tactical merits of Pyrrhus' campaigns (Frontinus, *Strat.*, 2.4.13, 2.6.9-10, 3.6.3, 4.1.3, 4.1.14). A brief reference in Book Four of the *Strategemata* highlights the fashion in which Pyrrhus was portrayed (Frontinus, *Strat.*, 4.1.3), but Frontinus was also at times critical of Pyrrhus' methods, typically mentioning him as a means of complimenting a Roman, such as Manius Curius and Valerius Laevinus (Frontinus, *Strat.*, 2.2.1; 2.3.21; 2.4.9).

The comparison of Pyrrhus with Alexander the Great occurred frequently in both ancient and modern times (Garoufalias 1979, 148-9), which is a good example of the impact that he had upon the ancient mindset. In a supposed conversation between Hannibal and Scipio Africanus (Holleaux 1968, 184-207), Livy mentions that Hannibal viewed Pyrrhus' military worth as only being second to Alexander the Great (Livy, 35.14.6.12), which is also stated by Appian (Appian, *Syrian*, 2.10), Pausanias (Pausanias, 4.35.4), Lucian (Lucian, *Cal.*, 11), and Plutarch in his *Life of Flaminius* (21.3). It is notable that Plutarch contradicts this view in his *Life of Pyrrhus* (8.2) (and reportedly in the *Life of Scipio*), where he states that Hannibal viewed Pyrrhus as being the best military leader of antiquity.

The contradiction between the different *Lives* written by Plutarch was probably owing to the different contexts in which he was writing, illustrating the inherent difficulty of parallel lives as a biographical form. Even so, for the present purposes it is still representative of the high regard in which later classical scholars viewed Pyrrhus. Livy (29.18.6) also refers to Pyrrhus as *supurbissimus rex* ('greatest king'), whereas Florus (1.13) describes him as *Pyrrhum, clarissimum Graeciae regem* ('Pyrrhus, most dignified of Greek kings'), which further illustrates the Roman authors' esteem for him. From a later time period, Ammianus Marcellinus admires both his capacity to select a suitable campsite and the disguising of his true military strengths (Ammianus Marcellinus, 24.1.3). That being said, not all of the ancient sources were complimentary of Pyrrhus' abilities. Terence provides a good example in the *Eunuch* (781-3), but this characterisation was in keeping with its comedic context. These representations of Pyrrhus highlight the literary context in which

Plutarch composed the *Pyrrhus* and epitomise how the various heroic (or non-heroic) episodes were used to correspond with this tradition that had surrounded this Hellenistic general.

The *Pyrrhus* and its Use of Heroic Episodes

The general structure of the *Pyrrhus* has been analysed in previous studies (Duff 1999, 101-30; Buszard 2005, 281-96), but with particular emphasis upon its relationship with the *Marius* and how this epitomised Plutarch's representation of Rome. There has also been some discussion of the parallels drawn by Plutarch between Pyrrhus and Alexander the Great (Mossman 2005, 498-517; 1992, 90-107), but for the purposes of this discussion, it is the Homeric parallels used by the biographer that are the initial focus. The Homeric allusion that occurs within these episodes was clearly intended to emphasize the heroic portrayal of Pyrrhus within the narrative, but this was altered when it came to Pyrrhus' dealings with the Romans in the Tarentine Wars. The representation of Pyrrhus within Plutarch's biography in these episodes is largely inconsistent. Some depict him as good, whereas others were quite negative, but this was largely determined by the context in which the episode was set and often by who Pyrrhus was dealing with. But this is indicative of the biographical intent of Plutarch: to emphasize certain key episodes that allowed him to analyse the key elements of the character's 'soul' (see Wardman 1971, 254).

The episodes that have been analysed in this study have been selected because of how they are used within the biography to epitomize various qualities and themes within the narrative. As stated previously, the initial impression of these episodes is quite inconsistent, particularly in relation to those episode that Plutarch included that were not so heroic. There are twelve instances where Plutarch includes episodes that describe Pyrrhus' character: Sections 7.4-5, 8.3, 15.3-4, 16.6-10, 17.1-3, 21.6-7, 22.5-6, 24.1-4, 26.9-11, 30.5-6, 32.4-33.1 and 34.1-4. The variation within these representations highlights the contrasting use of literary episodes by Plutarch, but this was largely in order that he might be able to provide a moral example for his audience (see Pelling 2002, 147-9). In relation to the heroic elements, Plutarch consistently draws Homeric allusions within the text, but it is also evident that he simultaneously also accentuated the importance of Rome's victories over Pyrrhus, which was largely in keeping with the views of his intended audience (Russell 1966, 140-1). It is quite clear that there was a clear distinction within Plutarch's narrative between the

portrayal of Romans and non-Romans (Swain 1990, 131). Judging from the inclusion of these episodes it is evident that Plutarch's representation of Pyrrhus was largely heroic, but only when it suited the biographer and his audience. Nevertheless, in order to establish this, each of the heroic episodes should be considered in relation to the allusions drawn by the author.

Pyrrhus as the Definitive Hero

The representations of Pyrrhus through various episodes within the biography are largely heroic. There are five notable examples of this in particular: Sections 7.4-5, 8.3, 22.5-6, 24.1-4 and 30.5-6. All of these passages give a positive account of Pyrrhus' heroism and were used to emphasise the admirable qualities that he possessed as a general and a leader. These heroic episodes provided clear examples of this personal quality of Pyrrhus, for which he was most famous. Each of these passages provided different foci, but the underlying theme of Pyrrhus as the embodiment of a military hero is consistent within each episode. The first example of this within the biography occurs in Section 7.4-5, which provides an account of the battle between Pyrrhus and Pantauchus in 289 BC (Garoufalias 1979, 40-2). The heroic portrayal of Pyrrhus in this passage is one of the most overt references towards his great courage and skill as a combatant. Plutarch provides both of the combatants with illustrious qualities within this episode, but this was largely in order to emphasise the heroism of Pyrrhus. Pantauchus is described as having great courage, dexterity and strength, being the best of Demetrius' generals, which was intended to further illustrate the heroism of Pyrrhus, particularly because of Pyrrhus' ultimate victory over him. However, the heroism of the main character was then further stressed through the reference to his alleged descent from Achilles. This Homeric allusion epitomises the overall theme of this episode: Pyrrhus possessed a similar military aptitude to this famed hero, which went far beyond his descent from Achilles (Mossman, "Plutarch, Pyrrhus and Alexander", in P.A. Stadter 1992, 91-2).

The heroic theme of Pyrrhus' military acumen and the importance that it represented is further emphasised in the next positive episode (Section 8.3) included by Plutarch. The inclusion of this passage by Plutarch was intended to highlight the importance of military affairs to Pyrrhus' reign as king of the Epirots (see Swain 1995, 245). The one-eyed devotion to military affairs expressed within this episode by Plutarch was a further extension of the heroic ideal that Pyrrhus' portrayal

followed in the previous section (7.4-5). This was in many ways reminiscent of Achilles, the single-minded devotion represented by Homer, with the greatest warrior almost being solely devoted to his warrior-craft. While the composition of the *Parallel Lives* by Plutarch was primarily intended to compare the similarities in this instance between Pyrrhus and Marius, it is also possible that the author was also drawing a correlation between this Hellenistic leader and the legendary Achilles as well.

This is also illustrated in the next heroic episode that was included within the *Pyrrhus* (22.5-6). This episode clearly continues the correlation between Pyrrhus and the Homeric representation of heroism. The representation of Pyrrhus as almost single-handedly repelling his enemies is clearly reminiscent of the Homeric tradition of military heroism, which Plutarch clearly emphasises through the final sentence where he makes an overt correlation between Pyrrhus' countenance and the descriptions of Homer. This is the clearest example of Pyrrhus' portrayal by Plutarch following a Homeric model, which epitomises how these heroic episodes were intended to present Pyrrhus as the embodiment of military virtue and courage (Tatum 1996, 140). This almost 'superhuman' representation of Pyrrhus by Plutarch was quite different from the portrayal of Gaius Marius, which emphasised Marius' endurance and restraint, rather than his aptitude in hand-to-hand conflict (such as *Marius* 6.3; 7.2-3). Instead of this aspect being comparable between Pyrrhus and Marius the inspiration for Pyrrhus' portrayal is clearly more from a traditional Homeric model. The 'superhuman' abilities of Pyrrhus in battle were further emphasised in relation to his conflict with the Carthaginians (*Pyrr.*, 24.1-4).

This heroic episode provides a further example of how Pyrrhus emphasised the fear that Pyrrhus instilled in his enemies through the description of his frenzied facial features in battle. The possibility of Pyrrhus cleaving an enemy in two seems unlikely in reality, but this emphasises the heroic representation that Plutarch gives Pyrrhus: he was able to perform unnatural/impossible feats on the battle field, which is highly reminiscent of some of the traditions of Homeric epic. A hero could perform great deeds that far surpassed those of ordinary combat. This episode also covers a similar theme to one that was implied in Section 7.4-5: that it was only Pyrrhus' leadership that brought about success from his army.

The final passage in the biography that presents Pyrrhus in the guise of the definitive hero is Section 30.5-6, which also clearly provides a similar theme to

Sections 22.5-6 and 24.1-4, with Pyrrhus being represented as a terrible and invincible hero in combat. Pyrrhus' brilliance in hand-to-hand combat was an important point for Plutarch in this regard, but through the inclusion of this episode he also sought to emphasise how the death of his son made him even more fearsome. The inclusion of this account in relation to the Spartans would have seemed like an added benefit to Plutarch because of the great traditional regard in which they were held in combat. This serves to even further emphasize the greatness of Pyrrhus' military abilities more within the narrative. So again, Plutarch has included these episodes to highlight the brilliance of Pyrrhus in the field of battle. This corresponds well with the traditional ideals of a military hero.

There are also two episodes (Sections 15.3-4, 31.1-4) within the *Pyrrhus* that portray Pyrrhus in a heroic guise, but do not strictly conform to the previous five examples. These passages present more of a mixed view of his character, embodying both positive and negative views of his nature that led to some catastrophe despite the heroic attempts on his part. The first of these (Section 15.3-4), illustrates how Plutarch's narrative on the voyage to Italy clearly contains heroic elements in relation to Pyrrhus' response to such a disaster, describing the events as if the survival of at least a portion of his army was only due to his courageous actions. However, that being said, it could hardly be judged as a successful outcome for Pyrrhus as well, but this would have been impossible for Plutarch to attribute to him. It is notable that Plutarch does not explicitly explain why Pyrrhus threw himself into the sea either. The biographer simply indicates that to do so was another example of his great courage and physical strength by him reaching the shore. Of course it is likely that the reasoning for such an act was intended to be understood: Pyrrhus was accepting a lesser danger by abandoning ship. However, the inclusion of this episode was probably intended to illustrate the heroism and courage of Pyrrhus, even in the most dire of circumstances. All the same, it may have also been included to also indicate the recklessness that was also a fundamental feature of Plutarch's representation of this Hellenistic monarch. The combined presentation of Pyrrhus' recklessness and heroism is also presented in Section 31.1-4. This episode is given with the background of Pyrrhus having recklessly (or impetuously) entered Argos in order to take the city, but he only had the support of part of his forces (*Pyrr.*, 31.1-4).

The representation of Pyrrhus' personality in this episode corresponds well with that of Section 15.3-4, which highlights how despite Plutarch's emphasis upon the heroism of Pyrrhus, he also sought to call attention to the recklessness that was also a prominent feature of his representation of the central character. The central element of this was the removal of the helmet, which could be interpreted in a few ways. Firstly, it could be taken to indicate a degree of cowardice on Pyrrhus' part because the helmet distinguished him so much in battle, but this appears unlikely owing to Plutarch's description of him plunging headlong into the enemy. It could also be argued that it may have been intended to be symbolic of its worth to him, and that there was a degree of understanding on Pyrrhus' part that he was about to meet his fate. This is plausible largely because of Plutarch's clear appreciation for a degree of fatalism within his biographies that has been noted previously elsewhere (Swain 1989, 279-98). However, it is also possible that in addition to this Plutarch continued to emphasize a degree of recklessness on Pyrrhus' part, which appears to have been a common theme within the biographer's presentation of him. There is clearly a heroic element within this episode of the narrative (as well as a degree of tragedy) (see De Lacy 1952, 159-71), but it is the theme of Pyrrhus' recklessness that is apparent. However, this certainly corresponds with his perceived similarities with Achilles. This motif is frequently used by Plutarch and is typical of some quite non-heroic episodes within the biography as well.

The 'Non-heroic' Pyrrhus

The use of descriptive episodes to provide moralising examples was also used by Plutarch to provide illustrations of how non-heroic Pyrrhus' actions were on occasion. The use of such instances in the narrative was just as important to the biographer as the inclusion of heroic examples of Pyrrhus' behaviour because of the continued emphasis upon providing moral illustrations to encourage, or in this case – to discourage, certain forms of behaviour. It should be clarified that for the present study 'non-heroic' is used to indicate an instance where Pyrrhus is not shown in heroic terms. This is different to an 'un-heroic' episode, where Pyrrhus could be shown as cowardly or unworthy of heroic status. There are five instances within the *Pyrrhus* where an episode depicting Pyrrhus in a non-heroic guise occurs: Sections 16.6-10, 17.1-3, 21.6-7, 26.9-11 and 32.4-33.1. However, what is of greatest interest for the present discussion is the context in which non-heroic episodes were included

by the author and how these instalments differed from the more heroic accounts within the *Pyrrhus*. It is by comparing the literary context of these accounts that it is possible to gain a clearer understanding of why they were included by Plutarch and how the heroic or non-heroic representation corresponded with the intended audience of the author.

The first example taken from the *Pyrrhus* of such a non-heroic representation occurs in Section 16.6-10. This episode is not initially non-heroic, there being clear indications of a sense of heroism in Plutarch's description of Pyrrhus' generalship and his manner on the battlefield, but it can hardly be said that the results of the combat with Oplax the Frentanian were entirely virtuous. Firstly, it is notable that Plutarch again refers to the prominence of Pyrrhus' armour on the battlefield, which may give another indication of how Plutarch sought to emphasize that he by no means shirked from personal danger. That being said, Plutarch's description of the fight with Oplax largely results in a stalemate, which is quite different to the fashion in which the biographer described Pyrrhus' impact and success in the battles against both the Carthaginians and the Spartans (*Pyrr.*, 22.5-6, 24.1-4, 30.5-6). In many ways the heroism of his adversary, Oplax, is described as almost being as comparable to that of the central character, which is a marked change to these other descriptions whereby Pyrrhus was the epitome of martial heroism that almost recalled the legendary heroes of Homer. The reason for this is owing to the adversary himself: Oplax the Frentanian was fighting for the Romans.

In the context of when Plutarch composed the *Pyrrhus* it would have been entirely unacceptable for the author to describe the Roman forces in a lesser light to that of Pyrrhus. Placing Pyrrhus in greater esteem in comparison to the Carthaginians and Greeks was entirely appropriate, but it would not have been welcomed if such differentiation was applied to the Roman forces. The distinction between Pyrrhus and Roman virtue was particularly emphasised by Plutarch in the speech of Appius Claudius in Section 19.2-3 (Wardman 1955, 96, n. 7). The same basic theme is reiterated by Plutarch in the next 'non-heroic' episode (Section 17.1-3). As with Section 16.6-10, the basic theme of this episode continues to emphasize the dress of Pyrrhus, but in a different regard: the exchange of dress with Megacles appears to have been intended to imply a degree of cowardice on Pyrrhus' part. Plutarch depicts Pyrrhus as being the most important aspect of the Greek army, without him all is lost and they will ultimately crumble before the efficiency (and virtue) of the Roman army.

This appears to be the underlying theme of this passage, which continues throughout the majority of the biography, but it is of note that the representation of Pyrrhus in this instance differs significantly from that of the fearsome leader who almost single-handedly defeated his non-Roman enemies. But this seems to be the salient point: despite the personal talents of Pyrrhus on the field, the Roman forces were ultimately superior.

It is also important to note the contrast between the changing of Pyrrhus' arms and clothes in this passage with the removal of his helmet in 31.1. While taking off his helmet in 31.1 was symbolic of his fate and his impetuosity, it is quite clear that the exchange of clothes with Megacles was intended to show Pyrrhus in an entirely non-heroic fashion. Pyrrhus is depicted as passing his own peril onto a subordinate, and regardless of his ensuing actions on the battlefield this act cannot be viewed in a heroic fashion.

Also in this episode Plutarch makes a further point: before the awesome might of the Roman state (see Swain 1989, 292), even the most heroic of leaders fears them enough to make less than heroic decisions. This is the first instance presented by Plutarch in the *Pyrrhus* of such fear and is particularly important because it shows him dishonourably placing Megacles in danger rather than himself. It is also important to note that this may further the suggestion that the reference to the removal of his helmet in Section 31.1-4 was more indicative of Pyrrhus' understanding of his fate and his attempt to avoid it. All the same, it is significant that this less than heroic representation of Pyrrhus by Plutarch resulted in a victory for him, which also indicates that the ultimate result of the affair did not necessarily determine how the biographer presented his central character.

The next episode occurs at Section 21.6-7 (Lefkowitz 1959, 163), which contrasts the valour of the Roman troops and Pyrrhus. This passage is different from the previous episodes that have been discussed in that it does not explicitly depict Pyrrhus in a negative light; it simply understates the impact of his military heroism, which is another significant departure within Plutarch's overall representation of him. Unlike the more heroic sections, this episode asserts that Pyrrhus' skills as a combatant was largely only successful because of the elephants under his command, which is a significant shift for Plutarch who had largely attributed all of the Epirot successes previously to Pyrrhus alone. The main reasoning for this was that Plutarch was seeking to avoid undermining the inherent valour of the Roman troops, and so

therefore he had to 'blame' the use of elephants for the Epirot victory in this regard. While in this episode Pyrrhus was praised for his valour, he could not be given the glory of this victory either by Plutarch, which was largely because of the author's desire to please his Roman audience. It is also of note that there was also a shift in the focus within this passage; the concentration being largely upon the reaction of the Roman forces rather than the central character. However, this also serves to highlight the change in Plutarch's intentions in his accounts of affairs that involved the Roman forces.

The next episode occurs at Section 26.9-11, which almost entirely changes the presentation of Pyrrhus' heroism when he undertook a campaign against the Spartans in 273 BC (Garoufalios 1979, 127-34; Swain 1989, 62-8). This episode almost entirely changes the representation of Pyrrhus' heroic qualities by Plutarch. The previous portrayal of Pyrrhus in relation to his diplomatic relations was one of respectfulness, particularly in relation to his dealings with Gaius Fabricius (*Pyrr.*, 20.1-5). This description of him breaking his word marks a significant shift in Plutarch's depiction of Pyrrhus. While the contrast in Pyrrhus' 'heroic' character can be understood in relation to his conflict with the Romans in view of Plutarch's intended audience, the same cannot be said for his Spartan affairs (Schepens 2000, 435-6). However, the answer for this character change can be found in the change that occurs in the *Marius*, which highlights the inherent difficulties in the configuration of the *Parallel Lives* itself: in this instance Plutarch is at pains to maintain the 'parallel' nature of these two characters. The 'non-heroic' nature of this passage was seemingly intended to correspond with the poor decision making processes shown in the *Marius* in relation to his association with Saturninus (*Marius*, 29.1-30.4), which was another clearly 'non-heroic' episode within the *Parallel Lives*. The structural constraints of the *Parallel Lives* are clearly apparent here and this has affected how Plutarch represented Pyrrhus' actions towards the Spartans in 273 BC.

The final 'non-heroic' episode included within the *Pyrrhus* by Plutarch is in Section 32.4-33.1. This final episode reasserts the fatalism that was implied in Section 31.1-4, but in this instance it corresponds well with Section 17.1-3 whereby Pyrrhus is shown to be reacting quite fearfully to the prospect of his own demise. This passage is also notable because it represents the only occasion in Plutarch's narrative where Pyrrhus actually seeks to retreat, which was in all likelihood intended to emphasize the gravity of his predicament in Argos. It is significant to note that Plutarch makes

no suggestion of panic or terror on Pyrrhus' part, but instead depicts him as carefully calculating the opportunities that were available to him, which was largely in keeping with his representation of him over all. However, it must also be stated that this portrayal of Pyrrhus was significantly at odds to the 'superhuman' representation that coloured the majority of the heroic episodes. In this instance, Pyrrhus is shown as being more 'human' than in any of the other previous episodes, but in this regard it could hardly be claimed as being ultimately 'heroic'.

Conclusions

The analysis of heroic and non-heroic episodes within the *Pyrrhus* by Plutarch provides six overall conclusions that can be drawn in relation to the portrayal of Pyrrhus within the narrative. Firstly, it is clear that Plutarch used a series of contrasting literary episodes involving Pyrrhus in order to provide a number of moral examples for Plutarch's audience. Secondly it is also evident that through the use of pseudo-Homeric heroism, particularly through the use of Pyrrhic analogies with Achilles and Homer, that Plutarch was able to accentuate the talents of Pyrrhus. This also allowed the biographer to accentuate the importance of Rome's victories over Pyrrhus, which would have certainly appealed to his intended audience. These episodes also clearly illustrate the clear distinction within Plutarch's narrative in the representation of both Romans and non-Romans. Ultimately, the portrayal of Pyrrhus was heroic within the biography, but this was only when it suited Plutarch, or at the very least, his audience.

Fourthly, through the use of particular imagery, such as Pyrrhus' countenance and his dress, Plutarch was able to emphasize qualities that suited the intentions of each episode, whether they were heroic or non-heroic. This analysis has also epitomized the difficulties that inherently lay within the format of the *Parallel Lives*. Plutarch's account of the expedition against Sparta reveals some discordance within the representation of Pyrrhus' character, which was ultimately a result of Plutarch's need to produce a convincing comparison with the *Marius*. And finally, the *Pyrrhus* provides a clear illustration of the moralism that affected the production of the biography, which was indicative of the social and literary parameters of the Second Century AD. In many ways Plutarch was constrained by the expectations of his audience, and yet he also sought to provide a moral lesson for his audience. Ultimately, the representation of Pyrrhus by Plutarch was that of a tragic but

admirable hero, which clearly epitomises his selection as a main character within the *Parallel Lives*. However, that being said, the vested historical interests of his intended audience severely affected how Plutarch was able to represent Pyrrhus.

Another significant issue that faced Plutarch was the fact that Pyrrhus *was* a very good professional soldier. This meant that Plutarch would have found it almost impossible to portray Pyrrhus as a stereotypical Homeric hero all of the time. The biographer was also under the constraints of what was historically attested at the time, which meant that the portrayal of Pyrrhus could not always conform with the heroic ideal. It is also possible to note a distrust of military professionalism in the portrayal of Pyrrhus, which can be viewed elsewhere in the *Parallel Lives* (such as Plutarch, *Philopoemen* 4.5-6). These additional considerations provide further insight on the factors that affected the presentation of these heroic and non-heroic episodes within the *Pyrrhus*. Plutarch was clearly attempting to show Pyrrhus as a tragic but admirable hero, who largely conformed to the heroic ideal. However, this characterisation also needed to be tempered by the historical reality, the necessity to create a parallel with the *Marius*, and ultimately the views of his intended audience.

Geoff W. Adams
The University of Tasmania, Australia
Geoffrey.Adams@utas.edu.au

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