

Performing Masculinity in Plutarch's *Life of Pyrrhus*

1. *Pyrr.* 8.1

καὶ γὰρ ὄψιν ὤοντο καὶ τάχος εἰκέναι καὶ κίνημα
τοῖς Ἀλεξάνδρου, καὶ τῆς φορᾶς ἐκείνου καὶ βίας
παρὰ τοὺς ἀγῶνας ἐν τούτῳ σκιάς τινος ὄρασθαι
καὶ μιμήματα, τῶν μὲν ἄλλων βασιλέων ἐν
πορφύραις καὶ δορυφόροις καὶ κλίσει τραχήλου
καὶ τῷ μείζον διαλέγεσθαι, μόνου δὲ Πύρρου τοῖς
ὄπλοις καὶ ταῖς χερσὶν ἐπιδεικνυμένου τὸν
Ἀλέξανδρον.

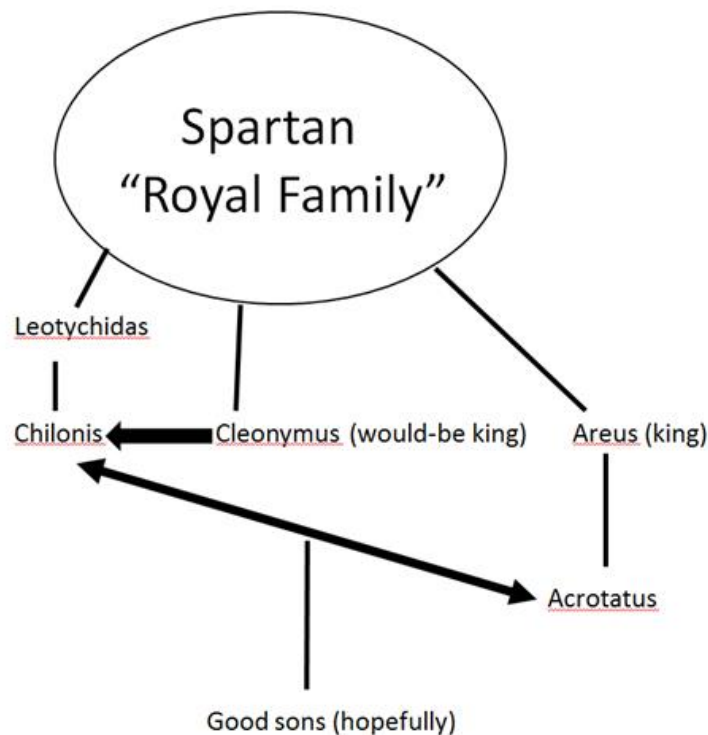
For they thought that [Pyrrhus'] appearance and speed and movement were like those of Alexander, and that some shades and likenesses of [Alexander's] fury and force in battle could be seen in him. Whereas the other kings resembled Alexander in their purple cloaks and their bodyguards and the tilt of their neck and their grandiose way of talking, only Pyrrhus resembled him in arms and action.

2. Aristotle, *Politics* 1269b

καίτοι τί διαφέρει γυναικας ἄρχειν ἢ τοὺς
ἄρχοντας ὑπὸ τῶν γυναικῶν ἄρχεσθαι;

But how is it different for women to rule than for the rulers to be ruled by the women?

3. The Spartan situation according to Plutarch



4. *Pyrr.* 26.8

ἡ δὲ Ἀκροτάτῳ τῷ Ἄρεως ἐπιμανεῖσα, μαιρακίῳ
καθ' ὥραν ἀκμάζοντι, λυπηρὸν ἐρῶντι τῷ
Κλεωνύμῳ καὶ ἄδοξον ὁμοῦ παρεῖχε τὸν γάμον·
**οὐδένα γὰρ ἐλάνθανε Σπαρτιατῶν
καταφρονούμενος ὑπὸ τῆς γυναικός.**

Being madly in love with Acrotatus the son of Areus, a young man at the peak of his youth, she made marriage painful for Cleonymus, who loved her, and at the same time shameful, **for it escaped none of the Spartiates that he was held in contempt by his wife.**

5. *Pyrr.* 28.2

...κατιδὼν τὸν κίνδυνον ὁ νεανίας Ἀκρότατος καὶ τὴν πόλιν διαδραμῶν μετὰ τριακοσίων περιῆλθε τὸν Πτολεμαῖον, οὐ συνορώμενος ὑπ' αὐτοῦ διὰ τινὰς συγκλινίας, ἕως προσέβαλε τοῖς ἐσχάτοις καὶ μεταβαλόντας ἠνάγκασε μάχεσθαι πρὸς ἑαυτὸν, ὠθουμένους ὑπ' ἀλλήλων εἰς τε τὴν τάφρον καὶ περὶ ταῖς ἀμάξαις πίπτοντας, ἄχρι οὗ φόνῳ πολλῷ μόνις ἀνεκόπησαν.

Spotting the danger the young man Acrotatus, running even through the city, came around behind Ptolemy without being seen by him on account of some hills. He then attacked the rear and compelled them to turn and fight him. They were being pushed by one another into the ditch and falling around the carts, until with difficulty and much slaughter they were driven back.

6. *Pyrr.* 28.3

ἐθεῶντο δὲ οἱ τε πρεσβύτεροι καὶ τῶν γυναικῶν τὸ πλῆθος ἀριστεύοντα τὸν Ἀκρότατον. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀπήιε πάλιν διὰ τῆς πόλεως ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτοῦ τάξιν, αἵματος κατάπλεως καὶ γαῦρος, ὑπὸ τῆς νίκης ἐπηρμένους, καὶ μείζων ἔδοξε γεγονέναι καὶ καλλίων ταῖς Λακαίνας, καὶ τὴν Χιλονίδα τοῦ ἔρωτος ἐζήλουν. τῶν δὲ πρεσβυτέρων τινὲς ἐπηκολούθουν βοῶντες· “Οἶχε, Ἀκρότατε, καὶ οἶφε τὰν Χιλωνίδα· μόνον παῖδας ἀγαθοὺς τᾶ Σπάρτα ποιεῖ.”

The elders and the multitude of women saw Acrotatus performing an *aristeia*. And when he came back through the city to his station, full of blood and jubilant, buoyed by his victory, he even seemed to the Spartan women to have grown larger and more beautiful, and they envied Chilonis her love. And some of the elders followed after him shouting, “Go, Acrotatus, and have sex with Chilonis. Just make good sons for Sparta.”

7. *Pyrr.* 30.5

καὶ πρῶτος εἰσελάσας ἐνεπίμπλατο φόνου τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων, αἰεὶ μὲν τις ἄμαχος καὶ δεινὸς ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις φαινόμενος, τότε δὲ ὑπερβάλλον τόλμη καὶ βία τοὺς προτέρους ἀγῶνας.

And leading the charge he took his fill of Spartan slaughter, a man who had always appeared invincible and terrible in battle, but at that time surpassed his earlier contests in daring and violence.

8. *Pyrr.* 31.1

ὁ δὲ Πύρρος ὡσπερ ἐναγισμὸν τινα τῷ παιδί τελέσας καὶ λαμπρὸν ἐπιτάφιον ἀγωνισάμενος, καὶ πολὺ τῆς λύπης ἐν τῷ πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους ἀφείς θυμῷ, προῆγεν ἐπὶ τὸ Ἄργος.

And Pyrrhus, after accomplishing something like a sacrifice to the dead and celebrating a brilliant funeral contest for his son by dispatching much of his grief in anger upon his enemies, led off to Argos.

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