

# *"Loving too much": the text of Plutarch, Themistokles 2.3*

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TIMOTHY E. DUFF

# ‘LOVING TOO MUCH’: THE TEXT OF PLUTARCH, *THEMISTOKLES* 2. 3\*

Ziegler’s Teubner text of *Themistokles* 2. 3 reads:

ἐπεὶ καὶ τῶν παιδεύσεων τὰς μὲν ἡθοιοποιούς ἢ πρὸς ἡδονήν τινα καὶ χάριν  
ἐλευθέριον σπουδαζομένας ὀκνηρῶς καὶ ἀπροθύμως ἐξεμάνθανε, τῶν δ’ εἰς  
σύνεσιν ἢ προᾶξιν † λεγομένων δῆλος ἦν ὑπερερῶν παρ’ ἡλικίαν ὥς τῇ φύσει  
πιστεύων.

τινα om. Y | λεγομένην S μελετωμένων Holzapfel | ὑπερερῶν Madvig; ὑπερορῶν SY

For even when it came to his studies he used to learn reluctantly and unenthusiastically those which form character or are pursued with a view to any pleasant or liberal accomplishment, but he clearly had an excessive love beyond his years for what was said † with a view to intelligence and action, because he trusted his nature.

Ziegler followed Madvig and Hercher in emending ὑπερορῶν (‘disdaining’, ‘being indifferent to’), the reading of all good mss., to ὑπερερῶν (‘loving too much’)<sup>1</sup>. This emendation was accepted by Flacelière and Juneaux in their Budé edition (1961), and more recently by Marr (1998). It was rejected, however, by Holden in his commentary (1892), Perrin in her Loeb edition (1914), Frost in his commentary (1980) and Manfredini and Piccirilli in the Fondazione Lorenzo Valla edition (1983), all of whom print ὑπερορῶν. Furthermore Martin, in a short article of 1964, cited with approval by Piccirilli and Frost, attacked the emendation as unnecessary and giving poor sense<sup>2</sup>. The purpose of this paper is to readdress the textual problems of the passage,

\* This paper was written at the Freie Universität Berlin while I was a fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. I am indebted to Christopher Pelling for this comments.

<sup>1</sup> Madvig (1871) 88; Hercher (1878). Neither explained the reasons for their emendation. In fact, Madvig and Hercher were more concerned to argue, on the grounds of sense, against οὐχ ὑπερορῶν, the reading of Parisinus 1675 (E), which was printed by Sintenis (see below, p. 153). All subsequent editions justifiably reject the οὐχ, which is not found in the best mss.

<sup>2</sup> Martin (1964) 192–4; Frost (1980) and Piccirilli (1983) ad loc. Cf. Piccirilli (1982b) 212, approving Frost’s rejection of the emendation; Moles (1985) 260, approving Manfredini’s rejection of the emendation because of ‘the simple fact that ὑπερορῶν makes sense and ὑπερερῶν does not’.

and show that, while ὑπερορῶν cannot be rejected on linguistic grounds, ὑπερερῶν makes more sense, and suits the context better<sup>3</sup>.

Let us begin with the object of Themistokles' disdain (ὑπερορῶν) or love (ὑπερερῶν), namely τῶν δ' εἰς σύνεσιν ἢ προᾶξιν † λεγομένων. Ziegler marks this as unsatisfactory. There is no difficulty with εἰς σύνεσιν ἢ προᾶξιν ('with a view to intelligence or action')<sup>4</sup>, but the phrase as a whole is in context rather difficult. Some scholars have taken τῶν ... λεγομένων as neuter plural and the meaning as 'what was said with a view to intelligence and action'<sup>5</sup>. But after τῶν παιδεύσεων τὰς μὲν, one would most naturally take τῶν δ' as feminine plural, sc. παιδεύσεων. Martin takes it in this way, and also takes εἰς σύνεσιν ἢ προᾶξιν λεγομένων as parallel to ἐλευθεροῖς καὶ ἀστεύαις λεγομέναις in the next sentence (activities 'said to be liberal and cultivated'), and translates 'those studies that were reputed to develop practical intelligence or to prepare one for worldly affairs' [my letter spacing]<sup>6</sup>. But the two phrases are not really parallel as they stand: λεγομέναις [εἶναι] is not parallel to λεγομένων εἰς and the latter cannot mean 'reputed to develop'. Marr attempts to make some sense of λεγομένων and translates, 'those subjects which are taught with a view to ...'. But λέγω παιδεύσεις or similar in the sense of 'teach lessons' is unparalleled. The text must, then, as Ziegler suspected, be corrupt. Holzapfel's emendation of λεγομένων to μελετωμένων is a possibility ('lessons studied with a view to') (Holzapfel)<sup>7</sup>. A simpler solution might be simply to delete λεγομένων entirely and take τῶν with παιδεύσεων and sc. σπουδαζομένων from the earlier part of the sentence ('studies pursued with a view to ...'); the occurrence of λεγομέναις in the next sentence might help to explain the corruption. Alternatively one might insert an infinitive dependent on λεγομένων, such as συντείνειν ('said to conduce to') or συμβάλλεσθαι (said to contribute to)<sup>8</sup>.

Whichever solution we choose, it seems clear that this part of the sentence refers to activities or studies which promoted 'intelligence or action' (σύνεσιν ἢ προᾶξιν)<sup>9</sup>. But

<sup>3</sup> Further discussion of *Them.* 2 can be found in Duff (2008a), 3–11; cf. also idem (2008b) on *Them.* 1. On the *Themistokles* – *Camillus* pair as a whole, see Stadter (1983–4); Larmour (1992); Duff (forthcoming).

<sup>4</sup> For εἰς in this sense, cf. e.g. Plato, *Gorg.* 519e: παιδεύειν ἀνθρώπους εἰς ἀρετήν.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Perrin: 'to all that was said for the cultivation of sagacity or practical efficiency'. Holden: 'anything that was said referring to (the improvement of) the understanding or practical life'.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Carena's 'per quelli [insegnamenti] ritenuti utili ('considered useful') all'intelligenza e all'azione' [my italics]. Chambry in the Budé edition paraphrases as 'celles [les études] qui se rapportent, comme on dit, à l'intelligence et à l'action', thus avoiding spelling out the relationship between λεγομένων and εἰς.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the suggestions of Reiske (1774–1782), i. 835: γινομένων ('happening'), τεταγμένων ('prescribed') or συμβαλλομένων ('contributing').

<sup>8</sup> E.g. ps.-Plut. *De mus.* 1144c: τῆς ... συγγυμνασίας (λέγω δὲ τῆς συντεινούσης εἰς τὴν τοῦ ἡρμοσμένου ζύνειν ...); Plato, *Symp.* 184e, εἰς φρόνησιν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετὴν συμβάλλεσθαι; Arist. *Eud. Eth.* 1234a.

<sup>9</sup> Perhaps to be taken together as 'practical intelligence' or 'intelligence leading to practice' (a kind of *bendiadys*): cf. δραστήριον σύνεσιν in 2. 6. Cf. also Diod. 33. 7. 7 (πρακτικὴ σύνεσις); Polyb. 2. 47. 5 (κατανοῶν δὲ τὸν Ἀντίγονον καὶ προᾶξιν καὶ σύνεσιν ἔχοντα). Martin (1961) and (1964) 193 (quoted above), translates σύνεσις itself as 'practical intelligence'.

is Themistokles said to be ‘despising’ (ὑπερῶν) or ‘loving too much’ (ὑπερῶν) such things? Martin argued against ὑπερῶν both on linguistic grounds and on grounds of sense. First, he claimed that active forms of the verb ὑπερῶν were unattested. He was aware of ὑπερηράσθη in Aelian, *VH* 12. 1, 120. 13 Hercher (= 127. 14 Dils): χρόνῳ δὲ ὕστερον ὑπερηράσθη μὲν ταύτης ὁ Κῦρος, ἀντηράτο δὲ καὶ ὑπὸ ἐκείνης. He took it, however, with LSJ, as the aorist of the deponent ὑπερέραμαι not of ὑπερῶν. But ἡράσθη is the usual aorist of ἐράω, so ὑπερηράσθη here could equally be regarded as a form of ὑπερῶν. But there are also a few examples of unambiguously active forms of ὑπερῶν. Most relevant here is Proklos, *Commentary on Plato’s Republic* I 171. 11 Kroll, where Plato is described as τῆς Ὀμηρικῆς ποιήσεως ὑπερῶντα. So ὑπερῶν is not inadmissible as a form<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, a parallel for ὑπερῶν in the sense of excessive commitment is provided by ὑπεργαπῶν, which is well attested in Plutarch: e.g. *Cato Min.* 4. 2, where it is used of Cato the Younger’s excessive and damaging attachment to his principles<sup>11</sup>.

Martin also claimed that ‘the overall sense of chapter two’ was against ὑπερῶν. He argued that, ‘one of the key points of chapter two is that Themistocles relied exclusively on his untutored, native *synesis* throughout his boyhood and even into his youth and that only later did he resort to *paideia*. To introduce a conjecture that makes Plutarch say that as a boy Themistocles exhibited his confidence in his *physis* by his devotion to that aspect of his *paideia* which dealt with *synesis* is to introduce an at least apparent inconsistency that demands explanation’<sup>12</sup>. Piccirilli, in his commentary, repeated Martin’s objections: having Themistokles specially interested in his studies would, he claimed, contradict the way he is otherwise characterised, which has him despising *paideia* and trusting only in his natural endowments.

This objection, I hope to show, is faulty on two counts. First, it elides the difference implied between what are presented as two distinct types of studies, and the results they produce. On the one hand, there are ‘those studies which form character (ἡθοποιούς)<sup>13</sup> or are pursued with a view to any pleasant or liberal accomplishment’. On the other hand, there is the more practical kind of study, which aims not at the improvement of character, but at the acquisition of practical skill or cleverness. Martin’s objection also misunderstands the logic of the chapter, which sets up a contrast between good *ēthos* and the education which might produce it, and *physis*, and the practical skills with which Themistokles was born. The passage has Themistokles neglecting real education but concentrating on improving these latter skills and abilities. In the rest of this paper, I hope to demonstrate why a contrast between

<sup>10</sup> Other examples are admittedly late and few: Theodoros Hexapterygos *Rhet.*, *Progymnasmata* 1. 30 (τῆς κόρης ὑπερῶν); Photios, *Fragmenta in epistulam ad Romanos* 493 (ὑπερῶν αὐτοῦ).

<sup>11</sup> See Duff (1999) 157.

<sup>12</sup> Martin (1964) 193 and 194.

<sup>13</sup> For ἡθοποιός in this sense, see Duff (1999) 37 and the passages cited there. Elsewhere in Plutarch’s works, the mark of real education is that it moulds and forms character (ἡθος). This is laid out most explicitly in the *On moral virtue* (Περὶ ἡθικῆς ἀρετῆς), e.g. 44 c–d.

Themistokles' attitude to these two types of education is essential to the logic of the passage. I also hope to demonstrate that the use of an erotic metaphor to describe Themistokles' enthusiasm for the practical is consistent both with the wider Themistokles-tradition and with the imagery used of him elsewhere in Plutarch's Life.

### Practical training and true education

*Them.* 2 is a discussion of Themistokles' character, as revealed in his childhood and in his attitude to education<sup>14</sup>. It begins with the claim that Themistokles was 'by nature intelligent (συνετός)', but 'by choice fond of great action and politics' (μεγαλοπράγμων καὶ πολιτικός) (2. 1)<sup>15</sup>. The μέν and the δέ mark a contrast between *physis* ('nature') and *proairesis*, or character, which will continue throughout the passage<sup>16</sup>. Themistokles' intelligence and interest in practical action are confirmed and illustrated in the next sentence, where Plutarch remarks on his tendency not to play with the other children but instead to spend his free time composing speeches of prosecution or defence: he has an eye to the practical from the beginning. Note that the point here is not just that Themistokles was shrewd or intelligent by nature; he also acted on it. In fact, the literal meaning of the word *proairesis* ('choice') is probably important here: Themistokles' interest in the practical is deliberate. And it is because of this precocious, deliberate concentration on practical skills ('hence', ὅθεν), that Themistokles' teacher tells him, 'You will not be anything small, my child, but great, for sure, either good or bad' (2. 2)<sup>17</sup>.

The mention of the teacher provides a smooth transition to discussion of his education (2. 3), and the point here should be pushing the same way. This is what is implied by the καί in καὶ τῶν παιδεύσεων: 'even in his studies'<sup>18</sup>. We are thus expecting to have mention made of his concentration on practical action. The manuscript reading ὑπερορῶν would deny, however, any such concentration. It would also destroy the contrast implied between them by the μέν ... δέ structure, and would have both parts of the sentence meaning much the same, i.e. that Themistokles rejected all studies. While this might be possible grammatically, it would go against the logic of the passage to this point, and disrupt the smooth continuation of the contrast begun in

<sup>14</sup> See Duff (2008a) 3–11.

<sup>15</sup> τῇ μὲν φύσει συνετός, τῇ δὲ προαιρέσει μεγαλοπράγμων καὶ πολιτικός. A reworking of Thuc. 1. 138. 3: see Martin (1961) 327–31.

<sup>16</sup> On *proairesis* see Gill (1983) 479–80; (1996) 71–2, 249–50. On *proairesis* in Plutarch, see Duff (1999) 39, with further bibliography; (2008a) 4.

<sup>17</sup> οὐδὲν ἔσει, παῖ, σὺ μικρόν, ἀλλὰ μέγα πάντως ἀγαθὸν ἢ κακόν (Ziegler's text). The Attic form ἔσει is Fuhr's emendation for ἔση, the reading of the mss. of the tripartite recension (Y), presumably on the basis that this better explains the reading of the Seitenstettensis manuscript (S), ἐς αἰ. It is accepted by all subsequent editors. But elsewhere Ziegler prints only the *koine* form ἔση, which should be accepted here.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Fuhr (1880) ad loc.: 'ἐπεὶ καὶ bestätigt das ausgesprochene Urtheil'.

2. 1<sup>19</sup>. There μέν ... δέ marked a contrast between nature and character. Here, if we read ὑπερορῶν, the μέν and δέ would merely mark coordination ('both ... and'), and the second half of the contrast would be unmarked ('he rejected all education, since he put his trust in nature'). But in fact the μέν clause concerns those studies which might have improved Themistokles' character ('character-forming' studies), whereas the δέ clause concerns the very qualities of which Themistokles' nature was said in 2. 1 to consist. It would make much more sense to say that, even in his studies, he continued to show the same bias towards those activities in which he naturally excelled ('because he trusted his nature'), but rejected the kind of real education that would have moulded his character<sup>20</sup>.

Furthermore, if we accept the manuscript reading it is hard to see how the phrase παρ' ἡλικίαν could be interpreted. Themistokles would then be said to despise or be indifferent to practical studies 'beyond his years' – as though such disdain were a feature normally gained with age<sup>21</sup>. This might explain why the copyist of the 14<sup>th</sup>-century ms. Parisinus 1675 (E), or of an earlier ancestor, has inserted οὐχ before ὑπερορῶν ('not looking down on, contrary to [what one would expect of someone of his] age'), presumably in an attempt to get some sense out of the sentence as it stood – though this would render the next phrase ('since he trusted in his nature') very difficult<sup>22</sup>. If we accept the emendation to ὑπερερῶν ('loving too much') on the other hand, παρ' ἡλικίαν now makes perfect sense. A passionate attention to practical studies at an early age could well be described as unusual in a youngster<sup>23</sup>.

The rest of the passage continues the notion of Themistokles' lack of real education and concentration on practical training. The next sentence (2. 4) has Themistokles claiming that, although he did not know music, he knew how to make a small city great: that, in other words, although he did not have a liberal education he had learnt

<sup>19</sup> So Marr (1998) ad loc.: 'The sense is that Themistocles, who was reluctant to learn the character-forming elements of education, had by contrast a great passion ("far beyond his years") for those elements which develop intelligence (σύνεσις) and practical efficiency (πρᾶξις). Compare 2. 1, "by nature intelligent", "life of action and politics".'

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Fuhr (1880) ad loc.: 'das auf allgemeine Bildung und Erheiterung Abzweckende erlernte er träge widerwillig, schenkte dagegen den Lehren der praktischen Staatsklugheit eine über sein Alter hinausgehende Beachtung, im Vertrauen auf seine Anlagen'.

<sup>21</sup> Perrin translates, 'he clearly showed an indifference beyond his years' and Carena, 'dimostrava una grande noncuranza, in contrasto con l'età sua'. Waterfield translates 'he showed an unchildlike contempt† for a merely theoretical approach to intelligence and practical action', but rightly marks the text as corrupt.

<sup>22</sup> Reiske (1774–1782) i. 835, suggested emending ὥς το πῶς and punctuating, ὑπερορῶν, παρ' ἡλικίαν πῶς τῇ φύσει πιστεῦον ('trusting in his nature to an extent somewhat beyond his years'), but 'trusting one's nature' is no more a feature normally gained with age than is 'looking down on studies that form character'.

<sup>23</sup> παρ' ἡλικίαν when used of the young always implies precociousness: doing something at a younger age than is normally expected. The implications can be positive (e.g. *Alex.* 4. 8: Alexander's spirit is 'serious and lofty beyond his years'), negative (e.g. *Ant.* 2. 5: the young Antony amassed debts 'beyond his years') or ambiguous (e.g. *Cato Min.* 1. 2: the young Cato's impulses had an 'effective strength beyond his years'). Some more examples are given by Holden ad loc. and Frazier (1996) 75.

practical political skills very well<sup>24</sup>. The story is introduced by another ὅθεν ('hence') and so is meant to confirm the statements of the previous sentence, and this works best if the previous sentence also had him neglecting liberal education and concentrating on the practical<sup>25</sup>. Plutarch then goes on to discuss Themistokles' teachers (2. 5). Themistokles cannot, Plutarch claims, on chronological grounds have studied under Anaxagoras and Melissos. Rather he studied under Mnesiphilos, who, Plutarch reports (2. 6), taught 'what was then called wisdom' (τὴν τότε καλουμένην σοφίαν), but was in reality 'political cleverness (δεινότητα πολιτικὴν) and active intelligence (δραστήριον σύνεσιν)' – that is, those very features on which he concentrated in his lessons (cf. σύνεσιν ἢ προᾶξιν)<sup>26</sup>. The contrast here, then, between intelligence (*synesis*, *deinotes*) and wisdom (*sophia*) is aligned with the contrast, central to this passage, between practical training and true education, and between nature and character. His studying under Mnesiphilos is an example of his devotion to such practical training<sup>27</sup>.

In fact, this pattern in which a gifted individual pays great attention to practical training, often military or rhetorical, and rejects or is uninterested in true character-forming studies, often conceived of in terms of literature or music, can be paralleled elsewhere in Plutarch's *Lives*. The clearest example, perhaps, is the young Philopoimen. Despite benefiting from tuition by two Platonic philosophers (1. 2–5), Philopoimen's character was flawed (ch. 2). 'For' Plutarch tell us, 'from his childhood he loved soldiering and devoted himself to lessons useful to soldiering' (3. 2). Later in life, Plutarch goes on, 'when he had freed himself from teachers and tutors' (4. 1), he spent his time only in soldiering and outdoor work, and rejected all forms of literature which did not have a practical application (4. 8). 'This man', Plutarch concludes, 'seems to have pursued military matters more than was necessary' and looked down on other men as inactive (or 'impractical', ἀπράκτων) (4. 10). Plutarch makes similar points about the unbalanced education and flawed characters of Pyrrhos and Marius (*Pyrrh.* 8. 3–7, *Mar.* 2. 1–2). In the former case, Pyrrhos is said to be 'continually studying and philosophising' on warfare and leadership, as though it were 'the most royal of lessons', but counted other studies 'to be of no value' (*Pyrrh.* 8. 6). An anecdote follows, similar in tone and purpose to one about Themistokles: when Pyrrhos was asked at a symposium to judge the merits of two musicians, he dismissed the question and made a reply about generalship (8. 7)<sup>28</sup>. But perhaps the most striking

<sup>24</sup> The anecdote was plainly well-known and goes back at least to Ion of Chios (*FGrH* 392 F 13 = Plut. *Kim.* 9. 1). For discussion, see Marcaccini (2001).

<sup>25</sup> Thus Holden, who accepts ὑπεροχῶν, is forced to take ὅθεν as 'referring [only] to the former clause of the preceding sentence: i.e. because he did not learn μουσική etc. in the usual way'.

<sup>26</sup> *Deinotēs* is cleverness or skill, even cunning – as Aristotle puts it, the ability to attain one's aim, whether good or bad (*NE* 1144a). See Frazier (1996) 210–12; Duff (2008a) 6. For the contrast of true education and the teaching of mere *deinotēs*, cf. *Per.* 4. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Plutarch also says (2. 6) that Mnesiphilos' successors transferred the application of his teaching 'from deeds to words'. So what Mnesiphilos taught was action.

<sup>28</sup> For further analyses of these passages, see Duff (2008a) 11–18.



parallel for the combination of intelligence and attention to practical training with lack of true education, and the association of this educational imbalance with trusting or following one's *physis*, can be found in a fragment of Diodoros, which discusses the Lusitanian leader Viriathus (33. 7. 7)<sup>29</sup>. Viriathus, says the author, was a master of the pithy remark, 'since he had no experience of formal education (ἐγκυκλίου παιδείας), but was educated in practical intelligence (πρακτικῇ ... συνέσει)'<sup>30</sup>. 'For', the passage continues, 'the speech of a man who lives according to nature (ἀκολούθως τῇ φύσει) is concise ...'<sup>31</sup>.

### Themistokles and the erotic metaphor

We have seen, then, that in terms of the logic of the passage ὑπερερῶν seems preferable. We have also seen that there are parallels to the pattern of a rejection of true education combined with a concentration on practical training and intelligence. I would like finally to demonstrate that support for ὑπερερῶν, with its erotic metaphor, is found in the broader literary context, that is, the literary tradition on Themistokles, and in the language in which Plutarch himself describes Themistokles' character and ambition in the next chapter of the Life.

First, a passage of Aelian makes clear that there was a tradition of seeing Themistokles' passion for action in erotic terms. Aelian records the following story: 'For after being disowned by his father, Themistokles forsook his intemperance and began to behave with somewhat more moderation, and abandoned his harlots and began to fall in love with another object (ἦρα δὲ ἔρωτα ἔτερον) – Athenian politics' (VH 2. 12)<sup>32</sup>. It seems probable that both Plutarch and Aelian are drawing on the same source or the same tradition. Plutarch mentions Themistokles' rejection by his father in 2. 8, and his sudden temperance in chapter 3<sup>33</sup>. It is therefore likely that Plutarch found the notion of Themistokles' being 'in love with' action or politics in at least one of his sources – perhaps combined, as in Aelian, with the notion of a rejection of more corporeal erotic passions<sup>34</sup>. If Plutarch did write ὑπερερῶν here, then, he has changed

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Constant. Porphy. *De sent.* 388. It may derive originally from Poseidonios.

<sup>30</sup> τῆς μὲν ἐγκυκλίου παιδείας ἄπειρον ὄντα, πρακτικῇ δὲ συνέσει πεπαιδευμένον. The term ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία (or ἐγκύκλια παιδεύματα) is a common one for general liberal education, Plutarch's τῶν παιδεύσεων τὰς μὲν ἡθοποιούσας ἢ πρὸς ἡδονὴν τινα καὶ χάριν ἐλευθέριον. See *Alex.* 7. 2, with Hamilton (1969) ad loc. The link between ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία and 'liberal' (ἐλευθεριος) education or 'free-born' (ἐλεύθεροι) students is made explicit at ps.-Plut. *De lib. educ.* 7c; Strabo 1. 1. 22; cf. ps.-Luc. *Amores* 45.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. 33. 7. 3 and 5, 'since he brought out his words from a self-taught and unspoilt nature' (ἐξ αὐτοδιδάκτου καὶ ἀδιαστρόφου φύσεως), and Sacks (1990) 37–38.

<sup>32</sup> ἦρα δὲ ἔρωτα ἔτερον τὸν τῆς πολιτείας τῶν Ἀθηναίων.

<sup>33</sup> The story of his rejection, mentioned also by the Socratic writer Aischines (*SSR* VI A 48), is almost certainly not historically reliable: see Piccirilli (1982a).

<sup>34</sup> The two authors share several other anecdotes. Details in Podlecki (1975) 128–9 and 141.



what he found in the tradition from a point about politics to one about studies in preparation for politics<sup>35</sup>.

Indeed, the metaphor of Themistokles' *eros* for practical action or success is prominent in the next chapter of the Life, where Plutarch describes Themistokles' entry into politics. Plutarch begins by claiming that, despite his father's attempts to dissuade him, 'politics quickly and vigorously laid hold of Themistokles' (ἄψασθαι τοῦ Θεμιστοκλέους) and 'an intense impulse (ὄρμη) towards glory seemed to master him' (3. 1). According to normal usage of ἄπτεσθαι, one would expect Themistokles to be the subject of this verb (e.g. *Them.* 25. 5, πρὶν ἄπτεσθαι τῆς πολιτείας). Instead, he is here presented as the passive victim of a strong desire for practical action<sup>36</sup>. The language of desire is continued immediately afterwards, when Themistokles' rivalry with Aristides is traced back to an instance of 'real' *eros* – their both falling in love (ἠρώσθησαν) with the same boy, Stesilaos of Keos (3. 2). A few lines later erotic metaphors are again prominent. Themistokles is described as 'a lover (ἐραστής) of great deeds' (3. 4). Consequently, after the battle of Marathon, he is lost in thought and stays up all night; he declares to troubled friends that he cannot sleep for thinking of Miltiades' trophy at Marathon (3. 4–5). The image is of the obsessed lover, lying awake<sup>37</sup>: Miltiades' trophy has become, metaphorically, an object of passion<sup>38</sup>. The metaphor of erotic love as an image for Themistokles' devotion to the practical, begun in 2. 3 with ὑπερερῶν, is thus continued and developed. Themistokles really was passionately 'in love with' the practical and with practical success.

<sup>35</sup> For *eros* used metaphorically, see e.g. Thuc. 3. 45. 5, 6. 13. 1 and 6. 24. 3 (desire for military conquest); Pind. *Pyth.* 3. 19–23, Lysias 12. 78, Theok. 10. 8, Plut. *Pyrrh.* 26. 1 and *Mar.* 45. 11 ('love for what is absent'). See also below, nn. 37–38.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Moles (1985) 261.

<sup>37</sup> For sleeplessness as an erotic motif, see McKeown (1989), note on Ovid *Am.* 1. 2. 1–4. A parallel for the erotic metaphor can also be seen in *Dion.* 11. 1. Plutarch has already talked of the young Dionysios II's lack of education in chs. 9–10; now Dionysios is seized by 'a keen and frenzied passion' (ἔρως ... ὀξύς καὶ περιμανής) for Sokrates' teaching and company. His interest does not last: *eros*, in Plutarch, tends to imply lack of reasoning and so instability.

<sup>38</sup> Plutarch mentions Themistokles' emulation of Miltiades, in the same language, also in *Prof. in virt.* 84b–c; *De cap. ex inim.* 92c; *Reg. et imp. apophth.* 184f–185a (long considered spurious, but see Flacelière 1976, 100–3; Beck 2002); *Praec. ger.* 800b; it is also found in Cic. *Tusc.* 4. 19. 44 and Val. Max. 8. 14 ext. 1. See Pérez Jiménez (2008) and Stadter (2008) 59–60 for analysis. Cf. *Marc.* 28. 4–5 on Marcellus' passion to fight Hannibal: 'For no-one else ever had a such a passion for anything (ἔρωτα τοσοῦτον ἠρώσθη) ... This was his dream at night'; *Per.* 20. 4 (based on Thuc. 6. 13. 1 and 6. 24. 3), 'Many were possessed by that mad and inauspicious love for Sicily (ὁ δύσερως ἐκείνος ἦδη καὶ δύσποτος ἔρως) ... Some also dreamed of Tuscany and Carthage ...'

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### Abstract

This paper argues that the emendation ὑπερερῶν for ms. ὑπερορῶν in *Them.* 2. 3, although rejected by many editors and commentators, should be accepted. The manuscripts have Themistokles 'despising' practical studies, that is studies which promoted 'intelligence and action'. But this makes little sense in context and disrupts the logic of the whole chapter, which presupposes a contrast between real education, which Themistokles rejects, and practical activities, on which he concentrates and for which he was suited by nature. It is much more plausible that Themistokles is presented as having 'an excessive love' for practical studies. Indeed, this combination – rejection of true education and enthusiasm for practical training – characterises several other subjects of Plutarch, while erotic metaphors are used to describe Themistokles' obsession with practical success in the next chapter.

Keywords: Plutarch, textual criticism, Themistokles, eros, education.