

Lien Van Geel

Andromache's Swoon: the Fainting Female in Homer and Plutarch*

ABSTRACT: Graeco-Roman fainting is a generally understudied subject. Homeric syncope appear in an overview by Alfons Nehring 1947, who notes that the percentage of male fainting incidents is considerable, whereas female episodes are less common. Although Homeric fainting is not strictly gendered, it typically functions as a commentary on a character's weakened vulnerability when the character in question is either elderly or female. This article examines one crucial episode of female fainting through the character of Andromache in *Iliad* 22 and explores her subsequent influence in Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. Plutarch develops this paradigm in the *Lives* of Pompey and Brutus, as the works feature lively moments of feminine lament, fear, and collapse. Plutarch's anecdotes of the swoons from the Late Republican Julia, Cornelia, and Porcia are prime instances of embodied emotion that can be traced back to Andromache's swoon. Ultimately, the transformation of the Andromache paradigm perceived in Plutarch illustrates how this literary tradition of the gendered swoon has evolved gradually.

KEYWORDS: Homer, Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, *syncope*, fear, Andromache, Julia, Cornelia, Porcia.

Introduction

The anti-conformist 1970 rock n' roll song «Sweet Jane» by The Velvet Underground challenges cinematic clichés as follows: «You know that women never really faint / And that villains always blink their eyes». By the seventies, the fainting female had been comfortably engrained in the cultural imagination, but to what point can we trace back this cliché? For one thing, Victorian literature has had a significant impact on the cultural trope of female fainting that we still know today¹. These swooners were, of course, by no means the

* I wish to thank Thomas Kuhn-Treichel and Sotera Fornaro for the invitation to contribute to this special volume and for their judicious editorship, as well as the anonymous reviewers, and Brett Stine for his helpful bibliographical suggestions on Homer. Lastly, my heartfelt thanks are due to Laurens van der Wiel for his invaluable comments and insights on early drafts of this contribution.

¹ For the trope of the Victorian fainting lady and its association with feebleness as an ideal, see Thorpe 1991 and Van Dijk & Wieling 2009. For ancient medical views on *syncope* and fainting, often associated with feebleness as a symptom, see Salazar 2001 and Papavramidou & Tziakas 2010. Recent medical studies, however, note that fainting generally affects more female than male

first to succumb temporarily to their excitement or suffering. Their ancient Graeco-Roman sisters, both mythical and historical, are equally portrayed as swooning because they are unable to endure their excessive emotions. To name just two early instances of literary female *syncope*, Andromache's swoon in *Il.* 22.475 or the psychosomatic suffering of Sappho's poetic persona in Fragment 31 come to mind.

Homeric swoons have overall received the most attention: Alfons Nehring 1947 provides an overview of instances of *syncope* in Homeric epic, and Elton Barker 2011 focuses on Sarpedon's swoon and its significant, innovative position in the narrative in relation to the fainting of Hector, Aeneas, and Andromache². These scholars reveal that Homeric epic fainting is not necessarily a female embodied experience, as multiple warriors lose consciousness after having been severely wounded. Fainting can thus have causes that range from inherently medical ailments to severe wounds and extreme emotion. The latter type of emotional fainting will be the focus of this article. The aim of this article is to uncover ancient trends in female fainting through the character of Andromache specifically and her subsequent influence in Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*.

Even with the Homeric articles above, Graeco-Roman fainting seems to have received relatively little scholarly attention, whereas, for instance, ancient tears have been subject to more academic scrutiny³. Additionally, Aeneas' words *sunt lacrimae rerum* (*Aen.* 1.462) have taken on something of a life of its own⁴. The *Aeneid* as a work itself was reported to have collapsed the boundary between narrative and audience and mind and body. Virgil's recital of the end of *Aeneid* 6 – the *tu Marcellus eris* during the Parade of the Heroes – famously caused Augustus' sister Octavia Minor to faint as she was unable to bear the lugubrious cameo of her prematurely deceased son in the epic:

patients; see Van Dijk & Wieling 2009 (following Ganzeboom et al 2003) and Raj 2020. Salazar 2001, p. 171, however, notes that ancient women were not deemed to have fainted more easily, or in her words, that «Ohnmachten zwar auch in den gynäkologischen Schriften erwähnt werden, es aber nirgendwo behauptet wird, daß Frauen leichter oder häufiger bewußtlos werden als Männer (wie man es aus späteren Jahrhunderten gewohnt ist)».

² See Nehring 1947, pp. 106-121 and Barker 2011, pp. 2-14. Such instances of Homeric fainting prompt questions about the nature of consciousness and the implications of the loss thereof, and the associations between death and fainting: see Clarke 1999, pp. 139-147, and de Jong 2012, pp. 182, 185. For Homeric falling, see Purves 2019.

³ See Fögen 2009 for a compiled volume on ancient weeping. The «Boys Don't Cry»-cliché, it turns out, is a fairly recent development, as public crying did not become taboo until the nineteenth century: see Rey 2015, p. 226 n. 2 and de Libero 2009, pp. 209-210 for attitudes towards weeping and gender.

⁴ See Wharton 2008.

Cui tamen multo post perfectaue demum materia tres omnino libros recitavit, primum, quartum et sextum, sed hunc notabili Octaviae adfectione, quae cum recitationi interesset, ad illos de filio suo versus, «tu Marcellus eris», defecisse fertur atque aegre focilata.

(Don. Auct.: Suet. *Vita Vergili* 32-33)⁵

But, not until much later when he had finally some material, Virgil at last recited three books in their entirety to Augustus – the second, fourth, and sixth – but the latter with a remarkable effect on Octavia, who, as she was present at the recitation, is reported to have fainted at those famous verses about her son, «You shall be Marcellus»; she was revived only with difficulty.

The historicity of this anecdote is often disputed⁶. Even so, the impact of the eulogy for the unfortunate youth suggests how intensely audience members are imagined having engaged with the text's performance and its possibilities for immersive experiences. This likely fabled swoon is then an illustration of how, as Douglas Cairns and Damien Nelis 2017, p. 16 puts it, «there is no absolute gulf between the material and the textual, the physical and the mental, in the study of emotion». Octavia's reaction to the *tu Marcellus eris* of *Aeneid* 6 is a prime example of an immersive experience where emotion becomes embodied.

So too, roughly a century later, Plutarch, in, e.g., the *Lives* of Pompey and Brutus, builds upon this trend, as the works sport lively moments of feminine lament and fear and, remarkably for our purposes, fainting. Plutarch's anecdotes of the swoons from the Late Republican Julia, Cornelia, and Porcia are instances of embodied emotion. Upon further examination, we see glimpses of Andromache recurring in these matrons' physical and verbal reactions: I will demonstrate Plutarch's literary innovation on this theme. This article will examine female fainting in the two genres that are combined in the Octavia episode, on the one hand, Homeric epic, on the other in a selection of Plutarch's *Lives*. Thus, in reading this selection of instances of swooning in Plutarch against the paradigmatic Homeric background, I will offer new insights on these passages and their relation to one another in the process. Ultimately, the transformation of the Andromache paradigm perceived in Plutarch is an example of how the gendered swoon has evolved gradually.

⁵ Text from Rolfe 1914; the translation is my own.

⁶ Servius (*ad Aen.* 6.861), in fact, claims that Octavia and Augustus had been weeping and does not mention any type of swooning. For recent treatments of the Octavia episode, see Ziogas 2017, Hope 2020, pp. 276-281 and Hallett 2020, p. 122.

1. The Epic Faint

The study of emotions in epic has been one of the catalysts of emotion studies in classical studies. Emotions are crucial driving forces of epic: Achilles' *mênis* launches the problem of the *Iliad*, whilst Juno's *ira* steers the course of the majority of the *Aeneid* and Aeneas' final murderous outburst continue to occupy scholars for centuries⁷. Classical fainting, while common, is a generally understudied subject. Homeric syncopes appear in an overview by Alfons Nehring 1947, who indicates that the percentage of male fainting incidents is considerable, whereas female fainting moments are less common. One might call this a logical finding for the *Iliad*, especially if one considers that most of these swoons are battle-related. Take, for instance, Sarpedon's swoon in *Iliad* 5: *τὸν δὲ λίπε ψυχή, κατὰ δ' ὀφθαλμῶν κέχυτ' ἀχλὺς* (*Il.* 5.696)⁸. In Homer, the loss of one's *ψυχή* usually denotes death, instead of this temporary state of unconsciousness. Other breath-taking phrases and verbs occur: Christine Salazar 2001, pp. 169-172 focuses on appearances of *syncope* in the context of trauma and surgery in Galen, while Elton Barker 2011, p. 2 provides a helpful overview of descriptions of fainting elsewhere, for instance, in the Hippocratic corpus and beyond. *λιποθυμία* and *λιποψυχία* (as well as *λιποψυχέω*) are common term for this physical reaction, and, according to Michael Clarke 1999, p. 147, fainting also appears in the range of meanings of *ἀποψύχω*⁹. While this article will not investigate swoons in Latin literature, it is worth noting that verbs such as *languéo* and *stupefacio* are common but that linguistic parallels occur between Greek and Latin. That is, *intermorior* preserves the liminal state

⁷ Much ink has rightly been spilled on the topic. For just a few studies on Achilles', Juno's, Aeneas' and Turnus' wrath, see Braund and Most 2004, pp. 50-75, 208-229, Cairns and Nelis 2017, p. 16, de Bakker-van den Berg-Klooster 2022, p. 5, and Agri 2022, pp. 3-7. Allan 2018, pp. 59-60 applies theories of cognitive narratologist Marie-Laure Ryan and cognitive psychologist Rolf Zwaan onto the Homeric epic and identifies a host of immersive narrative strategies. Most recently, see especially Fornaro 2024, pp. 5-11 for a embodied emotion reading of Achilles' wrath as having an 'emotional quality and bodily resonance'; *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Greek Epic* (2024), which features an entire section on 'epic feelings'.

⁸ Barker 2011, in the most extensive recent study of Homeric swoons, investigates the nature and significance of Sarpedon's swoon through similar uses of the underlined phrase. See also Purves 2019, pp. 63-77 on falling in Homer (esp. p. 41 n15 on the different falling gestures of Andromache and her association with warriors, beginning with Segal 1971, pp. 43-51, and p. 155 n9). Kuhn-Treichel 2024, p. 26 focuses on the dissolution of and loss of control over Homeric bodies in the line *λύτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ* and demonstrates its cognitive and embodied effectiveness in the narrative: 'da una prospettiva moderna la rappresentazione stereotipata di alcune emozioni può sembrare strana, persino primitiva, ma da un punto di vista cognitivo si può vedere in essa una strategia narrativa efficace, poiché le espressioni incarnate contribuiscono a rendere percepibili le esperienze di perdita di controllo del corpo'.

⁹ See Barker 2011, p. 2 n1.

between life and death in the moment of loss of consciousness; *linqui animo* indicates the interest in the plight of one's spirit in this passive state.

1.1. Andromache's Swoon

Let us now turn to the first fainting incident in this article, namely Andromache's swoon in *Iliad* 22. The context is as follows: Achilles has just slain Hector and is dragging his body behind his chariot. The principal Trojan characters in *Iliad* 22 then commence the informal mourning, which will be reprised more formally at the end of *Iliad* 24¹⁰. Grief is a major theme in *Iliad* 22: Andromache's tears during Hector's farewell speech in *Iliad* 6 foreshadow both his death and her mourning abilities¹¹. Initially, Hecuba and Priam lead the lament for Hector. This type of lament makes no gender distinction: the expression of emotion is just as intense for either gender in this episode¹². Andromache was not yet aware of Hector's death, as she – the picture of domestic virtue – had been weaving in her inner room and preparing a bath for her husband (*Il.* 22.438-446). It had not been until her kinspeople's wailing reaches her that she started to panic. The disturbing aural impression causes a physical reaction in her body: she starts to reel and drops her spindle: κωκυτοῦ δ' ἤκουσε καὶ οἰμωγῆς ἀπὸ πύργου· / τῆς δ' ἐλελίχθη γυῖα, χαμαὶ δέ οἱ ἔκπεσε κερκίς («But she heard the shrieking and lamentation from the rampart, / and her limbs trembled, and the shuttle fell from her hand to the floor» *Il.* 22.447-448)¹³. This physical reaction, then, is the forerunner of her actual swoon, which occurs after her address to her handmaids. In this address, she identifies her mother-in-law's ululations as the catalyst for her distress and thus reiterates the observation of the epic's narrator. As she sets out to investigate the situation at hand, she starts to describe her psychosomatic symptoms as follows:

δεῦτε, δὴ μοι ἔπεσθον, ἴδωμ' ὅτιν' ἔργα τέτυκται.
αἰδοίης ἐκυρῆς ὁπὸς ἔκλυον, ἐν δ' ἐμοὶ αὐτῇ
στήθεσι πάλλεται ἥτορ ἀνὰ στόμα¹⁴, νέρθε δὲ γούνα

¹⁰ For lament in the *Iliad*, see Alexiou 2002, p. 2, Tsagalis 2004, Segal 1971, Muich 2011, p. 12, and Hauser 2024.

¹¹ For Hector's farewell and the emotions it arouses, see Föllinger 2009, p. 33.

¹² Föllinger 2009, p. 21 and, esp., p. 25: «there is no difference between the weeping of men and that of women: when Priam and Hecabe, Hector's parents, see that their son is about to attack Achilles and will not let himself be dissuaded from doing so, they both weep».

¹³ The text is from the *Loeb Classical Library* (LCL) edition; for my own translation, I consulted and regularly followed de Jong 2012. See also de Jong 2012, p. 177 for the shock and panic in these verses.

¹⁴ Compare to Sappho's later description of her symptoms in *Sappho* 31.5-6 (text from LCL):

πήγνυται· ἐγγὺς δὴ τι κακὸν Πριάμοιο τέκεσσιν.
 αἶ γὰρ ἀπ' οὐατος εἶη ἐμεῦ ἔπος· ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἰνῶς
 δεῖδω μὴ δὴ μοι θρασὺν Ἑκτορα δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς
 μῶνον ἀποτμήξας πόλιος πεδίονδε δίηται,
 καὶ δὴ μιν καταπαύσῃ ἀγνηορίας ἀλεγεινῆς
 [...].
 (*Iliad* 22.450-457)

Come on, you two, and follow me, so that I may see what deeds have been done. I heard the voice of my revered mother-in-law, and, in my very breast, my heart leaps up to my mouth, and underneath my knees are locked¹⁵; there is certainly some trouble near at hand for the children of Priam. May my word be away from my ear, but I fear quite terribly that godlike Achilles may have put my over-confident Hector to flight by himself alone, cut off from the city, to the plain and has by now made him cease from his grievous excess of courage [...].

Andromache's reaction starts off as fairly rational. Even though she has a premonition of Hector's imminent demise (her words indeed echo both those of her earlier fears in *Iliad* 6 and the description in *Iliad* 22.189-198¹⁶), even though she experiences such disturbing sensations, she beckons her handmaids to confirm whether her anxiety is warranted. Only then is she willing to yield to this list of anxiety-driven symptoms. She attaches more value to gathering information through sight than through hearing, as she does not trust the sound of her kinspeople's wailing. Her reaction here is worth comparing to her behaviour in *Iliad* 6.496-502, where she prematurely and proleptically mourns Hector with her handmaids. Here, too, she starts to describe Hector in the past tense before confirming that he indeed has died. As she investigates the situation, the following onrush of emotions kicks in:

Ὡς φαμένη μεγάροιο διέσσυτο μαινάδι ἴση,
 παλλομένη κραδίην· ἅμα δ' ἀμφίπολοι κίον αὐτῇ.
 αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πύργον τε καὶ ἀνδρῶν ἴξεν ὄμιλον,
 ἔστη παπτήνας· ἐπὶ τείχεϊ, τὸν δ' ἐνόησεν
 ἐλκόμενον πρόσθεν πόλιος· ταχέες δέ μιν ἵπποι
 ἔλκον ἀκηδέστως κοίλας ἐπὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν.
 τὴν δὲ κατ' ὀφθαλμῶν ἐρεβεννὴ νύξ ἐκάλυπεν,

τό μ' ἦ μὲν / καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν. See Cuomo 2022, pp. 7-18 for a reading of these psychosomatic symptoms through the lens of a panic attack.

¹⁵ Cfr. Kuhn-Treichel 2024, pp. 13-21, 26-27: the knees here not loosened but locked.

¹⁶ As de Jong 2012, p. 179 observes.

ἤριπε δ' ἐξοπίσω, ἀπὸ δὲ ψυχὴν ἐκάπυσσε.
 [...]
 ἀμφὶ δέ μιν γαλόω τε καὶ εἰνατέρες ἄλις ἔσταν,
 αἱ ἔ μετὰ σφίσιν εἶχον ἀτυζομένην ἀπολέσθαι.
 ἢ δ' ἐπεὶ οὖν ἔμπνυτο καὶ ἐς φρένα θυμὸς ἀγέρθη,
 ἀμβλήδην γοόωσα μετὰ Τρωῆσιν ἔειπεν·
 (*Iliad* 22.460-477)

As she was speaking, she rushed through the palace like a maenad with a quivering heart. She made her way together with her handmaids. But when she came to the tower and the mass of Trojans, she stood still on the wall looking around [anxiously] and perceived him being dragged in front of the city; the swift horses were dragging him ruthlessly towards the hollow ships of the Achaeans. Then gloomy night threw a cloud over her eyes; then she fell backwards and breathed out her spirit. [...] And around her stood her sisters-in-law – her husband's sisters and his brothers' wives –, who held her, terrified almost to death, between them. But when she revived, and her spirit returned into her breast, wailing with sudden bursts, she spoke among the Trojan women.

Whereas just previously the acoustic triggers merely instilled concern, the visual experience – «perhaps the most moving instance of focalisation in the whole of the Homeric epics»¹⁷ – has a decidedly different effect. Once she sees the gruesome, immersive¹⁸ spectacle of Hector being dragged, her body succumbs. Homer's diction in the description of her swoon again focuses on the impact of sight¹⁹. It is as if the obscuring shade protects Andromache from the emotional burden. Homer reuses this phrase five times throughout the *Iliad*²⁰, with Andromache as the only female recipient of this diction; while

¹⁷ de Jong 2012, p. 181.

¹⁸ Allan, de Jong and de Jonge 2017, p. 42 read the description of the treatment of Hector, and especially the narrator's use of the adverb ἀκηδέστως, as an example of 'identification' in the shape of 'embedded focalization', as the adverb presents Andromache's emotional reaction. Ready 2023, pp. 17-20, 27-29 urges to proceed with caution when assigning the label of 'identification' on the basis of merely focalisation: he later, esp., pp. 94-100 provides an extensive reading of identification with Andromache in *Iliad* 22.

¹⁹ The omitted lines (on Andromache's casting off her headdress) similarly touch on the visual, as the narrator embarks on a climactic, decelerated *ekphrasis* of her clothing, and especially four items of wedding paraphernalia, which, according to Ready 2023, p. 95, enhances the reader's identification process. The activation of the memory of their wedding, de Jong 2012, pp. 182-183 reads as an 'external analepsis' to the wedding of Hector and Andromache, which Sappho would later treat in Fragment 44. The presence of the latter could therefore function as a link between *Iliad* 22 and Sappho's Fragments 31 (in its description of similar psychosomatic symptoms) and 44 (in its focus on the wedding of Hector and Andromache); see Nagy 2015 and 2024 for similar connections between the Hector and Andromache of Homer and Sappho.

²⁰ Barker 2011, pp. 10-11.

fainting is common in Homer, Andromache's loss of consciousness receives the most elaborate description²¹. The phrase is, then, not markedly gendered, as we mostly see it reserved for the valiant yet falling warriors in the *Iliad*. Reversely, the phrase's application to a female character potentially complicates her position within the epic as a marker of strictly female virtue. She – named after manly battle – after all, offers valuable military advice to Hector in *Iliad* 6. Her husband insolently discredits her suggestions, even if the focalisation of her lament complicates the masculine experience and ideology at the end of the *Iliad*²². Moreover, Elton Barker 2011, p. 9 n28 also makes the connection between Sarpedon and Andromache, «two of the epic's key swooners», based on the description of their respective moments of losing and regaining their *psyche*. Another close parallel merits specific attention: Laertes, Odysseus' father, faints in a remarkably similar fashion as Andromache does in *Od.* 24.345-349²³. The connection between the two characters can be explained as follows: through their *anagnorisis* or recognition of, on the one hand, Hector's tragic fate, and, on the other, Odysseus' successful return²⁴. Moreover, the description of Andromache as, on the one hand, a 'falling warrior'²⁵, and, on the other hand, an elderly male figure makes sense. In both readings, she is described in masculine terms, yet, either way, she is described as a weakened male. While Homeric fainting may, then, not be strictly gendered, it only appears as a commentary on a character's weakened emotional state when said character is either elderly or female.

Finally, if the swoon can also be read as another iteration of death – or at least a temporary one – Andromache here mimics her husband's sorry plight. Hector himself had experienced not one but two swoons and therefore near-death experiences before his actual death, which is the catalyst for Andromache's own swoon²⁶. Andromache's premature lament in *Iliad* 6 may be the

²¹ de Jong 2012, p. 182 and 185. For Andromache's position among these male warriors who faint, see Graziosi and Haubold 2010, p. 129. The other key fainters in the *Iliad* are Aeneas (*Il.* 5.308-317), Sarpedon (*Il.* 5.696-698), and Hector (*Il.* 11.349-360, *Il.* 14.419-439).

²² Muich 2011, p. 3.

²³ As Barker 2011, p. 4 n13 and p. 12 n39 and de Jong 2012, p. 182 have noted. ὥς φάτο, τοῦ δ' αὐτοῦ λύτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ, / σήματ' ἀναγνόντος τά οἱ ἔμπεδα πέφραδ' Ὀδυσσεύς. / ἀμφὶ δὲ παιδὶ φίλῳ βάλε πῆχες: τὸν δὲ ποτὶ οἷ' εἵλεν ἀποπνύχοντα πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς. / αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ῥ' ἄμπνυτο καὶ ἐς φρένα θυμὸς ἀγέρθη, [...] This text originates from the *LCL* (Murray 1919); the echoes of the description of Andromache's swoon are indicated in bold. See de Jong 2012, p. 185 for the similarities between Andromache's and Laertes' regaining consciousness. See also Kuhn-Treichel 2024, pp. 15-16 on the diction used of Penelope's and Laertes' dissolution of their limbs upon recognising Odysseus.

²⁴ Segal 1971, p. 5.

²⁵ Segal 1971, p. 54.

²⁶ Barker 2011, p. 11 n37.

parallel here. As soon as Andromache regains her consciousness in the midst of the crowd, she seems to realise her assigned function in the lament tradition and starts her second (but not final) lament for Hector. Andromache's multiple initiations of lament may then mirror this structure of Hector's multiple near-deaths.

To conclude this first section, we have seen that, like weeping, fainting is not a markedly female embodied emotion. We, in fact, see more male characters losing their consciousness because of physical trauma. Even if Andromache does not fail because of a battle wound, her swoon does not necessarily represent the female feebleness. Even if she is unable to bear the sight of her slain husband, she initially attempts to remain rational upon hearing the commotion surrounding Hector's demise. She does not faint until she is visually triggered. Sight, then, emerges as a particularly potent fainting catalyst amongst the senses. The correlation between the bodily and the visual persists in the set of swoons that follow in the second section of this paper: those which Plutarch seemingly modelled after the Homeric paradigm in the *Parallel Lives*.

2. Fainting Matrons of the Late Republic: Plutarch's *Life of Pompeius* and *Life of Brutus*

Now we turn to a selection of female fainting moments from the Late Roman Republic, a time of incessant civil strife, during which the classic dichotomy between public and private becomes increasingly blurred²⁷. An author who seems to pay particular interest to these fainting matrons and his female characters in general is Plutarch of Chaeronea²⁸. This second part of the article will take three instances of female fainting in two *Lives*, that of *Pompeius* and *Brutus*, each in connection with political moments that feature particularly heightened embodied emotion and female involvement. In these instances, Andromache's paradigm and presence will become apparent.

²⁷ See Milnor 2005, Rohr Vio 2023, and Foubert 2024.

²⁸ For all the centrality of Plutarch's statesmen in the *Lives*, gender and female characters in Plutarch's works have become more in vogue so much so that some have entertained the idea of Plutarch as a proto-feminist (cfr. Flacelière 1971), while scholars including McNerney 2003 and Chapman 2011 and onwards question this view quite rightly. Although Plutarch focuses on his statesmen and their characters and deeds, Le Corsu 1981 was the first to demonstrate that the *Lives* teem with female characters: *Plutarque et Les Femmes* is the first and still the most extensive study of women in Plutarch to date but is of a mostly encyclopaedical nature, a strand of research that Nikolaidis 1997, Blomqvist 1989, Walcot 1999, Marasco 2008, Chapman 2011, and Castellani 2002 have continued. See Caterine 2019 and Warren 2018, 2019, and 2022 for investigations of Plutarch's attitudes towards gender and gender-bending. For a recent overview on Plutarch's *Mulierum Virtutes* and the place of women in it, see Tanga 2019, pp. LXIV-LXII (and esp. n10).

2.1 Emotions in Historiography and Plutarch

At this juncture, it is then fitting to regard the interplay between historiography and emotion studies. For instance, Cynthia Damon 2017 provides an insightful overview on emotions in historiography. She applies it to three strands: emotion in the matter and effect of the story, in the audience, and lastly in the author. Damon reminds us of the historiographical philosophy of Plutarch, who strives for an immersive alignment of emotion in historiography with Thucydides as the ideal paradigm in *Moralia* 347A (*De gloria Atheniensium*): the emotions of the participant ideally equal those of the reader (2017, pp. 151-2). Historiographers often achieve this immersivity through their craft of speeches, as Dennis Pausch 2010 has shown for historiography in general and Bradley Buszard 2010 for Plutarch in particular. Unlike swoons, tears in historiography have received considerable attention. Loretana de Libero 2009 provides an overview of the many tears in Roman history and historiography, while Donald Lateiner 2009, p. 106, 128 identifies Plutarch's historiography as a particularly tearful *étape* in the genre²⁹. Unlike the airtime given to Homeric *syncope*s, historiographical swoons have not been studied as extensively. Fainting in Plutarch, in a similar way to and, as I suggest, influenced by that of the theme and diction of Homeric epic, is by no means strictly female³⁰. Plutarchan *Lives* (or *Moralia* for that matter) feature just as many male figures fainting from battle or emotion or medical conditions³¹. In this part of the article, we will regard three instances where female characters faint, whilst comparing them to the paradigm of Andromache already presented in *Iliad* 22, with the following fourth instances as its point of departure.

This is not to say that the three examples of the two *Lives* on which this

²⁹ Cfr. Lateiner 2009, p. 128: «In the *Lives*, δάκρυ [tear] terms appear 134 times, 79 for Romans and 55 for Greeks».

³⁰ For an overview of some Homeric references and citations throughout the *corpus Plutarcheum* as well as *De Homero*, see Díaz Lavado 1999, D'Ippolito 2004, pp. 11-35, and Kim 2010, pp. 11, 51, 96 and *passim*, who examines Plutarch's views of Homeric material with respect of his handling of morality and truth and Homer's status as 'the fountain of all knowledge.' Fernández-Delgado 2020, pp. 86-97 similarly focuses on Homeric quotations in a selection of political *Moralia* and identifies Homer as a figure of great authority and instruction.

³¹ Salazar 2010, p. 173 identifies a number of *syncope*s resulting from physical trauma and surgery in Plutarch, such as in *Ages.* and *Alex.* For uses of ληθοθυμία and its variants in Plutarch, see *Them.* 10 (where a dog is said to have fainted after attempting to reunite with the owner who abandoned the poor creature; the anecdote serves as an explanation for the name 'Dog's Mound') and *Pomp.* 49 (where it denotes weakness of spirit rather than a swoon), *Brut.* 25 (where the meaning shifts to hunger-faintness) as well as the Licinia and Porcia episodes below. See also *Quaest. conv.* 695a.

contribution focuses most heavily are the only such occurrences of female fainting. In the *Lives of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus*, Licinia, the wife of the titular character of the second of the double *Life*, is already depicted as another Andromache figure, albeit in a compressed fashion. Indeed, Bradley Buszard 2010, pp. 88-89 already links Andromache and Licinia (for they both entreat their husbands not to depart) and focuses especially on the two wives' utterances, though the execution of each fainting incident differs³². For our purposes especially, Plutarch places Licinia's swoon directly after her lament for her husband, thus compressing Andromache's lengthier arc reaching from *Iliad* 6 to *Iliad* 22 into a single vignette:

τοιαῦτα τῆς Λικινίας ὀδυρομένης, ἀτρέμα τὰς περιβολὰς ἀπολυσάμενος αὐτῆς ὁ Γάϊος ἐχώρει σιωπῇ μετὰ τῶν φίλων, ἡ δὲ τοῦ ἱματίου λαβέσθαι γλιχομένη καταρρυεῖσα πρὸς τοῦδαφος ἔκειτο πολὺν χρόνον ἄναυδος, μέχρι οὗ λιποθυμήσασαν αὐτὴν οἱ θεράποντες ἀράμενοι πρὸς Κράσσον ὄχοντο τὸν ἀδελφὸν κομίζοντες.
(*C. Gracc.* 36(15).4)³³

And as Licinia was lamenting in this way, Gaius, having loosened himself from her embrace without trembling, advanced in silence with his friends. But she, striving to clasp his toga and falling down, was lying on the floor, speechless, for a long time, until her servants, raising her up as she had fainted, carried her to her brother Crassus.

Like Andromache, Licinia pleads her husband – a juxtaposed picture of serenity – not to venture out in public (an echo of Andromache in *Iliad* 6). Then Plutarch starts to blend certain elements: Licinia similarly dreads and attempts to prevent her husband's departure (*Iliad* 6), which immediately causes her to faint (*Iliad* 22). One could read this mixture as an interpolation of *Iliad* 22, where a concrete visual image is the catalyst, as opposed to the more abstract anxiety, which Andromache initially was able to bear until faced with Achilles' treatment of her husband. In both instances, too, the inability to speak that a loss of consciousness causes is starkly contrasted by an initial, heavily rhetorically charged speech³⁴. In any case, Andromache emerges as a paradigm

³² For Plutarch's choice of speech and citation material (including Homer) in the *Lives*, see Rose 2022, pp. 69-70.

³³ The text stems from *LCL* (Perrin 1921); the translations are my own.

³⁴ Buszard 2010, p. 88 views the 'circumstantial similarities' between Andromache and Licinia as elements that «serve to highlight the fundamental differences between them» (to him, Andromache's motivations are self-centred as opposed to those of Licinia in *Gracchus* and Ari-

for not only the aforementioned women³⁵, but also for Cornelia of the *Life of Pompey* and Porcia of the *Life of Brutus*, two of the principal women in this part of the article.

2.2. Julia's Swoon in the *Life of Pompey*

The *Life of Pompey* lends itself particularly well to investigations of emotions. Plutarch in fact starts the *Life of Pompey* with the juxtaposed feelings that Pompey and his father elicit from the general Roman opinion: intense goodwill towards the former, and equally blazing hatred towards the latter in *Pompey* 1-2. Jeffrey Beneker 2012 offers an extensive study of how, in Plutarch, Pompey's passion came to function as a chronic distraction and his ultimate demise. Pompey's amorous pursuits and its impact on his career could be read in stark contrast with, for instance, how Plutarch manipulates Caesar's chastity, potentially as a foil for his antagonist Pompey³⁶. In this section, I will regard the two final marriages of Pompey, for which Plutarch both includes two anecdotes that feature a fainting female³⁷. The first instance is the swoon of Julia Caesaris, Caesar's daughter and Pompey's third wife³⁸. Plutarch uses Julia's vehemently emotional reaction to illustrate the closeness between Julia and Pompey. The latter is a knowing nod to their union, which elicits a variety of criticisms ranging from their (to some excessive) age difference to Pompey's alleged neglect of the state in his predilection to act as a doting husband (*Pomp.* 53.1)³⁹. This fondness proves to be reciprocal and much talked of, as Plutarch informs his readers (καὶ περιβόητον ἦν τῆς κόρης τὸ φίλανδρον, *Pomp.* 53.2):

stomache in *Dion*, whom he deems «more aware of civic concerns»). Buszard 2010, p. 86 generally reads Andromache as a 'selfish' character, which strikes one as a rather uncharitable (though common) view of the grief-stricken woman, at least, when read through a masculine lens. Muich 2011, p. 12 does not exactly describe Andromache's lament in those terms. She does, however, point out that she shifts the focus from the martial to the marital sphere, as it were.

³⁵ Cfr. Buszard 2010, p. 89 n18.

³⁶ See, esp., Beneker 2002/2003 and De Wet 1981.

³⁷ In one chapter of my forthcoming monograph, I trace the appearances of female characters in the *Pompey*, ranging from the intense emotions that Pompey arouses through his series of marriages and military conquests alike.

³⁸ For the most recent overview to date of the literary appearances of Julia Caesaris, see Trine Arlund Hass and Sine Grove Saxkjær 2024. For an overview of Pompey's five wives, see Haley 1985 and Aguilar Fernández 2002.

³⁹ Plutarch's exemplary depiction of Julia is not uncommon: Valerius Maximus, in his *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, already includes Julia – and Porcia in the section immediately following – as one of the exemplars of conjugal love. See *Val. Max.* 4.6.4, which Plutarch seems to have followed faithfully: [...] *territa metu ne qua ei vis esset adlata, exanimis concidit partumque, quem utero conceptum habebat, subita animi consternatione et gravi dolore corporis eicere coacta est magno quidem cum totius terrarum orbis detrimento* [...].

οὖν ἀγορανομικοῖς ἀρχαιρεσίοις εἰς χεῖράς τινων ἐλθόντων καὶ φονευθέντων περὶ αὐτὸν οὐκ ὀλίγων ἀναπλησθεὶς αἵματος ἥλλαξε τὰ ἱμάτια, πολλοῦ δὲ θορύβου καὶ δρόμου πρὸς τὴν οἰκίαν γενομένου τῶν κομιζόντων τὰ ἱμάτια θεραπόντων, ἔτυχε μὲν ἡ κόρη κύουσα, θεασαμένη δὲ καθημαγμένην τὴν τήβεννον ἐξέλιπε καὶ μόλις ἀνήνεγκεν, ἐκ δὲ τῆς ταραχῆς ἐκείνης καὶ τοῦ πάθους ἀπήμβλωσεν.
(*Pomp.* 53.3)

Once, while during aedile election some came to punches and not a few men around him [Pompey] were murdered, since he himself was stained by the blood, he changed his garments. There was, however, much uproar and running about at their house, as the servants were bringing back the garments, and it happened that the maiden – pregnant – having seen the bloody toga, fainted and was revived with difficulty, but, because of all the confusion and emotion, she miscarried.

This anecdote relates Julia's embodied emotion as the visual of Pompey's bloody toga and its recognition causes her to faint. Such visuality and embodiment are common techniques to immerse an audience further into the narrative. The Andromache paradigm similarly comes to mind in the following ways. First, public uproar penetrates the private sphere through external shouts. Secondly, whereas the external noises cause consternation – Plutarch generally sprinkles in those terms, emphasised in bold in the text and translation –, the visual trigger of the bloody garment causes the young maiden to faint. Moreover, she loses consciousness out of tragically misplaced conjugal concern, yet her pregnant and therefore frail state causes her miscarriage. And thus, whereas Pompey's life is preserved, that of their unborn child is lost: as soon as one fear disappears, another materialises.

The feeble Julia's swoon foreshadows her premature demise, a fate that not even Pompey's affection could prevent. Soon after, we learn that this harmonious union came to a tragic end in Julia's next miscarriage (*Pomp.* 53.4-5). The knowing reader knows that, with it, ended the marriage alliance between Pompey and Julia's father Caesar. The death of the young maiden seems to have sparked deep emotion within the general people as well as within her kinsmen. Plutarch mentions that the former intercept her body for burial at the Campus Martius instead Pompey's own wishes: «rather because of compassion for the maiden than to gratify Pompey and Caesar» (οἰκτῶ τῆς κόρης μᾶλλον ἢ Πομπηῖω καὶ Καίσαρι χαρίζομενος). In any case, though the element of speech is lacking in the case of Julia, like Licinia's, Julia's swoon is another variation on the theme of that of Andromache.

2.3. Cornelia's Swoon in the *Life of Pompey*

Though Julia features only sparingly in the *Life of Pompey*, her main impression in Plutarch elicits strong emotions for the unlucky couple as well as for the bystanders. At first glance, the betrothal to Pompey's last wife Cornelia and the characterisation in Plutarch's introduction appears conventional, as merely a replacement and different version of Julia⁴⁰. Plutarch's diction and close placement of the two maidens in the narrative indeed suggest as much. Plutarch, however, adds dimension to Cornelia's characters as he soon has his readers know that Cornelia is exceptionally educationally engaged⁴¹. This seemingly small detail will be important, especially when compared to, on the one hand, her inability to bear the intensity of her emotions in her time of need, and, on the other, Porcia's preparation in *Brutus*⁴².

In *Pomp.* 72, when Pompey's demise looms following his defeat at Pharsalus, he himself is represented as fearful and forgetful of himself; Cornelia will later mimic this behaviour. In *Pomp.* 74, Plutarch provides a stark contrast with the measured characterisation by which he introduced the educated Cornelia. The reason for this consternation is of course Pompey's escape from Caesar, in which he involves his wife and his son Sextus by his previous wife Mucia. Pompey's episode teems with embodied emotion and features a by now familiar fainting incident:

ἐν τούτοις οὔσαν αὐτὴν καταλαβὼν ὁ ἄγγελος ἀσπάσασθαι μὲν οὐχ ὑπέμεινε, τὰ δὲ πλεῖστα καὶ μέγιστα τῶν κακῶν τοῖς δάκρυσιν μᾶλλον ἢ τῇ φωνῇ φράσας σπεύδειν ἐκέλευσεν, εἰ βούλεται πως Πομπήϊον ἰδεῖν ἐπὶ νεῶς μιᾶς καὶ ἄλλοτρίας, ἡ δὲ ἀκούσασα προήκατο μὲν αὐτὴν χαμαῖζε καὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἔκφρων⁴³ καὶ ἄναυδος ἔκειτο, μόλις δὲ πως ἔμφρων γενομένη καὶ συννοήσασα τὸν καιρὸν οὐκ ὄντα θρήνων καὶ δακρύων, ἐξέδραμε διὰ τῆς πόλεως ἐπὶ θάλατταν.
(*Pomp.* 74.2)

The messenger, happening upon her in such a state, could not bear to greet

⁴⁰ For Cornelia in the *Life of Pompey* and Plutarch in general, see, e.g., Aguilar Fernández 2002, pp. 200-207 and 2008, pp. 13-14.

⁴¹ *Pomp.* 54. Both the compared appearances of Julia and Cornelia and the latter's erudite representation, I examine in a forthcoming piece.

⁴² *Pomp.* 54.4: ἐνῆν δὲ τῇ κόρῃ πολλὰ φίλτρα δίχα τῶν ἀφ' ὥρας. καὶ γὰρ περὶ γράμματα καλῶς ἥσκητο καὶ περὶ λύραν καὶ γεωμετρίαν, καὶ λόγων φιλοσόφων εἴθιστο χρησίμως ἀκούειν. «In this maiden, there were many charms beyond those of her youth. For she had been trained very well in literature, the lyre, and geometry, and she had been accustomed to listen to philosophical lectures profitably».

⁴³ Compare to Pompey's πάθος and own state of mind in *Pompey* 72.1-2: ... μάλιστα δὲ ὁμοίος παράφρονι καὶ παραπλήγι τὴν διάνοιαν.

her. Pointing out those most numerous and largest of troubles through his tears rather than his voice, he urged her to make haste if she wished to see Pompey in his ship, one in number and not his. Having heard these things, she let herself fall [fainted] and was lying on the ground for a long time without sense or speech, having become sensible somehow with difficulty, she reflected that this was not the right time for wails or tears, she ran out, through the city, towards the sea.

Cornelia's swoon is a far cry from the expectations of the protection that her education might offer, which the initial introduction sets up. Her emotion is so deep that she is neither able to draw from her hardly acquired education, nor to bear the heightened emotion caused by the messenger's unfavourable news. In this variation of Andromache's swoon – mirrored by the echo in her speech, as identified by Bradley Buszard 2010, p. 89, who compares the varying depictions of Andromache, Licinia, and Cornelia –, Cornelia reacts not to any visual trigger, but to the report of the messenger. In each case, females faint out of fear. Plutarch suggests, however, that Cornelia is able to stop herself from lamentation within the city limits. For all her fear, she is still able to maintain a sense of propriety. It is at the fringes of society, however, that she lets herself go and fall into her husband's arms. Whereas the description of their brief reunion contains language of tottering and falling, it does not count as a proper swoon exactly because of the speech that so quickly follows: ἀπαντήσαντος δὲ τοῦ Πομπηίου καὶ δεξαμένου ταῖς ἀγκάλαις αὐτὴν ὑπερειπομένην καὶ περιπίπτουσιν [...] εἶπεν [...] (*Pomp.* 74.3) «and as Pompey met and received her in his arms, tottering and falling over, she spoke [...]». If the visual triggers of the Andromache swoon are lacking in this passage, Plutarch revisits Andromache's reaction to the visual horror at the end of the *Life*⁴⁴. Thus, another variation on the theme of the Andromache paradigm emerges, though Plutarch's use thereof does not reach its full effect until it culminates in his representation of Porcia in the *Life of Brutus*⁴⁵, the final example of this article.

⁴⁴ The following elements recur: Cornelia mourns Pompey beforehand in his embrace (ἀσπασάμενος οὖν τὴν Κορνηλίαν προαποθρηνοῦσαν αὐτὸν τὸ τέλος... [*Pomp.* 78.4]); Cornelia beholds his impending death from afar in company (ἡ μὲν Κορνηλία μετὰ τῶν φίλων ἐκ τῆς τριήρους περιπαθῆς οὖσα τὸ μέλλον ἀπεσκοπεῖτο... *Pomp.* 79.3); the murder prompts lament expressed through the same word-use as in *Iliad* 22.447 (οἱ δ' ἀπὸ τῶν νεῶν ὡς ἐθεάσαντο τὸν φόνον, οἰμωγὴν ἐξάκουστον ἄχρι τῆς γῆς ἐκχέαντες ἔφυγον... *Pomp.* 80.1) and is treated as a fear-inducing visual spectacle (τοῦ δὲ Πομπηίου τὴν μὲν κεφαλὴν ἀποτέμνουσι, τὸ δὲ ἄλλο σῶμα γυμνὸν ἐκβαλόντες ἀπὸ τῆς ἀλιάδος τοῖς δεομένοις τοιοῦτον θεάματος ἀπέλιπον. παρέμεινε δὲ αὐτῷ Φίλιππος, ἕως ἐγένοντο μεστοὶ τῆς ὀφθῆς. *Pomp.* 80.1-2).

⁴⁵ It is worth noting that the chronology of the publication (though not the composition) of

2.4. Porcia's Swoon in the *Life of Brutus*

The interplay between emotions, philosophy, and historiography brings us to the *Life* on the other side of *Caesar*, namely *Brutus*. As one might expect, Plutarch's sections around the conspiracy and assassination of Caesar attract ample instances of anxiety. Porcia's swoon appears in the context of her knowledge and anxiety surrounding Brutus' involvement in the conspiracy. In this episode, we get, as it were, a glimpse of the backstage affairs of arguably one of the most infamous assassinations in history (Plutarch mirrors this glimpse with Calpurnia's anxiety in *Caes.* 64)⁴⁶. Porcia, as one might expect from Cato Minor's offspring, strives to depend on her family's trademark stoicism to keep her anxiety at bay. Donald Lateiner 2008, p. 107 sees these two *Lives* as apt displays of «the contrary ability to restrain tears, a self-control that inhibits the escape of tears, while other men and women sob and cry» with examples of «the philosophical Roman Stoics' self-control: Cato Minor and Brutus (Plutarch, *Them.* 10.9, *Cato* 67-70, *Brut.* 52; cfr. 53.1)». Even so, Lateiner 2008, p. 127 declares the *Cato Minor* as «the weepiest of all the *Lives* (10 examples [of the *dakru-* root])»⁴⁷. In these findings, however, Lateiner 2008, p. 130 records the tears of Cato's kinswomen without any further mention of the *Brutus*. The *Brutus*, however, displays moments in which self-control is sought, yet ultimately unattained (or indeed unattainable).

Porcia's swoon occurs in this very context. Try as she might, and, for all her philosophical pedigree and preparation, like Cornelia, she is unable to bear the intensity of the situation. Her swoon results from the combination of her self-inflicted physical wound and her crippling concerns thus already combining Homeric swoon elements: the Andromache paradigm only sets in gradually. Plutarch first sets up a structure of anxious reactions similar to the one we just perceived with Pompey and Cornelia: first, we learn about the husband's emotional state, after which that of his wife follows, usually in a heightened

the *Parallel Lives* places *Brutus* slightly in front of *Pompey*. For a recent overview, see van der Wiel 2024, p. 468 for the most recent overview of the chronology of the *Lives*.

⁴⁶ Conjugal concern is a common theme in the Late Republic; see Rohr Vio 2023, pp. 125-128. For a recent historical overview of the assassination, though mostly through the lens of Marc Antony's experience, see Tatum 2024 as well as Tatum 2008 (chapters 6 and 7) for a sole focus on Caesar.

⁴⁷ In this particularly tearful *Life*, Lateiner 2008, p. 131 demonstrates that the specific statistics of gendered weeping remain fairly balanced: «In this weepiest *Life*, then, women weep thrice, dependent men twice, peers thrice and Cato Uticensis himself twice. Others weep for the paragon of courage Cato (or themselves). Cato weeps for the doom of his countrymen, friend and foe. Very philosophical of the philosopher».

mode⁴⁸. Porcia's particularly empirical approach is meant to prove her worthiness to share in Brutus' disquietude (Plutarch later has Porcia express her wish to be his confidante)⁴⁹. It is almost as if Plutarch's character Porcia has learned from Julia and Cornelia to check first if she will be able to bear the emotion: for the latter, she devises a physical test⁵⁰. Porcia, emphatically identified as the famous Stoic martyr's daughter, attempts to test the firmness of her mind to control her passions⁵¹. In her thought experiment, however, she equates the strength of her body to that of her mind. In this line of thinking, then, the demarcation between mind and body blurs to the extent that it becomes one entity. Indeed, as with the observation of Douglas Cairns and Damien Nelis applied to Octavia's fabled faint above, Porcia already subscribed to the idea that an absolute gulf did not quite exist between body and mind. For, if her body would be able to stand the pain, surely her mind would exhibit a similar fortitude, would it not? Her physical preparation to achieve mental self-control is, in a sense, comparable to Cornelia's training of her mind in *Pompey*, though both prove to have been in vain. Through her wound, Porcia also transcends the boundaries of the separate spheres, as she inflicts a wound upon herself that recalls descriptions of the battle wounds found around the Homeric *syncope*s at the beginning of this article. As such, the circumstances surrounding her impending swoon resemble more those of Homeric warriors and are thus more akin to typically masculine swoons.

While Maria Teresa Galaz Juárez 2000 and Bradley Buszard 2010, pp. 87-88 have already examined Porcia's speech, it is worth revisiting considering the character's comments on gender and the bodily reaction surrounding the speech:

[...] οἶδ' ὅτι γυναικεία φύσις ἀσθενὴς δοκεῖ λόγον ἐνεγκεῖν ἀπόρρητον· ἀλλ' ἔστι

⁴⁸ *Brut.* 13.1.

⁴⁹ *Brut.* 13.4.

⁵⁰ φιλόστοργος δ' ἡ Πορκία καὶ φίλανδρος οὖσα καὶ μεστή φρονήματος νοῦν ἔχοντος, οὐ πρότερον ἐπεχείρησεν ἀνερῆσθαι τὸν ἄνδρα περὶ τῶν ἀπορρήτων ἢ λαβεῖν ἐαυτῆς τοιαύτην διάπειραν. λαβοῦσα μαχαίριον ᾧ τοὺς ὄνυχας οἱ κουρεῖς ἀφαιροῦσι, καὶ πάσας ἐξέλάσασα τοῦ θαλάμου τὰς ὁπαδοὺς, τομὴν ἐνέβαλε τῷ μηρῷ βαθεῖαν, ὥστε ῥύσιν αἵματος πολλὴν γενέσθαι καὶ μετὰ μικρὸν ὀδύνας τε νεανικὰς καὶ φρικώδεις πυρετοὺς ἐπιλαβεῖν ἐκ τοῦ τραύματος ... (*Brut.* 13.3) «Porcia, being affectionate and fond of her husband and full of sensibility and in possession of a good mind, did not try to question her husband about his secrets sooner than she herself had taken up a trial of this type. Having taken a small knife with which barbers cut nails and having dismissed all her servants out of her bedroom, she made a deep cut in her thigh so that a vast flow of blood came forth and, after a small period of time, vehement pangs and shivering fevers followed from the wound».

⁵¹ Plutarch both repeats and has his character Porcia repeat that she is Cato's daughter in *Brut.* 2.1, 13.3, 13.7, and 13.10. In Plutarch's view, philosophical aptitude seems hereditary.

τις, ὃ Βροῦτε, καὶ τροφῆς ἀγαθῆς καὶ ὁμιλίας χρηστῆς εἰς ἦθος ἰσχὺς· ἐμοὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ Κάτωνος εἶναι θυγατέρα καὶ τὸ Βρούτου γυναῖκα πρόσσεσιν· οἷς πρότερον μὲν ἦττον ἐπεποιθεῖν, νῦν δ' ἐμαντὴν ἔγνωκα καὶ πρὸς πόνον ἀήττητον εἶναι». ταῦτ' εἰποῦσα δείκνυσιν αὐτῷ τὸ τραῦμα καὶ διηγεῖται τὴν πείραν. ὁ δ' ἐκπλαγεὶς καὶ ἀνατείνας τὰς χεῖρας ἐπεύξατο δοῦναι τοὺς θεοὺς αὐτῷ κατορθοῦντι τὴν πρᾶξιν ἀνδρὶ Πορκίας ἀξίῳ φανῆναι. καὶ τότε μὲν ἀνελάμβανε τὴν γυναῖκα.
(*Brut.* 13.9-10)

«[...] I know that a feminine nature is reputed to be [too] feeble to bear a secret. But, Brutus, some good upbringing and useful company [strengthen] one's character. And for me, I happen to be both the daughter of Cato and the wife of Brutus. Previously, I trusted less in these facts, but now I have come to know that I myself am not to be conquered by pain». Having spoken these words, she showed her wound to him and set out her experiment in detail. And Brutus, shocked and lifting his hands, prayed that the gods grant him to be successful in his operation and to prove himself a worthy husband of Porcia. And then he helped his wife recover.

Plutarch's Porcia here reiterates Plutarch's repetition of Porcia's pedigree, making it the fourth mention of her being Cato's daughter. Her argument makes a distinction between (the albeit anachronistic) nurture and nature dichotomy in the following two ways. In her evaluation of her nature, she subscribes to the traditional prejudice of female feebleness, but then qualifies her statement by referring to her status of Cato's daughter, an identity that boosts her Stoic credentials⁵². Her connection to Cato and Brutus seems to undo part of the gender limitations she seems to believe in. Thus, she relies on the two following nurture aspects: her upbringing and surroundings. Her experiment, she believes, confirms the effectiveness of the mixture between nature and nurture by which she might be prepared to bear her husband's anxiety after all. While Plutarch focuses on Brutus' reaction to his wife's deed, we are not told explicitly that Porcia faints. The phrase καὶ τότε μὲν ἀνελάμβανε⁵³ τὴν γυναῖκα, however, reveals that Porcia had fainted, albeit outside of the narrative focus.

Plutarch is not the only or the first to have Porcia's mind divert from her actual gender: Valerius Maximus already was an impactful exemplar for the Chaeronean⁵⁴. Valerius Maximus, in *Val. Max.* 3.2.15, already uses Porcia as

⁵² Plutarch's use of ἀήσσητος is, per the *LSJ*, commonly used of the Stoic sage, as, e.g., Zeno Stoic. 1.53.

⁵³ See *LSJ* II 3 and 4 for this sense of recovering and regaining one's senses or strength.

⁵⁴ For Plutarch's use of Valerius Maximus, see van der Wiel 2024. See also Warren 2022, pp. 37-38 for Plutarch's use of female exempla in *Conf. praec.* 145f.

an exemplar in the category of courage, in which her father Cato precedes her: *cuius filia minime muliebris animi* (whose daughter's spirit was not at all womanly)⁵⁵. In this reading, a Stoic sage requires a mind that is as little 'feminine' as possible. As such, with these Stoic aspirations, authors such as Valerius Maximus and Plutarch represent Porcia as subverting the gender norms and expectations because of her Stoic practice. These depictions then align with her more masculine swoon in *Brut.* 13.10, that is, one resulting from a simulated battle wound. The actual Andromache paradigm, however, appears gradually more explicitly as the narrative progresses.

Plutarch introduces the Ides of March in the chapter that immediately follows Porcia's experiment, after which he places the episode of Porcia's frenzy and subsequent swoon⁵⁶. As with Pompey's defeat in *Pompey*, a messenger bridges the gap between husband and wife with the news of her death⁵⁷. In *Brutus*, though, the direction of the flow of information is reversed as the domestic sphere reaches into the public. The tidings present a domestic situation tortured by unrest. It now appears that Porcia's experiment was not as reliable as she had hoped. First, Plutarch addresses her mental difficulties: he presents her as unable to bear the size and weight of her anxiety⁵⁸. Secondly, Plutarch demonstrates that her body is not able to endure the strains of her anxiety either. In spite of her preparations, she is neither mentally nor physically fit to stand by Brutus in his conspiracy:

τέλος δὲ τοῦ χρόνου μῆκος λαμβάνοντος οὐκέτ' ἀντεῖχεν ἡ τοῦ σώματος δύναμις, ἀλλ' ἐξελύθη καὶ κατεμαραίνετο τῆς ψυχῆς ἀλυσούσης διὰ τὴν ἀπορίαν· καὶ παρελθεῖν μὲν εἰς τὸ δωμάτιον οὐκ ἔφθη, περιῖστατο δ' αὐτὴν, ὥσπερ ἐτύγγανεν, ἐν μέσῳ καθεζομένην λιποθυμία καὶ θάμβος ἀμήχανον, ἣ τε χροὰ μεταβολὴν ἐλάμβανε καὶ τὴν φωνὴν ἐπέσχητο παντάπασιν. αἱ δὲ θεράπαινοι πρὸς τὴν ὄψιν ἀνωλόλυξαν, καὶ τῶν γειτόνων συνδραμόντων ἐπὶ θύρας ταχὺ προῆλθε φήμη καὶ διεδόθη λόγος ὡς τεθνηκυίας αὐτῆς. οὐ μὴν ἀλλ' ἐκείνην μὲν ἀναλάμψασαν ἐν βραχεῖ καὶ παρ' ἑαυτῇ γενομένην αἱ γυναῖκες ἐθεράπευσον· ὁ δὲ Βροῦτος ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου προσπεσόντος αὐτῷ συνεταράχθη μὲν, ὡς εἰκός, οὐ μὴν γε κατέλιπε τὸ κοινὸν οὐδ' ἔρρῃ πρὸς τὸ οἰκεῖον ὑπὸ τοῦ πάθους.

⁵⁵ For an earlier account of the trial, see *Val. Max.* 3.2.15.

⁵⁶ *Brut.* 14, 15.4-9.

⁵⁷ *Brut.* 15.6: '὘ν τούτῳ δὲ τις οἰκοθεν ἔθει πρὸς τὸν Βροῦτον ἀγγέλλων αὐτῷ τὴν γυναῖκα θνήσκειν.

⁵⁸ ἡ γὰρ Πορκία πρὸς τὸ μέλλον ἐκπαθῆς οὔσα καὶ τὸ μέγεθος μὴ φέρουσα τῆς φροντίδος ἑαυτὴν τε μόλις οἶκοι κατεῖχε, καὶ πρὸς πάντα θόρυβον καὶ βοήν, ὥσπερ αἱ κατάσχετοι τοῖς βακχικοῖς πάθεσιν, ἐξάπτουσα τῶν μὲν εἰσιόντων ἀπ' ἀγορᾶς ἕκαστον ἀνέκρινεν ὃ τι πράττει Βροῦτος, ἐτέρους δὲ συνεχῶς ἐξέπεμπε (*Brut.* 15.6-7). Cfr. περιπαθῆς οὔσα τὸ μέλλον ἀπεσκοπεῖτο (*Pomp.* 79.3). Cfr. πολλοῦ δὲ θορύβου ... (*Pomp.* 53.2).

(*Brut.* 15.9)

At last, after a length of time, the strength of her body could no longer hold its ground; her strength was faint and quenched her mind, stirred by distress. She could not even go to her bedroom beforehand, but as it happened, her swoon and unmanageable shock surrounded her, sitting in the midst. She took on a different colour and let her voice escape entirely. Her handmaids bewailed the sight, and, as the neighbours were running together to the door, a rumour quickly went forth, and a tale spread about that she had died. The women cared for her, as she nevertheless ‘shone again’ in a short time and came to herself. But Brutus, on the one hand troubled by the news that reached him, as is reasonable, however, he did not abandon his public [duty] and was not rushed by his anxieties at home.

As commonly happens with the Homeric *synopes*, her swoon is briefly mistaken for death, yet she comes to eventually. Multiple Homeric elements recur in the description of her swoon, which recalls that of Andromache. For one thing, there is the intense physicality expressing the embodied emotion. Additionally, the presence of reported messages here recalls the lamentations that Andromache hears surrounding her husband’s death. The situation, however, differs in that Porcia does not undertake to find out the precise situation at hand, nor is she triggered by any visual element. The overall Homeric tint is also mixed with Sappho’s later symptoms in Fragment 31 (the inability to move and speak and the change in complexion). Moreover, the overall situation of a warrior being kept from the battlefield by private matters resembles that of Hector and Andromache, as the former similarly still returned to the battlefield after his wife’s ardent pleas.

In *Brutus* 23, Plutarch explicitly ties the two couples by means of a painting that depicts Hector and Andromache. As Plutarch busies himself with its aftermath – including young Caesar’s arrival at Rome – Porcia slowly reappears in the focus of the narrative. It turns out that she had been kept at Elea, so Plutarch reveals in *Brut.* 23.1-2, but that she now has returned to Rome. Here, Plutarch incorporates a final reminder of Porcia’s distress. Even as she attempts to conceal it, a visual prop unravels her composure:

ταῦτα θεωμένην τὴν Πορκίαν ἢ τοῦ πάθους εἰκὼν ἐξέτηξεν εἰς δάκρυα· καὶ
πολλάκις φοιτῶσα τῆς ἡμέρας ἔκλαιεν. Ἀκιλίου δέ τινος τῶν Βρούτου φίλων τὰ
πρὸς Ἑκτορα τῆς Ἀνδρομάχης ἔπη διελθόντος,

Ἑκτορ, ἄτὰρ σύ μοι ἐσσι πατήρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ
ἡδὲ κασίγνητος, σὺ δέ μοι θαλερὸς παρακοίτης,

μειδιάσας ὁ Βροῦτος, «Ἄλλ' οὐκ ἐμοί γ'», εἶπε, «πρὸς Πορκίαν ἔπεισι φάναι τὰ τοῦ Ἑκτορος,

ἰστόν⁵⁹ ἡλακάτην τε καὶ ἀμφιπόλοισι κέλευε·

σώματος γὰρ ἀπολείπεται φύσει τῶν ἴσων ἀνδραγαθημάτων, γνώμη δ' ὑπὲρ τῆς πατρίδος, ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς, ἀριστεύει».

The likeness of her own anxiety melted [reduced] Porcia, seeing such things, into tears. And often resorting to it throughout the day, she would weep. But as Acilius, one of the friends of Brutus, recounted the words of Andromache to Hector –

«But, Hector, you are to me both father and revered mother,
as well as brother, but you are also my vigorous husband.»

Brutus smiled and said: «But I, indeed, would not speak to Porcia in the words of Hector,

«[Ply] the loom and distaff and give orders to your handmaids»,
for when it comes to the nature of her body she is wanting in heroic feats [to match to those of men], but in her mind she prevails for the sake of the fatherland, just as we do.»

Once again, Plutarch addresses Porcia's inability to bear the emotions that the post-assassination atmosphere stirs up. The visual cue of the painting at last makes Porcia think of their parallels with Hector and Andromache, which Plutarch had her act out a few chapters earlier both in speech and in affect. Smiling Brutus, however, rejects his friend's suggested *synkrisis*, as he dissociates Porcia from Andromache's domestic sphere and comments upon her masculine spirit. Brutus' assessment of his wife proves to be inaccurate, however, when placed next to the episodes examined in this article. Her suicide by coals, too, in *Brutus* 53, has some gendered undertones, as it is not quite yet the quintessential *mors Romana* by sword. If Homeric fainting initially started off as a fairly ungendered paradigm, the same embodied theme now has become a commentary on gender and emotion. It is still worth noting that the swoon does not quite yet seem to be as gendered as the more modern (or at least Victorian) stereotype.

Conclusion

This article has considered the evolution of the trope of the ancient *syncope* against the background of the Homeric paradigm of Andromache. The be-

⁵⁹ See Nagy 2015 and 2024 for the elided citation and the connections between the two scenes.

ginning of this article served as a reminder that swooning was not particularly gendered in Homeric literature. Indeed, swoons were often reserved for valiant warriors who fell in battle: their faint appeared antithetical to a wound's resulting weakness. The expectation that the feeble (and especially the females) were more prone to faint is thus a later development. Andromache's swoon has received particular attention; these close readings serve to set up the parallels that Plutarch creates in a selection of Roman *Lives*. I have demonstrated that Plutarch especially practices creative licence in terms of the manner, chronology, and narrative compactness to fashion these thematic (and in some cases literary) echoes with the intertext. As such, we notice the pliability with which Plutarch approaches this earlier epic paradigm, which did not exactly pass for a gendered emotion or expression thereof, suggests a movement towards a trope.

As with Octavia's example with which we opened this contribution, confirming historical validity of these Plutarchan swoons of Licinia, Julia, Cornelia, and Porcia remains out of reach. Regardless, the point still stands. It is exactly the presence of this female faint in the cultural and literary *imagination* that matters. The dichotomy between the gendered swoons, however, seems to fluctuate, as Kenneth Heaton 2006 notes that for Shakespearean characters, the frequency of swoons seem to fluctuate throughout his plays; like the Homeric *syncope*s, there is no real gender distinction to be observed⁶⁰. For this collection of characters evolved from Homer to Plutarch, after a period a little short of a millennium, it has become the expectation that female fainting may occur at moments of intense emotion, in a similar fashion as the trope of the female swoon is still standing today.

⁶⁰ Plutarch generally had a significant influence on Shakespeare. For instance, Mandel 2016 investigates the similarities between the Porcias of the two authors.

Bibliography

- AGUILAR FERNÁNDEZ R. M. 2002, *Las mujeres en la Vida de Pompeyo*, in: I. CALE-RO SECALL, M. DURÁN LÓPEZ, & J. C. CAPRIGLIONE (eds.), *Debilidad aparente, fortaleza en realidad: la mujer como modelo en la literatura griega antigua y su proyección en el mundo actual*, Málaga, pp. 189-207.
- AGUILAR FERNÁNDEZ R. M. 2008, *La valía de las mujeres en Plutarco*, in: J. R. FERREIRA, L. VAN DER STOCKT, M. D. C. FIALHO (eds.), *Philosophy in Society: Virtues and Values in Plutarch*, Coimbra, pp. 9-17.
- AGRI D. 2022, *Reading Fear in Flavian Epic: Emotion, Power, and Stoicism*, Oxford.
- ALLAN R. J., DE JONG I. J. F., DE JONGE C. C. 2017, *From Enargeia to Immersion: The Ancient Roots of a Modern Concept*, «Style» LI, pp. 34-51.
- ALLARD J.-H., MONTLAHUC P. 2018, *La construction genrée des émotions dans le monde grec et romain*, «Clio. Femmes, Genres, Histoire» XLVII, pp. 23-44.
- ALEXIOU M. 2002, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, Lanham.
- ARLUND HASS T., GROVE SAXKJÆR S. 2024, *Daughter of Caesar, Wife of Pompey. The Role and Narratives of Julia Caesaris*, in: N. JAVETTE KOEFOED, R. RAJA (eds.), *Women of the Past, Issues for the present*, Turnhout.
- BARKER E. 2011, *The Iliad's Big Swoon: a Case of Innovation within the Epic Tradition?*, «Trends in Classics» III, pp. 1-17.
- BENEKER J. 2002/2003, *No Time for Love: Plutarch's Chaste Caesar*, «Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies» XLIII, pp. 13-29.
- BENEKER J. 2012, *The Passionate Statesman: Eros and Politics in Plutarch's Lives*, Oxford.
- BLOMQUIST K. 1997, *From Olympias to Aretaphila: Women in Politics in Plutarch*, in: J. MOSSMAN (ed.), *Plutarch and His Intellectual World*, London, pp. 73-98.
- BRAUND S., MOST G. (eds.) 2004, *Ancient Anger: Perspectives from Homer to Galen*, Cambridge.
- BUSZARD B. 2010, *The Speech of Greek and Roman Women in Plutarch's Lives*, «Classical Philology» CV, pp. 83-115.
- CAIRNS D., NELIS D. 2017, *Emotions in the Classical World: Methods, Approaches, and Directions*, Stuttgart.
- CASTELLANI V. 2002, *Plutarch's 'Roman' Women*, in: E. N. OSTENFELD (ed.), *Greek Romans and Roman Greeks: Studies in Cultural Interaction*, pp. 142-55, Aarhus.
- CATERINE M. A. M. 2019, *Tyrannical Men and Virtuous Women in Plutarch's Mulierum Virtutes*, «Illinois Classical Studies» XLVI, pp. 194-208.
- CHAPMAN A. 2011, *The Female Principle in Plutarch's Moralia*, Dublin.
- CLARKE M. 1999, *Flesh and Spirit in the Songs of Homer: a Study of Words and Myths*, Oxford.
- CUOMO V. 2022, *Sappho Fr. 31 V. between Poetry, Philology and Medicine*, «Archivi delle Emozioni» II (2), pp. 7-18.

- DAMON C. 2017, *Emotions as a Historiographical Dilemma*, in: D. L. CAIRNS, D. NELIS (eds.), *Emotions in the Classical World: Methods, Approaches, and Directions*, Stuttgart.
- DE BAKKER M., VAN DEN BERG B., KLOOSTER J. (eds.) 2022, *Emotions and Narrative in Ancient Literature and Beyond, Studies in Honour of Irene de Jong*, Leiden-Boston.
- DE LIBERO L. 2009, *Precibus ac lacrimis. Tears in Roman Historiographers*, in: T. Fögen (ed), *Tears in the Graeco-Roman World*, Berlin-New York, pp. 209-234.
- DE JONG I. 2012, *Iliad Book 22*, Cambridge.
- DE WET B. X. 1981, *Aspects of Plutarch's Portrayal of Pompey*, «Acta Classica» XXIV, pp. 119-132.
- DÍAZ LAVADO J. M. 2010, *Las citas de Homero en Plutarco*, Zaragoza.
- D'IPPOLITO G. 2004, *L'Omero di Plutarco*, in: I. GALLO (ed.), *La biblioteca di Plutarco. Atti del IX Convegno plutarco. Pavia, 13-15 giugno 2002*, Napoli.
- FERNÁNDEZ-DELGADO J. A. 2020, *Homer as a Model for Plutarchan Advice on Good Governance*, in: T. S. SCHMIDT, M. VAMVOURI, R. HIRSCH-LUIPOLD, *The Dynamics of Intertextuality in Plutarch*, Leiden, pp. 86-97.
- FLACELIÈRE, R. 1971, *Le féminisme dans l'ancienne Athènes*, «Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres Année», pp. 698-706.
- FÖGEN T. 2009, *Tears in the Graeco-Roman World*, Berlin-New York.
- FÖLLINGER S. 2009, *Tears and Crying in Archaic Greek Poetry (especially Homer)*, in: T. Fögen (ed.), *Tears in the Graeco-Roman World*, Berlin-New York.
- FORNARO S. 2024, *The Wrath of Achilles*, «Archivi delle Emozioni» IV (1), pp. 5-11.
- FOUBERT L. 2024, *Gendered Mobility in the Ancient Mediterranean: Getting Rid of Faceless and Sexless Crowds*, in R. RAJA, N. JAVETTE KOFOED (eds.), *Women of the Past. Testimonies from Archaeology and History*, Turnhout.
- GALAZ, M. T. 2000, *Rhetoric Strategies of Feminine Speech in Plutarch*, in L. VAN DER STOCKT (ed), *Rhetorical Theory and Praxis in Plutarch*, pp. 203-209, Leuven.
- GRAZIOSI B., HAUSOLD J. 2010, *Iliad, Book VI*, Cambridge.
- HALEY S. P. 1985, *The Five Wives of Pompey the Great*, «Greece & Rome» XXXII, pp. 49-59.
- HAUSER E. 2024, *Women in Homer and Beyond*, in: E. Greensmith (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Greek Epic*, Cambridge.
- HEATON K. W. 2006, *Faints, Fits, and Fatalities from Emotion in Shakespeare's characters: Survey of the Canon*, «BMJ» CCCXXXIII, pp. 1335-1338.
- MURRAY A. T., WYATT W. F. 1925, *Homer, Iliad, Volume II: Books 13-24*, Cambridge (MA).
- HOPE V. 2020, *Octavia: A Roman Mother in Mourning*, in A. SHARROCK, A. KEITH (eds.), *Maternal Conceptions in Classical Literature and Philosophy*, Toronto, pp. 270-295.

- KIM L. 2010, *Homer between History and Fiction in Imperial Greek Literature*, Cambridge.
- KIRK G. S. 1990, *The Iliad: a Commentary. Vol. II (books 5-8)*, Cambridge.
- KONSTAN D. 2006, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature*, Toronto.
- KONSTAN D. 2021, *Being Moved: Motion and Emotion in Classical Antiquity and Today*, «Emotion Review» XIII, pp. 282-288.
- KUHN-TREICHEL T. 2024, *Si sciolgono le ginocchia e il cuore': emozioni e dissoluzione del corpo in Omero (e oltre)*, «Archivi delle Emozioni» IV (1), pp. 13-29.
- LATEINER D. 2009, *Tears and Crying in Hellenic Historiography: Dacryology from Herodotus to Polybius*, in: T. FÖGEN (ed.), *Tears in the Graeco-Roman World*, Berlin-New York.
- LE CORSU F. 1981, *Plutarque et les Femmes dans les Vies parallèles*, Paris.
- LIDDELL H. G. 1984, *A Lexicon Abridged from Liddell and Scott's Greek-English lexicon*, Oxford-New York.
- MANDEL G. 2016, *Plutarch's Porcia and Shakespeare's Porcia: Two of a Kind?*, «Shakespeare Survey» LXIX, pp. 134-140.
- MARASCO G. 2008, *Donne, cultura e società nelle Vite Parallele di Plutarco*, in: A. G. NIKOLAIDIS (ed.), *The Unity of Plutarch's Work*, Berlin-New York, pp. 663-677.
- MCİNERNEY J. 2003, *Plutarch's Manly Women*, in: R. ROSEN, I. SLUITER (eds.), *Andreia: Studies in Manliness and Courage in Classical Antiquity*, Leiden, pp. 319-344.
- MEINECK P., SHORT W. M., & DEVEREAUX J. (eds.), 2018. *The Routledge Handbook of Classics and Cognitive Theory*, Abingdon-New York.
- MILNOR K. 2005, *Gender, Domesticity, and the Age of Augustus: Inventing Private Life*, Oxford.
- MUICH R. 2011, *Focalization and Embedded Speech in Andromache's Iliadic Laments*, «Illinois Classical Studies» XXXV-XXXVI, pp. 1-24.
- NAGY G. 2015, *Cato's daughter Porcia has herself a really good Cry*, «Classical Inquiries».
- NAGY G. 2023/2024, *Sappho from Ground Zero*, «Classical Continuum».
- NEHRING A. 1947, *Homer's Descriptions of Syncopes*, «Classical Philology» XLII, pp. 106-121.
- NIKOLAIDIS A. G. 1997, *Plutarch on Women and Marriage*, «Wiener Studien» CX, pp. 27-88.
- PAPAVRAMIDOU N., TZIAKAS D. 2010, *Galen on 'syncope'*, «International Journal of Cardiology» CXLII, pp. 242-244.
- PAUSCH D. 2011, *Stimmen der Geschichte: Funktionen von Reden in der antiken Historiographie*, Berlin-New York.
- PERRIN B. 1917, *Plutarch. Lives. Agesilaus and Pompey. Pelopidas and Marcellus. With an English Translation*, Cambridge (MA)-London.

- PERRIN B. 1918, *Plutarch. Lives. Dion and Brutus. Timoleon and Aemilius Paulus. With an English Translation*, Cambridge (MA)-London.
- PERRIN B. 1921, *Plutarch. Lives. Agis and Cleomenes. Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus. Philopoemen and Flamininus*, Cambridge (MA)-London.
- PURVES A. 2019, *Homer and the Poetics of Gesture*, New York.
- RAJ S. R., AHMED S. B., SHELDON R. S. 2020, *Understanding Vasovagal Syncope: a Role for Sex and Gender*, «Clinical autonomic research: official journal of the Clinical Autonomic Research Society» XXX, pp. 369-370.
- READY J. L. 2023, *Immersion, Identification, and the Iliad*, Oxford.
- REY S. 2015, *Roman tears and their impact: a question of gender?*, «Clio» XLI, pp. 243-263.
- RICHARDSON N. 1993, *The Iliad: a Commentary. Vol. VI (books 21-24)*, Cambridge.
- RIEKS R. 1970, *Die Tränen des Helden*, in: M. VON ALBRECHT (ed.), *Silvae. Festschrift für Ernst Zinn zum 60. Geburtstag*, Tübingen, pp.183-198.
- ROHR VIO F. 2022, *Powerful Matrons: New Political Actors in the Late Roman Republic*, Sevilla-Zaragoza.
- ROLFE J. C. (ed. and trans.) 1914, *Suetonius, Lives of the Caesars, Volume II*, Cambridge (MA).
- ROSE T. C. 2022, *The Quiet Life: Silence in Plutarch's Demetrius*, in: J. BENEKER, F. TITCHENER, N. HUMBLE (eds.), *Plutarch's Unexpected Silences, Suppression and Selection in the Lives and Moralia*, Leiden, pp. 65-80.
- SALAZAR C. F. 2001, *Die Ohnmacht in der griechisch-römischen Medizin, insbesondere im traumatologisch-chirurgischen Umfeld*, «Sudhoffs Archiv» LXXXV, pp. 169-174.
- SEGAL C. 1971, *Andromache's Anagnorisis: Formulaic Artistry in Iliad 22.437-476*, «Harvard Studies in Classical Philology» LXXV, pp. 33-57.
- TANGA F. 2019, *La Virtù delle Donne (Mulierum Virtutes)*, Leiden.
- TATUM W. J. 2008, *Always I Am Caesar*, Malden (MA)-Oxford.
- TATUM W. J. 2024, *A Noble ruin: Mark Antony, Civil War, and the Collapse of the Roman Republic*, New York.
- THORPE D. 1991, 'I Never Knew My Lady Swoon Before'; *Lady Dedlock and the Revival of the Victorian Fainting Woman*, «Dickens Studies Annual» XX, pp. 103-125.
- TSAGALIS C. 2004, *Epic Grief: Personal Laments in Homer's Iliad*, Berlin-Boston.
- VAN DER WIEL L. 2024, *Exempla for the Emperors: A Comparison of the Prefaces to Valerius Maximus' Facta et dicta memorabilia and Plutarch's Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata*, in: K. JAŹDŹEWSKA, F. DOROSZEWSKI (eds.), *Plutarch and His Contemporaries*, Leiden.
- VAN DER WIEL L. 2024, *An Opaque Mirror for Trajan: A Literary Analysis and Interpretation of Plutarch's Regum et imperatorum Apophthegmata*, Leuven.
- VAN DIJK N., WIELING W. 2009, *Fainting, Emancipation and the 'weak and sensitive' Sex*, «The Journal of Physiology» DLXXXVII, pp. 3063-3064.

- XENOPHONTOS S. 2016, *Ethical Education in Plutarch: Moralising Agents and Contexts*, Berlin-Boston.
- WALCOT P. 1999, *Plutarch on Women*, «Symbolae Osloenses» LXXIV, pp. 163-183.
- WARREN L. 2018, *Reading Plutarch's Women: Moral Judgement in the Moralia and some Lives*, «Ploutarchos» XV, pp. 75-96.
- WARREN L. 2019, *Virtue, Masculinity, and Hierarchies of Domination on Plutarch's Antony and De Iside*, «Akroterion» LXIV, pp. 45-64.
- WARREN L. 2022, *Like a Captive Bird: Gender and Virtue in Plutarch*, Amherst.
- WHARTON D. 2008, *Sunt Lacrimae Rerum: A Linguistic Exploration*, «Classical Journal» CIII (3), pp. 259-279.
- ZIOGAS I. 2017, *Singing for Octavia: Vergil's 'Life' and Marcellus' Death*, «Harvard Studies in Classical Philology» CIX, pp. 429-481.