

In his Roman *Lives* Plutarch seems to depict Roman leaders more like Greek demagogues than as Roman magistrates or politicians. Conflicts in the Late Roman Republic are frequently treated by Plutarch as simplified clashes between *demos* and leaders (De Blois 1992, 4578-4615; Pelling 2004, 211-7). A good example is to be found in his *Vita Antonii*, in which Plutarch portrays Mark Antony as a popular not very well behaving demagogue among the mob of Rome as well as among the soldiers. In military camps and in marching armies Antonius adapts his behaviour to his ambience: he acts like a common military man. In this *Vita* Plutarch does not very much differentiate between higher officers, middle cadre and the rank and file of Roman armies. He mostly speaks of *to stratiotikon* or *stratiotai*, as a separate element in society, not at all as citizens of different classes in arms. This is an anachronistic element in Plutarch's *Antonius*, which reminds us of some contemporaneous papyrus texts, some paragraphs in Cassius Dio's *Roman History* and other 2nd century AD Greek prose.

In his *Antonius* Plutarch neglects the very important Roman military middle cadre. Simplifying Roman Late Republican power relations, Plutarch reduces political strife to a competition between a handful of political magnates. Other sources, however, such as Cicero's *Letters*, Appian's *Bella civilia*, Cassius Dio's *Roman History*, Nicolaus of Damascus, Velleius Paterculus, and in a few cases even Livy's *Periochae* are more precise and give us a clue how politicians used military tribunes, prefects, centurions and logistical and financial specialists in an intricate political game, for example to influence groups of soldiers, important senators, or even adversaries. There are some traces in Suetonius' *Iulius* and *Augustus* as well. Plutarch leaves aside that Antony knew how to use the military middle cadre to his own advantage, but nonetheless was less efficient in doing this than his rival Octavian, who became the best manipulator of the minds of the military middle cadre of those times.

The *Vita Antonii* shows how Plutarch's lack of attention to oddities and detail in this case may have confused his military analysis with an over-reliance on *demos*-leader oppositions. Leaving aside peculiarities of Roman ranks and the Roman military system, Plutarch reduces his story to a tissue of *loci communes* that are common in his Greek and Roman *Lives*.

In conclusion: the perception of the military factor in politics in Plutarch's *Life of Antony* consists of a combination of anachronistic, contemporaneous 2nd century AD Greek views of the Roman soldiery and shows us how Plutarch's lack of attention to oddities & detail in this case may have confused his military analysis with an over-reliance on *demos*-leader oppositions, *demos* in this case being an undifferentiated military mob.

This paper will elaborate upon publications by Christopher Pelling (for example his *Plutarch and History*, London 2004) and Lukas de Blois (for example his 'The Perception of Politics in Plutarch's Roman *Lives*,' *ANRW II* 33, 6, 1992, 4568-4615).