

EMOTION AND GREEKNESS IN
DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS’
ACCOUNT OF THE EXILE OF
CORIOLANUS*

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Abstract: Dionysius’ account of Coriolanus’ exile is rarely treated on its own terms, normally being deprecated as inferior to Livy or Plutarch’s version of the same. On the contrary, Dionysius’ account is a powerful illustration of his method in combining Roman source-material with Greek literary heritage. In particular, Dionysius uses epic and technical elements of stage language to draw out the psychological tensions at play in the story. This account, therefore, not only helps us get closer to Dionysius’ vision of Romanness, as Greek-inflected and distinct from Livy’s; it also problematises tough, Roman masculinity, suggesting that Dionysius is a more subtle observer of Rome than is usually imagined.

Keywords: Coriolanus, family, mother, Livy, tragic history,
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This paper considers Dionysius’ narration of Coriolanus’ encounter with his mother (8.36–54), with especial regard to Dionysius’ presentation of their emotional relationship, and the ways in which this

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relationship drives the plot of Dionysius' story. The encounter takes place when Coriolanus, having rebelled against Rome, is encamped with his new Volscian allies a few miles in front of the city of Rome.¹ Coriolanus' mother, herself still living in the city, goes to meet Coriolanus to try to persuade him to desist. It is a classic, complex story, the main thrust being the conflict between public and private, in the sense of personal, duty. I will investigate the shifts in the story between public and personal planes in order to illustrate the changing relationship between mother and son. Dionysius explicates this relationship by playing with Homeric epic and, in particular, the formal strictures of tragedy,² and so my discussion will permit insights into the way Dionysius builds his narrative artistically, with a view to broader considerations about Dionysius' construction of Greeks and Romans. I will not directly address standard

¹ The example of Coriolanus arises frequently in modern discussions of family relationships during the Roman Republic. Attempts to fit the Coriolanus story into a broader typology of Roman family relationships include Africa (1978); D'Ambra (2007) 30; Dixon (1988) 9; Evans (1991) 172–4; Frascchetti (2001) 53; Hallett (1984) 40–3, 246–8. Part of the catalyst seems to have been Africa's bizarre attempt to demonstrate a Roman 'Coriolanus-complex' to sit in parallel with a Greek 'Oedipus-complex'. Dionysius' version has occasionally been excluded from the discussion, e.g. by Hallett (1984) 41, though she obviously knows the text (e.g., at 47–8 n. 17).

² On space in tragedy, see e.g. Rehm (2002); Taplin (1978), esp. 31–57 on entrances and exits. In addition, part of the function of the story of Coriolanus is aetiological, to explain the origin of the temple *Fortuna Muliebris* (see, e.g., David (2001) 18, 20–1); so the story exists at the point of interaction between physical space and memorialisation on the one hand and history on the other. In his epigraph on Coriolanus, Dionysius emphasises the same sense of memory. The Herodotean language of the passage, underlined, recalls Herodotus' figurative use of the language of physical erasure in his preface (8.62.3): *ἐτῶν δὲ μετὰ τὸ πάθος ὁμοῦ τι πεντακοσίων ἤδη διαγεγονότων εἰς τόνδε τὸν χρόνον οὐ γέγονεν ἐξίτηλος ἢ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς μνήμη, ἀλλ' ἄδεται καὶ ὑμνέται πρὸς πάντων ὡς εὐσεβῆς καὶ δίκαιος ἀνὴρ.* ('And though nearly five hundred years have already elapsed since his death (τὸ πάθος) down to the present time, his memory has not become extinct, but he is still praised and celebrated by all as a pious and just man.') (This and all other translations of the *Antiquitates Romanae* included here are taken or adapted from Cary 1937–50).

questions of pro- or anti-Roman or Greek sentiment, a seam which has been mined sufficiently already. I will instead investigate what sort of Romanness and Greekness Dionysius establishes in this story, and how this may be used to illuminate the depiction of Romans and Greeks in the *Antiquitates Romanae*.

The two most commonly discussed versions of the Coriolanus story are by Livy and Plutarch.³ Dionysius' account of Coriolanus' rise and subsequent exile differs in some details from each of these. The young Marcius is a successful soldier of noble stock who earns the cognomen Coriolanus along with considerable fame in Rome. When later he harbours political ambitions, he loses an election, and becomes so divisive and anti-plebeian that the senate decide to allow him to be exiled to spare them the wrath of the people. According to the *Antiquities*, after Coriolanus is expelled, himself enraged, he goes to join the Volsci, and wages a long war, capturing Roman town after Roman town until he reaches the fifth mile marker.⁴ Successive Roman embassies of senators and of priests fail to convince him to desist, until finally the women's embassy containing his mother Veturia and his wife Volumnia persuade him to stop.⁵ There are various traditions for what happens next:

³ Plut. *Cor.*; Livy 2.33–40 (cf. Florus 1.5; Eutropius 1.14). The ancient accounts of Coriolanus which have been preserved also include Valerius Maximus 5.2.1, 4.1; App. *Rom.* 2.1–5 = Polyæn. 8.25.3; Cassius Dio F 18 = [Aur. Vict.] 19; cf. the now-lost version by Atticus, mentioned by Cicero at *Brut.* 42. See also Salmon (1930) 96 n. 1; David (2001) 17 with nn. 1–6.

⁴ Ogilvie (1965) 314–8 explains the differences between Dionysius' and Livy's accounts from a Livian perspective. Most obviously, Livy's account of Coriolanus' campaign is significantly more compressed than Dionysius' version.

⁵ Easy comparison between the versions of Livy, Dionysius and Plutarch is hindered by the different names used of the characters. Livy and Dionysius have Veturia as the mother and Volumnia as the wife. Plutarch (followed by Shakespeare) has Volumnia as the mother and Vergilia as the wife. In this chapter, I shall use the Dionysian system, or clearly mark otherwise, or simply refer to the 'mother' or the 'wife' as appropriate. Russell's explanation ((1963) 22), that we owe the variation to a slip of Plutarch's memory, is the popular and most plausible expla-

Livy prefers the one where Coriolanus dies in exile, years later, old and embittered. Plutarch and Dionysius choose the more dramatic and obvious motif of having him killed while about to make, or in the process of making, a speech.

Departure and the Mother

Dionysius gives a sophisticated and intricate portrayal of the mother, Veturia. Because scholars usually adopt a Livian or a Plutarchan perspective, this aspect is often overlooked.⁶ In essence, this is due to Dionysius having a more balanced focus in his account between her and Coriolanus. This approach is evident in the way that Dionysius devotes considerable space to the first women's embassy, led by Valeria, to Veturia's house to persuade her to go to her son, which is much more briefly narrated by Livy and Plutarch.⁷ Both Dionysius and Livy use the opportunity to touch upon the nature of women's strengths. While Livy (2.40.2) filters this through the voice of the narrator,⁸ Dionysius has Valeria address the Roman women in direct speech, in a manner which loosely recalls Livy's version of the passage. They will persuade Veturia to act with a strength (8.39.3):

nation (cf. Pelling (1997/2002) 394–5). Gagé has suggested that the names of the women who help appease Coriolanus' *furor* can be explained in aetiological terms: see David (2001) for qualification and further bibliography (Gagé (1963) 48–63 at David (2001) 21).

⁶ Pelling (1997/2002) 394 allows more nuance than most, but his analysis is more concerned with detecting points of interest in Plutarch's version (395).

⁷ Plut. *Cor.* 33; Livy 2.40.

⁸ Livy 2.40.2: *pervicere certe, ut et Veturia, magno natu mulier, et Volumnia duos parvos ex Marcio ferens filios secum in castra hostium irent, et, quoniam armis viri defendere urbem non possent, mulieres precibus lacrimisque defenderent.* ('They certainly prevailed upon both Veturia, the older woman, and Volumnia, bringing her two sons by Marcus with her, to go to the camp of the enemy and, since they were unable to defend the city with men's weapons, to defend as women, with prayers and tears.')

... οὐχὶ ὄπλων, ἔφησεν ἡ Οὐαλερία, καὶ χειρῶν δεομένη·
τούτων μὲν γὰρ ἀπολέλυκεν ἡμᾶς ἡ φύσις·

‘... that does not require weapons or hands’, said Valeria, ‘for nature has relieved us of these.’

Livy draws attention in his account to how Veturia will attempt to win over her son using the feminine weapons of prayers and tears (*precibus lacrimisque*, 2.40.2). In Dionysius’ version, Valeria goes on to say that she and the other women should use the gifts granted her by her womanly *physis*, namely *logos* and *eunoia*. This is a particular sort of *logos*, because as with Livy it is bound up with weeping and entreaty. Dionysius’ Valeria tries to win over Veturia, but her *logos* alone fails: only when she weeps, and so uses prayers and tears, will Veturia be persuaded to undertake the embassy. It is remarkable, however, that Dionysian women do possess a *logos* that is more closely associated with political discourse than this, though they may not always have the opportunity to use it. Indeed, women’s *logos* shares some of the features of men’s: for example, Veturia and the consular C. Claudius each use the metaphor of ship-as-state (8.49.1; 11.9.1; cf. 2.62.4).⁹ This means that later, when Vetu-

⁹ The language of the ship-of-state metaphor in Dionysius is extremely interesting, because Flierle (1890) 65–7 has identified a Thucydidean parallel in the phrasing, and his discussion illuminates Dionysius’ method of constructing speeches in the *Antiquities*. He argues that Claudius’ speech contains rare Thucydidean words: κλύδωνι (‘wave’ or ‘sea’, 11.9.1) and ὀρεγόμενον (‘grasping at’ or ‘reaching for’, 11.14.3). Neither of these examples is definitively Thucydidean. In the first instance, the word is used in a ship-of-state metaphor, which is a very common metaphor indeed (Page (1955) 179–97 at 182 n. 1; e.g., Alc. A6 Lobel-Page; Dem. *Phil.* 3.69). The full expression, ἐν οἴῳ κλύδωνι τὰ πράγματα σαλεύει (‘in what sort of sea the affairs [of the state] are tossed’), has its closest parallel (to my knowledge) in Chrysippus, the earliest usage revealed by *TLG* (*Fragmenta Moralia* 476 (*SVF* III.127.22)). But it is rather Dionysian than Thucydidean, being attested three times in the *Antiquities* (including 2.62.4, used by the narrator, and 8.49.1), and not in that form in Thucydides. The closest parallel in Thucydides is at 2.84.3, in the account of the sea-battle at Naupactus. If the parallel is conscious, then it is another striking instance, alongside 7.66.5, of

ria discusses state business with Coriolanus, it will be no surprise that she is equipped with the appropriate language for governing.

Dionysius' Veturia at first refuses to do as the women ask (8.41.1–42.2). Her refusal, in direct discourse, is revealing of the emotional relationship between Coriolanus and his family. In a lightly dramatic-ironical moment, Veturia describes Coriolanus' soul as hard (*σκληράν*) and invulnerable (*ἄτρωτον*),¹⁰ which picks up Valeria's belief—expressed earlier to the other Roman women, but not said directly to Veturia—that Coriolanus cannot be so stubborn (*στερράν*) and invulnerable (*ἄτρωτον*) that he will hold out against his mother's pleas.¹¹ Valeria had expected that Coriolanus would yield in the face of Veturia's lamenting and entreating (8.39.5). Valeria is right, but not in the way she

Dionysius elevating Thucydidean language to the clearly figurative level. In the second case, Thucydides uses *ὀρεγόμενον* four times (Thuc. 2.61.4, 65.10; 4.92.2 (in a close parallel); 6.16.6, 83.1), but the word is also attested frequently in Xenophon (e.g., Xen. *Hell.* 4.4.6; 6.5.42; *Hiero* 7.1; 9.7; *Agesilaus* 1.35; *Hipp.* 1.23; *Symp.* 8.23; *Const. Lac.* 2.13) and Isocrates (e.g. *Antid.* 217; *Dem.* 2.52; *Pac.* 7.23 (both close parallels), 62; *Nic.* 2; *Phil.* 134; *Soph.* 4), two important sources for Dionysius. See also Aesop, *Fab.* 27.3, 8; 28.13; 42.6; 59.4 for very close parallels. It has been pointed out to me by Alexander Meeus (whom I thank for the point) that while *ὀρεγόμενος* might not be a very common word, it also occurs comparatively frequently in Polybius and especially Diodorus. This is in fact a pattern often observed when looking at the frequency of a word through the ages: in spite of his early Atticism, Dionysius' language is also still very Hellenistic and words that are remarkably frequent in Diodorus will also occur fairly often in Dionysius, and often disappear only after Plutarch. The word is perhaps then indicative of Hellenistic usage rather than Dionysius' own idiolect. See further Usher (1982) *passim*, esp. 810 on Dionysius' idiolect.

¹⁰ 8.41.6: *πρὸς δὴ τοιαύτην ψυχὴν οὕτω σκληράν καὶ ἄτρωτον, ὦ Οὐαλερία, τίνα ἰσχὴν ἔξουσιν αἱ παρ' ἡμῶν δεήσεις* ('on such a mind, so hard and invulnerable, Valeria, what force will the entreaties of us women have?').

¹¹ Once again, the verbal parallel is studiously off-centre: 8.39.5: *οὐχ οὕτω στερράν καὶ ἄτρωτον ἔχει καρδίαν, ὥστ' ἀνασχέσθαι μητέρα πρὸς τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ γόνασι κυλιομένην*. ('He does not have a heart so hard and invulnerable that he can hold out against a mother who grovels at his knees.')

expects. Coriolanus will succumb to his mother's pleas, but that will be because she recalls in speech the closeness of her relationship with her son: in other words, she will use her *eunoia* and her *logos*, not the grovelling that Valeria had predicted.

Veturia came to understand her son's harshness at his moment of parting from her four years previously. She recounts to Valeria Coriolanus' words upon departure in detail and in embedded direct discourse, indicating the vividness of her memory,¹² and so we see the emotional closeness that she feels. Veturia's explicit recollection of the moment of the departure is a partially expanded version of the scene as it appeared in the text at 7.67.2:

αὐτὸς δ' ὁ Μάρκιος οὐτ' ἀνακλαυσάμενος ὤφθη τὰς αὐτοῦ
τύχας οὐτ' ἀποιμώξας οὐτ' ἄλλο εἰπὼν ἢ δράσας ἀνάξιον
τῆς ἑαυτοῦ μεγαλοφροσύνης οὐδ' ὀτιοῦν.

But Marcus himself was not seen either to bewail or to lament his own fate, or to say or do the least thing unworthy of his greatness of soul.

The emphasis when the departure scene was narrated was not on Coriolanus' words to his mother, as it is when Veturia tells it later. Rather the focus is on impassivity, a strikingly Roman characteristic. This mark of Roman masculinity is not an unalloyed strength of Roman manhood in the *Antiquities*.¹³ Dionysius is drawing on the expectation of Roman men in the first century that in

¹² Pelling (1997/2002) 394, 399–400 and id. (1996) xxv interprets Dionysius' version of Coriolanus' farewell scene differently, using it to indicate that Dionysius prepares the reader for the final embassy scene much less than Plutarch does. Pelling rightly stresses that Plutarch's text starts working much earlier to explain Coriolanus' susceptibility to his mother's pleas (Pelling (1997/2002) 396). See also Hallett (1984) 247.

¹³ Janssen (1972) *passim* analyses emotions in Livy's account of Coriolanus. He sees *ira* and subordination of *ira* in the name of the *res publica* and *pietas* as Livy's chief themes; in my opinion he overplays the importance of the anger of the gods.

public they ought to be seen to be unmoved, or at least largely unmoved, by family grief.¹⁴ This was the case in contemporary Greece too, but Dionysius actually distinguishes impassivity as Roman, as opposed to the classical version of Greece presented by Dionysius here, full as it is of lachrymose Homeric and tragic heroes, as I will argue later on.¹⁵ If we were to push the argument further, we might suggest this as evidence that in the *Antiquities*, Dionysius writes Hellenistic Greece out of his definition of Greekness: such a view is consistent with Dionysius' deprecation of Hellenistic rhetoric in his theoretical treatises (e.g. *Vett. Orr.* 1.1).

The Romanness of impassivity is drawn out through Coriolanus' similarity to another Roman in the *Antiquities* who was impassive at a moment of loss, Lucius Junius Brutus, the founder of the Republic, when he had his two

¹⁴ 'In public' might include before one's children: e.g. Prop. 4.11.79–80 (on which see Hutchinson (2006) *ad loc.*): *et si quid doliturus eris, sine testibus illis! | cum venient, siccis oscula falle genis!* ('And if you are going to lament in any way, do it without them [i.e. the children] as witnesses! | When they come, deceive their kisses with dry cheeks!')

Cicero's grief at the death of his daughter Tullia is well documented (*Att.* 12.14, *Fam.* 4.5; 4.6; Treggiari (2007) 135–8). This grief lasted long enough to seem suspicious to some of those around him (Cic. *Fam.* 4.6; Wilcox (2005)); see further Aemilius Paullus (Liv. 45.42.1). It was not in itself shameful to express deep pity in public, so long as the pity was for someone else rather than oneself (e.g. the contrasting characterisation of the doleful Cicero defending the stout Sex. Roscius Amerinus (Cic. *Pro Sex. Rosc. Amer.* 143)). On the way Cicero handled his life's misfortunes, Livy is cited by Sen. *Suas.* 6.22: *sed in longo tenore felicitatis magnis interim ictus vulneribus, exilio, ruina partium pro quibus steterat, filiae morte, exitu tam tristi atque acerbo, omnium adversorum nihil ut viro dignum erat tulit praeter mortem.* ('But in the long course of his happiness he was sometimes struck by great blows, by exile, by the ruin of the faction for which he had stood firm, by the death of his daughter, so saddening and bitter, yet of all these misfortunes he bore nothing in the manner worthy of a man besides his death.')

On grief and pity in Plutarch, see Pelling (2005).

¹⁵ Cf., e.g., *Il.* 24.744–5; But cf. the seclusion or concealment of tears at *Od.* 17.304; 21.350–8 (Hutchinson (2006) 245–6).

sons executed. The phrasing clearly echoes the *Coriolanus* passage (5.8.6):

μόνος οὐτ' ἀνακλαυσάμενος ὤφθη τὸν μόρον τῶν τέκνων
οὐτ' ἀποιμώξας ἑαυτὸν τῆς καθεξούσης τὸν οἶκον ἐρημίας
οὐτ' ἄλλο μαλακὸν οὐθὲν ἐνδούς, κτλ.

But he alone was not seen to bewail the fate of his children, nor lament himself for the desolation that would possess his house, nor to betray any sign of softness, etc.

The similarity of expression draws *Coriolanus* and Brutus into the same archetype of Roman heroic stolidity, superficially drawing a contrast with Greek emotiveness. The narrator in the Brutus episode was afraid that the reader would perceive Brutus' impassivity upon seeing his sons led off for execution as 'harsh' (*σκληρά*), exactly the word (*σκληράν*) which Veturia, a Roman, uses to describe her son's impassivity in the departure scene. Then, Dionysius praised Brutus' behaviour, while saying that the reader, being Greek, might be horrified by the story.¹⁶ Yet this is not the whole picture. The Roman Collatinus, Brutus' colleague in the consulship, was so angered by what Brutus did that the event caused an irreversible schism between the consuls: the Greeks and the Romans, implies the narrator, are not so different after all. The consequences for Roman history are lasting. Collatinus is so angry that he speaks up, causing the first moment of argument in direct discourse in the new Republic, and so his anger opens up a new way of speaking in the *Antiquities*.

In *Coriolanus*' situation, it is left unclear how impressed the reader is expected to be by his impassivity, since his

¹⁶ 5.8.1: τὰ δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα ἔργα θατέρου τῶν ὑπάτων Βρούτου μεγάλα καὶ θαυμαστὰ λέγειν ἔχων, ἐφ' οἷς μέγιστα φρονοῦσι Ῥωμαῖοι, δέδοικα μὴ σκληρὰ καὶ ἄπιστα τοῖς Ἑλλησι δόξω λέγειν, κτλ. ('I am afraid that the subsequent noble and astonishing behaviour of Brutus, one of the consuls, which I am now to relate and in which the Romans take the greatest pride, may appear cruel and incredible to the Greeks, etc.').

refusal to weep does not seem to help him much. While Brutus' unmoved expression angered Collatinus so much that new ways of speaking opened up in Roman history, Coriolanus' does not actually benefit anyone.¹⁷ Conversely, Coriolanus' eventual fate is sealed in part by a display of emotion (8.54.2). It may in fact be the case that Coriolanus' achievement is not to *be* unmoved but to *be seen to be* unmoved. For even though Coriolanus did not show affection towards his family when he left them to go into exile, abandoning formally his relationship with them, his residual affectionate feelings have become clearer over the course of the narrative. For example, the hatred felt by Coriolanus towards some Romans is not extended to those Romans who helped his family (8.29.1).

My next point again concerns the family, and how Coriolanus' father is long dead, making Coriolanus in Greek terms an orphan. The way Coriolanus expresses himself when he mentions this to his mother opens up the idea that in this story Dionysius' Greeks are rooted in the heroic world. Modern scholars investigating from a Plutarchan perspective are right to observe that this orphan status, elaborated and pushed to the front in Plutarch, is merely incidental in comparison when Veturia mentions it in Dionysius.¹⁸ Nevertheless, because Coriolanus is an orphan, Dionysius can telescope the entire range of direct family relationships into these two characters (8.51.3):

ἤ τις ὄρφανὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς καταλειφθέντα σε παρα-
λαβοῦσα νήπιον διέμεινα ἐπὶ σοὶ χήρα καὶ τοὺς ἐπὶ τῆς
παιδοτροφίας ἀνήντλησα πόρους, οὐ μήτηρ μόνον, ἀλλὰ
καὶ πατὴρ καὶ τροφὸς καὶ ἀδελφὴ καὶ πάντα τὰ φίλτατά
σοι γενομένη.

I who, when you were left an orphan by your father,
took you as an infant, and for your sake remained a

¹⁷ Duff (1999) 213–15 draws out the implications of Coriolanus' impassivity in the departure scene in Plutarch (Plut. *Cor.* 21.1).

¹⁸ Pelling (1997/2002) 396.

widow and underwent the labours of rearing you, showing myself not only a mother to you, but also a father, a nurse, a sister, and everything that is dearest.

This telescoping brings to mind the moment in the *Iliad* of Andromache's farewell speech to Hector (*Il.* 6.407–39 at 429–30). As Hector represents husband, father, and brothers for Andromache, so does Veturia become invested with the force of Coriolanus' whole family. This force destabilises Coriolanus' position when she finally confronts him in the camp. It means, further, that the power of the story lies in the difficulties Veturia and Coriolanus face in living up to their supposed Roman archetypes. While Livy's Veturia is strong, the archetypal Roman matron, Dionysius' Veturia is only with difficulty able to put the state's interests above her son's, as the archetypal Roman matron is expected to do. In my view Dionysius has laid the groundwork for this in his emphasis upon the emotional relationship between mother and son, making his Veturia a more layered character than either in Livy or Plutarch. As I will go on to argue in the next section, this emotional relationship adds a Dionysian depth to Coriolanus' character: trying in his impassivity to fit into the broader picture of Romanness, and Roman heroes, ultimately he cannot; yet he is brought down by his own Roman, familial attachment to his mother.

Confrontation and Reconciliation

The relationship between Coriolanus and his mother is expounded in detail in the scene of the embassy which the Roman women undertake to Coriolanus (8.44–54). They find him encamped five miles outside the city. Coriolanus dispenses with the usual tools of office, and asks the lictors to lay aside their axes, then goes to meet his mother before the camp. After a few tender words are exchanged, Veturia begins the speech with which she hopes to win over Coriolanus, but it is ineffective. He interrupts her, saying that she is asking the impossible. Veturia then speaks again. This second speech, which addresses more closely their

relationship, convinces Coriolanus to stand down; he yields, with the knowledge that in doing so, he is ruined.

Critics have tended to use this scene as a *comparandum* for showing how much better Livy or Plutarch managed the scene.¹⁹ They do so by stressing the strength of Livy's Veturia, or Plutarch's Volumnia.²⁰ Among scholars who have discussed Dionysius' version in more depth, Bonjour argues that Plutarch and Dionysius made their scene of confrontation between Coriolanus and his mother more 'emotive' (*pathétique*) than Livy did because that was the milieu, Greek, from which they came.²¹ Evans cites and rejects other scholars who argue that Dionysius in particular is composing according to the principles of 'tragic history'.²² Of course, to say that Dionysius' narrative in this passage is 'tragic' could lead to counter-productive inferences relating to 'tragic history' in the 'debased Hellenistic sense'.²³ Never-

¹⁹ Livy: e.g. Bonjour (1975) 173, who calls Dionysius' Veturia 'bavarde'; Walsh (1961) 91. Plutarch: Russell (1963) *passim*; Pelling (1997/2002) *passim*. Cf. Burck (1934) 75ff. on the same episode. Cf. Ahlrichs (2005) 394–403, though the analysis is very descriptive.

²⁰ Walsh (1961) 91 says that 'Livy depicts a nobler, more controlled character, whose patriotism transcends even her maternal feelings.' Ogilvie (1965) 314 is typical too: 'The tragedy leads onto the supreme interview between Coriolanus and his mother in which Coriolanus acts out the secondary moral [besides the theme of *externus timor* at 2.39.7] that in the last resort a true Roman's love for his country outweighs every other consideration.' Cf. Burck (1934) 75 who describes Veturia as *die Römerin κατ' ἐξοχήν* or *par excellence* (though note that Aly, cited by Bonjour (1975) 171, describes the story as un-Roman).

²¹ Bonjour (1975) 174–5: while there is more 'sobriety and reserve' in Plutarch, 'les historiens grecs ont ... interprété le personnage de la mère de Coriolan selon leur mentalité: tendresse et loquacité.' Janssen (1972) 414 observes a 'griechisch-geistige Erziehung' in Plutarch's and Dionysius' accounts.

²² Evans (1991) 173.

²³ Pelling (1980) 132 n. 26, with bibliography. See also Braund (1997); Zadorojnyi (1997) 170; Mossman (1988) and (1992) *passim*, esp. 90–1 discuss the 'tragic' in Plutarch in terms of allusion to 'Tragedy, the literary genre' (Pelling, cited above). 'Tragic history', however, carries pejorative tones of a history constructed around dramatic requirements at the expense of 'proper' history (it is worth keeping the term vague). The extreme of 'tragic history' was often considered to be Duris of

theless, the term 'tragic' will remain useful to this discussion for the following reasons.

There are several ways in which tragedy and history can intersect. In some senses, Thucydides is a strongly dramatic historian, admired in antiquity for the *enargeia* of his scenes.²⁴ Nevertheless, he also removes the 'tragic' from his history insofar as his concentration on public affairs in non-monarchic *poleis* precludes the interplay between public and personal duty which characterises such tragedies as *Antigone*.

Samos, who 'was so influenced by tragedy that he constantly mentions the various costumes in which his characters strut across the stage in appropriate stage setting' (Ullman (1942) 39, with references to the fragments); but if this can be taken rather as indicating Duris' care for *enargeia* then it should be applied to Thucydides in equal measure. Cf. Arist. *Poet.* 9; Pol. 2.56; 12.24.5, 26b.4ff. who discusses Phylarchus and Timaeus; cf. Cic. *Inv.* 1.27; [Cic.] *Ad Her.* 1.12–13. See esp. the fundamental studies by Walbank ((1938), (1960) and (1972)) on Polybius' use of the term, which, taken in concert with an over-reading of Aristotle's distinction at *Poetics* 9, helped form the misguided modern concept of 'tragic history', as exemplified by Ullman (1942), esp. 25–6. Dué (2000), who discusses 'tragic history' in Adherbal's speech in Sallust *Jugurtha* (14.14ff.), is a more modern example; she uses 'tragic' and 'dramatic' in a non-pejorative way but one which still proposes too anachronistic an understanding of historicity (Dué (2000) 311–13; cf. 313 n. 8 (and also 322–5 on Herodotus' tragedy, and Pompeius Trogus' criticism of Sallust and Livy (Just. *Epit.* 38.3.11)), where she explains that she follows Fornara's insistence upon a fairly firm yet nuanced distinction between history and tragedy rather than Walbank's alternative reading (Fornara (1983) 124–6). On Thucydides see also Greenwood (2005) 83–108. More recently, Marincola (2013) has argued that Polybius' criticisms of tragic history are focused upon the truth or falsity of a given account, and he has tried to set Polybius' apparent engagement with Aristotle within the broader context of attempts 'to assert the claims of history as a more valuable endeavour than tragedy' (90). See also Fromentin (2001) for a recent, thorough overview of the ancient sources.

²⁴ Plut. *Nic.* 1.1, 1.5; Rood (1998) 3–5 with bibliography. Cf. Ullman (1942) 38 with n. 70, who suggests that Plutarch says that Duris 'exaggerates in tragic fashion' (τούτοις ἐπιτραγωδεῖ, Plut. *Per.* 28.2); but that the word might not be so meaningful because Dionysius uses the same of Thucydides (*Thuc.* 28). Cf. Macleod (1982). For Thucydides' excursus on Themistocles and Pausanias (1.128–38) see Hornblower (1991) 211–25, esp. 211–12, who notes the 'unusualness' of the narrative for Thucydides. The motifs of the excursus, such as curses and flight, resemble those of tragedy, perhaps specifically the *Telephus*.

In other words, whenever family relationships have an impact on events within the historian's compass, then history starts inevitably to tread on the same ground as tragedy:²⁵ this is an important point of intersection for the present study.

The second important point of intersection lies in the way the narrator prepares the scene for the viewer, whether that viewer is the audience in the story or the external audience. A good example of this in historiography is Thucydides' account of the sea-battle in the harbour at Syracuse (7.69–72), in which the sense of the dramatic and epic is heightened by the narrator shifting the focus between the battle itself and the responses of the 'audience' of soldiers watching it.²⁶ The role of the audience will be important in my argument too.

Now for space. What can tragedy do with that? To take a simple example, in *Hippolytus*, the movement of Phaedra's bed outside the palace signals the start of the tragedy, as what is conventionally private spills out onto the stage: all the characters of this play are undone in the tension between what they try to control, and what they are ultimately able to. For Herodotus, however, it is not the bed or the bath²⁷ which moves, but the narrator. It is at his discretion that private and personal spaces remain private, and they frequently do not.²⁸ In presenting a public conflict between mother and son, the tradition of Coriolanus is

²⁵ Ancient authors may also use tragic allusions in unexpected places to make links and tensions between apparently very different worlds, creating the impression that history and tragedy are in normal circumstances very different (see above, n. 24). Such forced cross-generic pollination is very common in poetry: see, e.g., Homeric metaphors in archaic lyric (or is it lyric metaphors in Homer?), or the way in which the *Aeneid* keeps looking as though it will slip into tragedy, but in the end remains epic.

²⁶ Macleod (1982); on Homeric resonance, see, e.g., Mackie (1996) 110–13.

²⁷ A. *Ag.* 1343–406, esp. 1405.

²⁸ E.g., Candaules and Gyges, 1.8–12; Phaedyme, 3.68–9; Atossa at 3.133–4 (cf. 7.3.4; Dominick (2007)); Xerxes and Masistes' wife, 9.108–10.

fertile ground for an analysis of that tension between public and personal.²⁹

The flexibility of historiography stands in contrast with the fixed confines of the stage. The force of a narrative can come when a narrator allows access to a space that should be secluded. In the case of the *Antiquities*, the narrator ventures into the bedroom for the rape of Lucretia in the episode which introduces Lucius Junius Brutus and the establishment of the Roman Republic (4.64.4–65.4). Now Dionysius' narrator is resolutely public: he is interested in the formation, consolidation and expansion of the city of Rome. Personal affairs are not usually his concern; but with the rape of Lucretia by Sextus Tarquinius, the state interferes with personal affairs (itself a *topos* of events preceding the overthrow of a tyranny). By following Sextus into the bedroom as well, the narrator carries out the same intrusion as the character. This willingness to eavesdrop on private conversations occurs in the *Antiquities* when women start to wield power: in each instance, the eavesdropping and the privateness of the situation are emphasised.³⁰

The physical staging of tragedy is important to Dionysius' scene. Dionysius treats the confrontation between Coriolanus and his mother as occurring on a 'stage', namely the tribunal on which he is sitting. There are movable stage-props and a *skênê* in the background, in a literal and a figurative sense:³¹ literally, the actors will retire from their public discussion to the commander's tent at

²⁹ Livy has Scipio say that Coriolanus was recalled from public parricide by private piety: *revocavit ... a publico parricidio privata pietas* (28.29.1).

³⁰ No women speak in direct discourse in the *Antiquities* between the expulsion of the Tarquins at the end of Book 4 and Valeria's speech in Book 8. Most direct discourse by women occurs in Book 4, in other words during the decline of the regal period (e.g., Tanaquil at 4.4, Tullia at 4.39.2, Lucretia at 4.66.3).

³¹ Ogilvie (1965) 314 describes Livy's version of the story as a 'tragedy'.

8.54.2;³² figuratively, the *skéné* is a defining element of the Greek stage. The raised tribunal and the *skéné* are accompanied by a lower, clear area in front (8.45.3), perhaps like an *orkhêstra*, so the scene approximately resembles a theatrical stage.

After they are reconciled, Coriolanus and his family will leave this ‘stage’ in order to take counsel about what to do next, as characters in tragedy might enter a stage-building. The narrator stays outside the tent for all of the discussion, simply reporting at the end the decisions to which they have come (8.54.2):

ἦν δὲ τὰ δόξαντα αὐτοῖς τοιάδε ...

The decisions they reached were as follows ...

The language is official: τὰ δόξαντα almost always refer to decisions taken by the senate or the people.³³ The deliberations are revealed to the audience as *faits accomplis*, in which the decisions are presented, and only subsequently explained, and the announcement is concluded with a modified recapitulation of a stock phrase, such as (8.54.3):

τὰ μὲν δὴ βουλευθέντα αὐτοῖς καὶ δόξαντα δίκαιά τε καὶ ὄσια εἶναι, φήμης τ’ ἀγαθῆς ἐφ’ ἧ μάλιστα ὁ ἀνὴρ ἐσπούδαζε παρὰ πᾶσι τευξόμενα, τοιάδε ἦν.

Such were the subjects of their deliberation and such were the decisions they reached as just and right and

³² 8.54.2: ταῦτ’ εἰπὼν ἐπὶ τὴν σκητὴν ἀπήει κελεύσας ἀκολουθεῖν τὴν τε μητέρα καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ παιδιά ... (‘After saying this, he retired to his tent, bidding his mother, his wife, and his children follow him ...’).

³³ E.g. 2.14.1, 60.3; 3.1.3, 27.2; 29.5, 36.1; 4.26.5, 75.4, 84.2, 85.2; 5.54.5, 57.3, 57.4, 70.5, 6.84.1, 88.4, 8.43.7, 81.1; 9.5.2; 10.15.7, 55.1, 58.2; 19.6.3. Its frequency when attached to the senate or the people makes its occurrence alongside other nouns or (more commonly) pronouns—such as *μοι* at 6.40.3—revealing. τὰ βουλευθέντα, on the other hand, is much rarer, occurring just four times (4.3.3; 8.36.3, 54.3; 11.17.1).

calculated to win the good opinion of all men—a thing which Marcius had most at heart.

At the same moment in Livy's scene, Feldherr observes an 'interconnectedness between family and state'.³⁴ In Dionysius, this would be underplaying the point. Instead, in its appropriation of the language of state in *τὰ δόξαντα* and *τὰ βουλευθέντα*, the family subsumes the role of government. The narrator does not follow the family into the tent. Like the later Roman trials *intra cubiculum*, women become involved in decision-making again, and government becomes private.³⁵

By this stage in the story, son and mother are a model of agreement. That had not been the case at the beginning of the embassy. The initial confrontation between mother and son came earlier, at a point when the personal relationship between mother and son had been long denied—and we are seeing how Dionysius uses the occasion to play suggestively with the intrusion of personal affairs into public, and vice versa. For while the mother and son are not yet reconciled there is no private space for them to retreat to; but when they will be reconciled the private space will become available to them again, and they take public affairs, government, in with them. Dionysius thus uses the screen of the *skênê* to particular effect.

It is therefore tempting to describe the scene as 'tragic' because this dramatic or tragic element is reinforced in Coriolanus' moment of capitulation, when Veturia falls at her son's feet.³⁶ I disagree here with Evans, who says that Coriolanus remains completely unresponsive to Veturia's appeals to his patriotism and *pietas* in her speech, and that 'it is only when she falls to the ground at his feet that he is

³⁴ Feldherr (1998) 121.

³⁵ E.g., Messalina at Tac. *Ann.* 11.2; cf. 5.1; 13.4.2; 14.50.1; Suet. *Claud.* 15. See Purcell (1986); Wallace-Hadrill, *CAH*² X.302–4. There is an effective discussion to be had here comparing this moment with Dionysius' portrayal of the senate, but space does not permit it.

³⁶ On the response of the supplicated to an act of supplication in Homer, see Gould (1973) 78–82.

finally moved and submits to her will'.³⁷ In fact, the closing of Veturia's speech and her falling to the ground come so close together that it is the *combination* of supplication and speech (*logos*) which moves Coriolanus.³⁸ It is dramatically important that Coriolanus does not cut his mother off before she can finish her speech: more on that below.³⁹

Veturia's supplication will prove fatal for Coriolanus. Supplication is commonly disastrous for the recipient in tragedy.⁴⁰ But the theme of supplication is present in epic too. Schönberger saw Iliadic resonances in the story of Coriolanus, especially in the failed embassy at *Iliad* 9 and the story of Meleager and the Calydonian Boar Hunt.⁴¹ The Iliadic tone can be tied in with the idea that Coriolanus is driven by his rage or wrath—this is especially true in Plutarch⁴²—, which makes Achilles and his tent an especially appealing parallel for Coriolanus and his exile.⁴³ The hero punishes his own side, and eventually himself, in the

³⁷ Evans (1991) 27. By extension I would be minded to disagree with Duff (1999) 215, who draws the same conclusion from the end of the mother's speech in Plutarch, except the tensions in that narrative are quite different. Ahlrichs (2005) and Pelling (1996) xxii–xxxv are the most detailed comparisons between Dionysius' and Plutarch's versions.

³⁸ 8.54.1: ταῦτ' εἰποῦσα ἔρριψεν ἑαυτὴν χαμαί ('saying these things she threw herself to the ground').

³⁹ A further dramatic allusion in the mother's speech, this time to Plutarch's version, is suggested by Bonjour (1975) 173, who introduces then qualifies a comparison with the similar scene at Eur. *Phoen.* 432–4, when Jocasta attempts to reconcile her sons. The point for Bonjour is that Plutarch portrays the mother as fundamentally Roman ('elle est l'incarnation littéraire de la mère romaine').

⁴⁰ Gould (1973) 85–90.

⁴¹ *Il.* 9.526–99; on Althea, Escher *RE* I.2, coll. 1693–4; A. *Cho.* 602 f., Diod. 4.34.6–7., Ov. *Met.* 8.270–545. Schönberger is cited in Bonjour (1975) 172, who says that Schönberger 'a poussé trop loin les ressemblances'.

⁴² Pelling (1997/2002) 38, who understands the overriding emotion of Plutarch's Coriolanus as wrath rather than rage, 'rage' being Perrin's Loeb translation of θυμός (see further Pelling *ibid.* 399–400).

⁴³ Freyburger (2001) 37–40 discusses the vocabulary of anger in Dionysius, Plutarch and later authors (ὄργή, 38; θυμός, absent from Dionysius but present in the tradition as late as Tzetzes, 39–40).

face of a perceived slight, Coriolanus by fighting, Achilles and Meleager by refusing to do so.

Another Iliadic parallel is at work in the *Antiquities*, namely Agamemnon, when he addresses the assembly ἐξ ἔδρης or *ex cathedra* (*Il.* 19.76–7):

τοῖσι δὲ καὶ μετέειπεν ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων
αὐτόθεν ἐξ ἔδρης, οὐδ' ἐν μέσσοισιν ἀναστάς.

And among them spoke Agamemnon, lord of men, too,
from the place where he sat, and did not stand up in
their midst.

The dynamics are not identical, but in each case uncertainty arises because the seating and speaking arrangements betray the fact that normal rules do not apply in this situation. In the first instance, Agamemnon, wounded from battle, remains in his seat and does not occupy the centre as the speaker normally would. His position in the council is therefore undercut by his inability to conform to its rules of address. This lack of clarity adds to Agamemnon's defensiveness, which shines through when he asks not to be interrupted (*Il.* 19.79–80). Coriolanus, on the other hand, neither obeys his mother nor asserts authority over her. Veturia asks him (*παρεκάλει*, 8.45.2) to sit in the seat from which he dispenses justice.⁴⁴ Coriolanus does not sit exactly where his mother asks, but has his seat brought down to be on a level with her. The consequent lack of clarity leads Coriolanus to interrupt his mother when she first attempts her speech.⁴⁵ In the Dionysian dialogue, Veturia is also at fault, because she starts her speech inappropriately. In the first part of her speech, she speaks about the other women in the embassy, who are not related to Coriolanus, and he interrupts her: the interruption has occurred because the

⁴⁴ 8.45.2: ἡ δὲ ... παρεκάλει τ' αὐτόν, ἐν ᾧ καθεζόμενος εἰώθει χωρίῳ δικάζειν τοῖς ἄλλοις, ἐν τούτῳ καθίσαι. ('She ... bade him be seated where he was wont to sit when administering justice to his troops.')

⁴⁵ 8.47.1: ἔτι δ' αὐτῆς λεγούσης ὑπολαβὼν ὁ Μάρκιος εἶπεν ... ('While she was yet speaking, Marcius interrupted her and said ...').

lines of authority have not been clearly agreed. That is why, when Veturia speaks again, this time at length about her relationship with Coriolanus, the tie which binds them becomes clear, and Coriolanus does not interrupt her.

The Iliadic parallel works insofar as just as things are different for Agamemnon now that Achilles has returned, so are things different for Coriolanus now that his mother has arrived. So rather than specific heroic or tragic references, we are instead loaded with a wealth of references from both, as Coriolanus' situation is raised to heroic levels.⁴⁶ This heroic level is reinforced when Veturia refers to the Furies and to Coriolanus feeling shame before the guilt of matricide, τὸ μητροκτόνον ἄγος αἰδούμενος (8.51.2). The language of shame and matricide is thunderously heroic.⁴⁷ It also demonstrates the nearing of the fulfilment of a prediction made by Minucius at 8.28.3, that Coriolanus would be called μητροκτόνος. Minucius had surely not anticipated that Coriolanus' own mother would use that term against him; the human prophecy is right, but in an unexpected way. Yet it is only when it is used by Veturia that the threat is effective. At 8.33.4, when Minucius says it, Coriolanus insists that the Furies will only pursue him if he abandons his new allies. The parallel with Orestes is obviously ironic, as it is exile which draws Coriolanus towards matricide, while it was matricide which forced

⁴⁶ On the appellation of Coriolanus as a hero in the *Antiquities*, see Freyburger (2001) 31, who suggests that when ἀνὴρ is attached to Coriolanus, it might ('pourrait') best be translated by *héros*, which in turn might best be translated 'champion', as she goes on to argue in detail; I am not sure that ἀνὴρ does not simply function as the Greek for *vir* in this instance. On the importance of manliness to the tradition of Coriolanus, which is especially present in Plutarch's version, see, e.g., Duff (1999) 210 and subsequent discussion.

⁴⁷ All instances relate to the Atreids: A. *Ag.* 281, 1281; *Eum.* 102, 202, 427, 492, 595; Eur. *Or.* 587, 1559, 1649; *El.* 975; cf. *Or.* 48, 887; *Iph. Tau.* 1200 and *Troad.* 363; in Latin, Cic. *Q. Fr.* 1.2.2 (it is plausible that Dionysius may have seen some of Cicero's published letters: Nep. *Att.* 16.2–4; Shackleton Bailey (1965) 59–76). There is an excellent parallel (itself much cited) at Cassius Dio 66.16.6, of Nero, bringing in Alcmeon too (cf. Suet. *Ner.* 21; Aus. *De XII Caes.* 35).

Orestes into exile. In the end, and directly as a result of his mother's long speech and supplication (8.48–53), Coriolanus calls off the campaign before he can become a *μητροκτόνος*.

Let us return to the beginning. Personal and public space are now accompanied by personal and public grief. Coriolanus and his mother struggled to reconcile their own natures with the demands placed upon them by being Roman. Personal and public concerns coincide until the personal finally swallows the public. Dionysius plays these Roman tensions against a backdrop of a heroic and tragic Greece. He plays inventively with speech to show the genuine affection mother and son each had for the other; and through these means, we saw why the son finally obeyed.

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