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Shifting boundaries: *Philotimia* in democratic Athens and in Plutarch’s *Lives*

**Abstract:** This chapter explores Plutarch’s relationship to the Greek past, by discussing his use of a key concept, that of *philotimia*, in contexts related to Athenian democracy. To this end, I examine *philotimia* in Thucydides and Demosthenes vis-à-vis Plutarch’s readings of *philotimia*, especially in his *Lives* of Athenian heroes of the classical period. The comparison between the sources focuses on two topics. Firstly, I consider differences in the conceptual construction of *philotimia*. In Plutarch, I argue, *philotimia* seems to be more of a trait that inhabits the hero and is part of his character as well as of his personality. Its manifestation, good or bad, is presented firstly as a matter of the individual’s choices which are undoubtedly, yet only secondarily, informed by external stimuli, while at the same time specific socio-political norms do not seem to delimit the range and quality of *philotimia* manifestations. *Philotimia* within Athenian democracy, on the other hand, should be seen more as a civic virtue and as a social construct, the quality of which is primarily informed from without: its manifestation and, more importantly, its representation in public discourse is delimited within specific contexts, metaphorical and literal. As I argue, this is how democratic ideology managed to tame this dangerous as well as much needed virtue. Secondly, I look closely at two separate ways in which *philotimia* can be manifested in democratic Athens, that is, as private and public *philotimia*, and I examine how the individual’s private motivation is represented in each case. As we will see in Thucydides and Demosthenes, the fields of private and public *philotimia* are defined quite clearly, and different connotations are attributed to *philotimia* in each respective case. On the contrary, *philotimia* in Plutarch, as an individual quality informed from within, is not further defined as private or public: the motivation of the agent who is *philotimos* can be negative or positive according to his good or bad quality and depending on the specific occasion of manifestation at hand. As I conclude, the difference between Plutarch and democratic sources is a product of different moral purposes and generic demands.

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This chapter explores Plutarch’s relationship to the Greek past, by discussing his use of a key concept, that of philotimia, in contexts related to Athenian democracy. Specifically, I examine philotimia in Thucydides and Demosthenes vis-à-vis Plutarch’s readings of philotimia, especially in his Lives of Athenian heroes of the classical period. The comparison focuses on two topics.

In the first section, I identify conceptual shifts in the construction of philotimia. In Plutarch, I argue, philotimia seems to be more of a trait that resides in the hero, and is part of his character as well as of his personality. Its manifestation, good or bad, is presented firstly as a matter of the individual’s nature and choices which are undoubtedly, yet only secondarily, informed by external stimuli. In this sense, philotimia can be understood more as an individualistically expressed ethical/moral quality rather than as a civic virtue primarily informed by specific socio-political norms and expectations. By contrast, in classical Athens, the manifestation of philotimia as well as its representation seems to be quite strictly regulated and controlled. Philotimia is presented neither as a flexible trait that can be directed by the individual philotimos towards any end, honourable or dishonourable, nor does philotimia appear in association with any kind of ambitious activity and objective. Philotimia within Athenian democracy should be seen more as a civic virtue, as a social construct, the quality of which is primarily informed from without: its manifestation and, more importantly, its representation in public discourse is delimited within specific spaces, metaphorical and literal, while excluded from others. In this way, the Athenian democratic ideology managed to tame this dangerous as well as much needed virtue.

In the second section, the discussion looks closely at the distinction between private and public philotimia, which is evident in sources from democratic Athens, and the relation of each of them to personal and public interest. As we will see, such a distinction does not appear to be present in Plutarch: when private interest and motivation are discussed, philotimia does not need to be qualified as ἰδία (private) and to be set against δημοσία (public) philotimia in order to express private motivation. Philotimia in Plutarch, as an individual quality informed from within, can be negative or positive according to the good or bad qualities of the agent himself and manifested in a wide variety of contexts. In Thucydides and Demosthenes, by contrast, as we shall see, private and public philotimia are sometimes clearly defined and carry different connotations. Thus, within democratic settings, the range of acceptable philotimia manifestations is closely regulated and public demonstrations of philotimia seem to be checked by the city.

Such a differentiation brings out the fact that philotimia as a concept is constructed by and employed within distinctive social contexts and according to different generic demands each time. This examination endeavours to bring to the fore the distance that exists between certain models and values of the classical Greek past, and Plutarch’s understanding and adaptation of such ideas according to the generic and moral purposes of his work.
Construction ‘from within’, construction ‘from without’

At the beginning of On the Bravery of Women and of Phocion–Cato the Younger, Plutarch makes a general point on the nature of virtues. He claims that in their expression virtues have many nuances and differentiations, depending on the character and the personal nature of the agent (Phoc. 3.3–4, 7–8; Mul. virt. 243C); yet this situation does not produce many different ‘braveries and wisdoms and justices’ (Mul. virt. 243D). It has been noted that such statements run against an approach that sees Plutarch’s biographical work as having been produced ‘predominantly from a character-viewpoint’, according to which Plutarch’s aim is to see the heroes of his Lives almost exclusively as embodiments of ethical qualities.² By admitting a degree of variety in his heroes’ expression of ethical qualities, Plutarch opens the ground for understanding these great men not merely as examples of fixed virtues or vices, but, more importantly, as individuals whose specific expressions of certain ethical qualities are peculiar to their personality. Thus, Plutarch may indeed have been primarily interested in the ethos of great men, but the various perspectives from which he approaches character and the details of and comments on a hero’s life also shed light on the unique personality of each man.

Following this line of thought, Nikolaidis pursued the question whether philotimia in a group of Lives should be understood as a matter of difference of character or as a corollary of the socio-political conditions peculiar to each hero’s case.³ Nikolaidis concluded that philotimia is indeed expressed according to the character of each hero, and that the socio-political environment does not affect the behaviour of the philotimoi; the various expressions of philotimia are primarily a matter of an individual’s choices and philotimia should be seen not so much as an ethical virtue, but as ‘a means or a motive’;⁴ depending on ‘its dosage’, ‘on the quality as well as on the quantity of the honours desired and sought after’,⁵ philotimia may lead to virtuous or vicious behaviour.

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4 Nikolaidis (2012) 52–53, quotation from p. 52. Philotimia in Plutarch has been approached and understood in various ways. The most thorough examination of the concept is Frazier (1988), with a brief, schematic representation of its meanings on pp. 126–127; Also, Wardman (1974) 115–124; Duff (1999) 72–89; Pelling (2012); Aristotle includes philotimia in his discussion of ethical virtues in the Nicomachean Ethics (1125b1–26), but not in a clear-cut sense, as he prefers to leave unnamed the middle ground regarding the virtue of pursuing honour. Depending on the occasion, the virtuous middle ground borrows its name from one of the two extremes.
Nikolaidis is right when saying that *philotimia* in Plutarch is primarily a matter of dosage and quality of honours sought after, in other words, that the *philotimos* should also be *philokalos* if his behaviour is to be praised. Selecting a specific activity to demonstrate one’s *philotimia* in proper or improper dosages seems to be in Plutarch primarily a matter of individual choice. At the same time, though, we cannot disregard the role that the socio-political environment plays in the moral and ethical development of an individual: character and personality and, by extension, personal taste and preference, virtue and/or vice are all informed to a wide extent by social norms and are all developed ‘in dialogue with’ specific socio-political circumstances. Frazier has shown that in the *Lives* an individual’s ambition may be affected by the historical, political and ethical contexts in which he develops and thus ambition and *philotimia* are not one and the same thing in Sparta, in classical Athens, in Hellenistic times and in Rome. Nonetheless, the specific generic demands of biography place the individual in the limelight and lead indeed Plutarch to give priority to individual initiative and to internal, psychological factors in his presentation of *philotimoi* individuals. *Philotimia* in Plutarch is a moral quality that inhabits in the soul of an individual and can go right or wrong depending on the agent’s nature, choices and responses to external stimuli.

The situation was not the same in fifth and mostly fourth century Athens where the focus shifted from the individual to the collective: the socio-political norms of democracy demanded from the citizens specific manifestations of *philotimia* beneficial to the collective and consequently the range and quality of the activities in which an individual could demonstrate his *philotimia* were more clearly defined. In democratic Athens, *philotimia* as a civic virtue is a social construct and thus its quality and the range of its manifestations that are considered appropriate is primarily informed and regulated by the socio-political standards of democracy in accordance with collective interest and not by the nature and psychological condition of individual agents. Thus, if we want to understand the conceptual shifts in the meaning of *philotimia* in Plutarch vis-à-vis democratic Athens, we should endeavour to explain the way in which *philotimia* is constructed and functions in each case.

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6 In many cases, though, *philotimia/to philotimon* seem to control the individual rather than the other way round. See, e.g., Pyrrh. 30.1; Alc. 34.2; Comp. Lys. et Sull. 4.2.

7 On the idea of the ‘self in dialogue’, see Gill (1996), esp. 14–16 (for a brief introduction to the idea); Also, Gill (1996) 85–86 on his model of ‘self’ as ‘a psychological agent’ and as ‘an ethical agent’.


9 What interests me is how *philotimia* is presented as being constructed and functioning in the sources, not the probably unanswerable and empirical question of how it is constructed and functioning ‘in reality’. See Skinner (2002) 85: ‘... as soon as we see that there is no determinate idea to which various writers contributed, but only a variety of statements made by a variety of different agents with a variety of different intentions, what we are seeing is that there is no history of the idea to be written. There is only a history of its various uses, and of the varying intentions with which it was used. ... the persistence of particular expressions tells us nothing reliable about the persistence
In Plutarch *philotimia* is quite often seen as a psychological condition and is recognised as a quality pre-existent within an individual that is then manifested in diverse ways in response to external stimuli. In the *Life of Alcibiades*, for example, we find *philotimia* in this ‘stand-by’ mode as a characteristic of the hero that can go right and wrong. Alcibiades’ flatterers throw him into political activities that do not suit his age by appealing to his *philotimia* and *philodoxia* (*Alc*. 6.4). Socrates, on the other hand, when it was to be decided whether an award of valour would be made to him or to Alcibiades following a battle where both of them excelled, insisted that the prize should go to Alcibiades ‘because he wanted to increase his [Alcibiades’] *philotimon* in honourable undertakings’ (*Alc*. 7.5). What is assessed is not whether Alcibiades is *philotimos* or not—this is taken for granted—but whether his *philotimia/to philotimon* is going to be manifested virtuously or viciously. *Philotimia/to philotimon* is presented as a quality that is *a priori* inherent in the hero and which is directed by external influences either towards inappropriate ends (by the corruptors) or to noble undertakings (by Socrates). Socio-political expectations and norms are not presented as delimiting *a priori* the acknowledgement of a particular individual as *philotimos* nor do they put *a priori* restrictions on what actions should count as manifestations of *philotimia*; it is rather the creative virtue and/or vice of the agent in response to external stimuli, as presented in a *Life’s* narrative, which opens up the field of *philotimia* activities and of *philotimia’s* meaning.

In democratic Athens, on the other hand, during the fourth century and especially the time of Demosthenes where *philotimia* is more frequently seen as a civic vir-

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10 E.g., *Them*. 3.3–5, 18.1; *Lys*. 23.2–5; *Ages*. 2.2, 8.4; *Sull*. 3.4; *Comp. Ag. Cleom. et Gracch*. 5.5; *Flam*. 20.1–4.

11 Pelling (2002) 351 says that ‘[I]t is characteristic of Plutarch, in his best work, to bring out how the same qualities contribute both to a man’s greatness and to his flaws’.

12 Translations of Plutarch are taken from Loeb. In all instances, I prefer keeping *philotimia* vocabulary untranslated.


14 In a similar manner, the praiseworthy conduct of Titus when he served for a second time as military tribune as well as his contemptible chasing down and killing of an old and helpless Hannibal are both related to Titus’ *τὸ φρίεσι φιλότιμον* (*Flam*. 20.1–4, 21.1). The conduct of Titus in the latter case is explained in terms of his inability to restrain his passion as he was full of desire for δόξα and youthful enthusiasm even though he was old.

In democratic contexts, it was expected that one’s praiseworthy behaviour related to military or administrative offices could be related to his *philotimia*, but it is less likely that undertakings such as chasing down a helpless enemy in order to associate one’s name with his death would have been described as motivated by innate *philotimia/to philotimon* and passion for δόξα that cannot be restrained by the agent. Cf. the representation of Alcibiades the elder’s and Alcibiades the younger’s inappropriate *philotimia* in *Lys*. 14.2, 35–60, 42–43 and note the interplay among *dunamis, ponēria*, and *philotimia* throughout the speech.
The majority of the examples concern the Attic orators. As we will see in section 2 below, making the city at the Assembly and participating in policy-making are not standardized as *philotimia* activities in the orators, even though one would fairly think that politics and the Assembly were replete with honour and ambition. This is probably explained as a matter of prioritizing in democracy collective effort and achievement in democracy instead of individual contribution when politics and policy-making are the issue. See below.

Thus, the rhetoric of praiseworthy *philotimia* of the individual is absent from the surviving deliberative speeches of the fourth century. Advising the city at the Assembly and participating in policy-making are not standardized as *philotimia* activities in the orators, even though one would fairly think that politics and the Assembly were replete with honour and ambition. This is probably explained as a matter of prioritizing in democracy collective effort and achievement in democracy instead of individual contribution when politics and policy-making are the issue. See below.

Edition of the text and translation (adapted) are by MacDowell (1990).
*Philotimia* should not be judged by the magnificence and ostentation of any kind of expenditure and activity but only of those that are beneficial to the community.²⁰ Such undertakings would be indices of one’s power and excellence demonstrated in a legitimate and publicly beneficial way.²¹ By being wealthy and ostentatious without benefiting the city, Meidias, again, manifests his power. But this is an illegitimate manifestation of power that does not make one *philotimos* in an egotistical or in a negative sense—a comment that we would expect to find in a *Life*—,²² but makes one a *hybristēs* and not *philotimos* at all,²³ precisely because the public manifestation of *philotimia* within democratic contexts is usually positively evaluated according to established norms.²⁴

Demosthenes avoids chastising Meidias as being viciously *philotimos*, even when Meidias is presented as demonstrating excessive power in unacceptable ways. This rhetorical tactic, followed throughout the speech, would be effective only if *philotimia* within democratic ideology is understood as a positively charged civic virtue.²⁵ On the other hand, in the *Life of Alcibiades*, we saw *philotimia* as a motivational power that may lead to, evaluatively speaking, diametrically opposed actions. It holds a prominent position amidst ideas and notions that form the wider nexus of ambition, a nexus seen by modern scholars ‘first and foremost as a psychological re-

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²⁰ Cf. also [Dem.] 42.24–25, where we find what I would characterize as an ironic use of *philotimia* (in 24), with all the uncertainty that such a statement carries. The speaker calls his opponent *philotimos* and then takes it back in a strikingly ironical way, when it is showed that the activities initially associated with *philotimia* are not publicly beneficial. On the relation of irony, meaning of a text and intention of its author, see Skinner (2002) 111–113.

²¹ In this framework, Demosthenes turns Meidias’ trierarchy into a self-interestedly motivated expenditure that is not an index of *philotimia* but of cowardice and unmanliness (Dem. 21.160–167) with Roisman (2003) 131. Again, egotistical manifestations of power and selfishness are not described as negative expressions of *philotimia* and Demosthenes never accuses Meidias of being a bad *philotimos*. If one is bad, then he is not *philotimos*. On the prerequisite of public spiritedness when spending for the city, see Ober (1989) 226–230.

²² Cf. for example, Sulla’s *philotimia* that reached such a level that he made a ring, which he wore all the time, representing his capturing of Jugurtha (Sull. 3.4).

²³ Throughout the speech, Demosthenes builds his profile as *philotimos* and *metrios* vis-à-vis Meidias who is *hybristēs*, non-*philotimos* and non-*metrios* (e.g., Dem. 21.67, 69, 101, 128–129, 134–135, 160 – 167, 186).

²⁴ *Philotimia* as a civic virtue is very often explicitly expressed towards the city/people/homeland. E.g., πρὸς ὑμᾶς (Lys. 29.14; Dem. 19.173, 223; 20.69; 21.67; [Dem.] 47.54; 50.64; Aesch. 3.19, 220), πρὸς τὴν πόλιν (Isoc. 18.60; Lyc. 1.140), πρὸς τὴν πατρίδα (Lyc. 1.15). On the occurrence of this formula in honorific decrees, see in general Brock (1991) 164 and especially on *philotimia* vocabulary Whitehead (1983) 63. Note also a similar association in Cim. 4.7: φιλοτιμούμενος πρὸς τὴν πόλιν, ὡς οί τε συγγραφεῖς ἱστοροῦσι (*philotimoumenos* towards the city, as the historians narrate). If Plutarch quotes directly from Athenian sources, this phrasing enforces my point that such a representation of *philotimia* is peculiar to classical Athens.

²⁵ Whether Dem. 21 was delivered or not does not change its significance as a source for fourth-century Athens. On the debate, see Harris (1989); MacDowell (1990) 23–28.
Such an understanding of the concept which can go either right or wrong depending on the agent points towards an ‘individual-centred’ approach to philotimia. Springing from within, philotimia may indeed be activated in response to external stimuli, but at the same time it is not presented as being pre-defined as a concept by strictly defined socio-political norms and expectations. Philotimia in Plutarch remains a power whose quality is primarily informed by the quality of the agent as a person.

ιδία and δημοσία philotimia in Athenian politics

If we turn to Plutarch’s discussions of fifth-century Athenian politics, we see that at least twice strong dissensions threatening to set the whole city in turmoil are attributed to this dominant passion, philotimia, which drives the behaviour of powerful citizens involved in public life. Philotimia is not presented as being delimited by any kind of social conventions that would control its manifestations and make it serve the city. Quite the opposite: the only way that philotimia can serve the well-being of the community is by its absence from political life. The elimination, or not, of philotimia is a matter of individual initiative. In the Life of Pericles, what seemed to be a non-threatening distinction between ‘the people’ and ‘the aristocrats’ turned into an extreme polarisation of the citizen population because of Pericles’ and Thucydides’ hamilla and philotimia (Per. 11.1–3). In the Life of Cimon, Pericles’ initiative in introducing the decree proposing the reinstatement of Cimon from exile shows that in those days public dissensions remained political and personal hatred had no place in them: ‘Even philotimia, that master passion, paid deference to the country’s welfare’ (Cim. 17.9). If the city is to prosper, powerful individuals should make sure they leave their philotimia out of the picture.

If we turn to Thucydides for an account of the role of philotimia in fifth-century Athenian politics, it appears that, in a similar manner, philotimia is a negative factor

Frazier (2014) 491, who at the same time notes that philotimia is also presented as a principle that stands outside an individual’s soul, as ‘an essential factor in politics’.

26 Frazier (2014) 491, who at the same time notes that philotimia is also presented as a principle that stands outside an individual’s soul, as ‘an essential factor in politics’.

27 Here, I do not attempt to engage in a theoretical-philosophical approach to the individual philotimos seen either from a ‘subjective-individualist’ or from an ‘objective-participant’ perspective. See Gill (1996) who convincingly argues for an ‘objective-participant’ conception of self in Greek epic, tragedy and philosophy.

28 Also, Comp. Arist. et Ca. Ma. 5.3–4.

29 For a different account of this episode which also hints at private motives and personal reasons behind Pericles’ initiative, see Per. 10.1–5.

30 Similarly, Agesilaus saved Sparta by renouncing his inherent passions (Ages. 33.1): philoneikia and philotimia are presented as emphuta pathē, inner qualities in a stand-by mode the handling of which, even in public-political contexts, is a matter of individual initiative. Cf. Frazier (1988) 122, who sees philotimia in Cim. 17.9 and Sull. 4.4 not so much as an individual characteristic, but as an autonomous factor disastrous for public life; also Nikolaidis (2014) 360 with nn. 40–42.
in politics (Thuc. 2.65.7; 8.89.3). There exists, however, a significant difference between the two authors: whereas Plutarch dismisses philotimia single-handedly as a factor that can be proven devastating for public life, for Thucydides it is not philotimia in general, but idiai philotimiai that should be eliminated from politics. If philotimia had to be qualified by idiai in order to denote personal interest contrary to the well-being of the city, this could indicate that already in the time of Thucydides there was another kind of philotimia—δημόσια or κοινα—³³ that was accepted as advantageous for the community. Such a phrasing could mean that channeling philotimia towards specific publicly beneficial activities as well as defining the different fields of philotimia should not be seen as a fourth-century Athenian phenomenon (manifested most clearly at the time of Demosthenes), but may also be traced back to the end of the fifth century.³⁶

In Thucydides, then, the qualification of philotimia as ἰδία points towards different types of philotimia, private and public, which colour accordingly the meaning of the concept. Here, philotimia is not evaluated as positive or negative depending on the way an individual expresses it nor is it a matter of personal initiative to exclude philotimia from specific spaces, as it appeared in Cim. 17.9 and Per. 11.1–3;³⁵ quite differently, an individual who exploits politics for private considerations is not castigated for acting out of philotimia, but out of ἰδία philotimia.³⁶ In the specific field of politics, philotimia is described as ἰδία in order to be negatively charged as a personal, egotistical power and set against public interest. This qualification is indicative of a pre-evaluated understanding of the concept and shows that philotimia in general, that is to say unqualified philotimia, is not ex definitione perceived as a quality that can be detrimental to the public interest.

In Demosthenes’ time, philotimia is a ‘cardinal virtue’ of Athenian democracy, and its quality is generally positive,³⁷ even when it is qualified as ἰδία. The field with-
in which philotimia emerges as a civic virtue is specifically that of benefactions, especially monetary ones, whereas it is not explicitly associated with active political participation. We do not find the vicious version of idia philotimia denoting private exploitation of political participation, neither a virtuous version of philotimia related to political contributions, such as participation in Assembly debating. In an instance where Demosthenes discusses his benefactions to the state, both kinds of philotimia, δημοσία and idia, are positively charged and at the same time dissociated from his active political participation:

ἔξελθόντι δ’ ἐκ παίδων ἀκόλουθα τούτων πράττειν, χορηγεῖν, τριηραρχεῖν, εἰσφέρειν, μηδεμίας φιλοτιμίας μητ’ ἵδιας μήτε δημοσίας ἀπολείπεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ πόλει καὶ τοῖς φίλοις χρήσιμον εἶναι, ἐπειδή δὲ πρὸς τὰ κοινὰ προσελθεὶν ἐδοξέ μοι, τοιαύτα πολεμεύμαθ᾽ ἐλέσθαι ὡστε καὶ ὑπὸ τῆς πατρίδος καὶ ὑπ’ ἄλλων ἔλληνων πολλὰς πολλάκις ἑστεφανώσθαι, καὶ μηδὲ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ύμᾶς, ὡς οὐ καλὰ γ’ ἢν ἄ προσειλόμην, ἐπιχειρεῖν λέγειν.

When I reached adulthood, I performed duties suitable to my background—I furnished choruses and triremes, paid taxes, lost no opportunity for private or public philotimia, but was of service to the city and to my friends. And when I decided to enter state affairs, I chose policies which earned me many crowns from both my country and the rest of the Greeks, and even you, my enemies, did not try to say that those policies were not honourable.³⁸ (Dem. 18.257)

δημοσία philotimia is the good done towards the city, idia philotimia is private philotimia in the sense of benefiting one’s friends, whereas political activity beneficial to the state is carefully dissociated from both. It seems that not every field of activity where ambition was expected to be found was at the same time a suitable place for demonstrations of a citizen’s philotimia.³⁹

Finally, if we want to explore further the relation between philotimia and the expression of negatively coloured private motivation, we may focus on the different usages of philotimia in association with kerdos in Thucydides, Demosthenes and Plutarch. Thucydides, referring to the successors of Pericles, mentions that, κατὰ τὰς ἱδίας φιλοτιμίας καὶ ἱδία κέρδη κακῶς ἐς τε σφᾶς αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς ξυμμάχους

an. In fact, Demosthenes’ Philip could be seen as a reversed alter ego of Plutarch’s Caesar (cf. Dem. 2.15–21 with Caes. 17).

³⁸ Edition of the text and translation (adapted) are by Usher (1993).
³⁹ Thus, in On the Chersonese, a deliberative speech that offers a clear example of political participation in action, Demosthenes, in order to stress the publicly beneficial character of the advice he has been giving in the Assembly-meetings, has to leave any considerations of philotimia out of the picture: ‘nor have I been prompted either by kerdos or by philotimia, but continue to offer advice which does indeed lower me in your esteem, but which, if you will follow it, would contribute to your greatness’ (Dem. 8.71, translation from Loeb, adapted). This exclusion of philotimia from the Assembly does not make philotimia a vice; it rather shows that, at least at the level of public rhetoric, the field within which the individual could legitimately present himself as pursuing philotimia was delimited.
ἔπολιτευσαν, Demosthenes, projecting his incorruptibility, declares to his fellow citizens that οὐκ ἀνταλλακτέον εἶναι μοι τὴν πρὸς ὑμᾶς φιλοτιμίαν οὐδενός κέρδος; and Plutarch puts in the mouth of Nicias an interpretation of Alcibiades’ desire to sail against Sicily: ἵδιων ἕνεκα κερδῶν καὶ φιλοτιμίας. Philotimia without any further qualification can be employed in Plutarch for the demonstration of private motivation, but this is not so in the other two cases. In Thucydides (ιδίας and set against the collective: ἐξ τε σφάς αὐτούς) and in Demosthenes (towards the collective: πρὸς ὑμᾶς and set against κέρδος) the scope of appropriate and inappropriate philotimia is defined and its quality is evaluated accordingly.

**Conclusions**

When examining philotimia in Plutarch’s Lives and in Athenian sources, we notice a wide discrepancy in what counts as a manifestation of philotimia in each case. What I tried to show in this chapter is that such a differentiation is a corollary of different understandings of philotimia as a concept in general. Thus, in Plutarch philotimia is very often seen as primarily springing from within and its manifestation as matter of the agent’s creative virtue and/or vice and, therefore, the range of philotimia’s activities is very broad. In Athens, on the other hand, philotimia as a civic virtue is restricted within specific places and related activities while excluded from others and its meaning is qualified accordingly (thus we saw the differences between ιδία and δημοσία philotimia).

Such a differentiation seems to be a matter of different priorities: from Thucydides’ and Demosthenes’ examples emerges that what was important within democratic ideology was to specify as far as possible the range of honourable philotimia activities and provide the community with a more specific idea of philotimia as a civic virtue in harmony with democratic prerequisites and socio-political norms. Plutarch, on the other side, was interested in presenting to his readers how philotimia works as an internal force, how it can be harnessed or, conversely, get out of control.

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40 Thuc. 2.65.7: ‘For the sake of private philotimiai and private profit they pursued policies which were bad for themselves [the Athenians] and for the allies’, Rhodes (1988) adapted.
41 Dem. 19.223: ‘no profit was worth giving up my philotimia in your service’, MacDowell (2000) adapted. Philotimia is qualified by ‘towards you’ (πρὸς ὑμᾶς), which shows the public character of philotimia, and is set against private interest, denoted by kerdos. In the same passage, Demosthenes says that he is deprived of his private philotimiai (τῶν ιδιῶν φιλοτιμιῶν), referring to the honours that the city usually awarded to ambassadors upon completion of their duties. Here idiai philotimiai is almost identical in meaning with the reward (‘personal/private honours’) that Demosthenes expects; idiai philotimiai does not stand for calculated interest as the motivational power driving one to participate in politics and/or to benefit the city, but is rather the personal benefit that one enjoys as a reward after having done so. See MacDowell’s (2000) commentary on paragraph 40.
42 Nic. 12.4–5: ‘of satisfying his own private greed and philotimia’, Loeb adapted.
and destroy ambitious statesmen and broader communities, thereby providing his readership with examples of ‘a more descriptive style of moralism’. ⁴³

Literary sources on Athenian democracy, it seems to me, also provide a good example of how philotimia is successfully harnessed, but this time not so much by individual initiative but by the democratic city itself, which had managed to direct different kinds of philotimia to specific activities. Plutarch, reflecting on his heroes from a temporal distance, has the advantage of examining them retrospectively: judging from the outcome of their actions, he can attribute ethical-psychological traits, such as philotimia, to their character and personality in order to explain behaviour and motives. Fifth- and fourth-century sources on Athenian democracy, especially in public discourse, speak the language of the city: the orators, talking about themselves and their opponents publicly, had to fulfil certain socio-political expectations; and even Thucydides, who is reflecting on past events and is not the most ardent supporter of democracy, seems to be following the flow.

Unveiling the workings of democratically informed philotimia was a task that fell outside Plutarch’s scope. It, after all, revealed more the collective intelligence encoded in democratic ideology than that of the individual. And probably that was something that, even if Plutarch had recognised it, he did not care to stress. The broad field of philotimia that is constructed in the Lives and includes flexible and often contrasting manifestations of philotimia brings to the fore the gap between the stability of socio-political models of behaviour promoted by democratic ideology and ‘the dissolution of an apparently stable sense of selfhood’ that came with the rise of imperial ideology. ⁴⁴

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⁴⁴ Larmour (2005) 47.