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The Portrayal of Marc Antony in *Rome* and the Testimony of Plutarch from Chaeronea

Audiovisual media are the modern relay of historical issues¹. However, historical movie, including a series, is not considered as a valid scientific discourse. A historical movie is a screen story featuring life and deeds of historical figures². It oscillates between reality of figure's life and its interpretation³. In contrast to the historiography a feature film, including a series, is not a subject of revision. Moreover, a film creator selects the facts of historical figures' life and chooses those that correspond to his vision⁴. This is the question of relations between historiography and historiophoty⁵.

A screen portrayal of a historical figure is considered in terms of relation between imagination and off-screen reality. A movie is to convince spectators that a particular story presents real figures and their real deeds. In this term a historical series has an empirical character and it depends on historical facts. However, those facts are hidden in historical sources that are continually (re)interpreted. A historian (re)constructs the past within the sources, using a methodology. The vision of the past comes from widely defined historical sources⁶ and therefore, sources are the bedrock of historiography and historiophoty. The subject I would like to consider concerns the question, whether and to what extent the figure of Marc Antony featured in *Rome* series is compatible with the literary vision presented in *Parallel Lives* by Plutarch from Chaeronea.

The portrayal of Marc Antony featured in the series largely refers to the work of Plutarch. A series is a single action program, which maintains a continu-

¹ Rosenstone 1988, 1173–1185.

² Hendrykowski 2000; idem 2001; idem 2007, 18–19; Wojnicka 2009, 369–373; Litka 2010, 415–416.

³ Hendrykowski 2007, 14–15.

⁴ Ferro 2011, 214.

⁵ White 1988, 1193–1199.

⁶ Topolski 2001; idem 2008; Marrou 2011, 78–101.

ity of characters, action and topics. A series is multiplied, less or more mechanically, into episodes. Each episode is a discrete and coherent segment. Typical for an episode are: character or more characters and the environment in which the action takes place. *Rome* is a tranche series, which maintains a continuity of topics, characters and action and it is limited by a number of episodes. Each episode is not a discrete part. Particular topics are continued within many episodes⁷. Therefore, a tranche series gives an insight into evolution of characters. A series, as a narrative television form, becomes more popular, moreover, it has been changing significantly in terms of complexity of narration. Certainly, a series is becoming a social fact, nowadays. Watching series entered spectators' daily social practice and today, a series is a modern form of storytelling⁸. One of the most important elements of storytelling are dialogues. In a significant passage, D. Herlihy writes: *The makers of historical films must then resort to imagination. They must fill the screen with scenes or backgrounds that may or may not be accurate. Like Thucydides, they must also place in the actor's mouths words that were probably never spoken but that seem appropriate to the person and the occasion. The visual portrayal of most of the unique scenes of history requires fabrication*⁹.

A historical movie certainly refers to sources, testimonies and comments on the past¹⁰. Association between the *Parallel Lives* – which is the historical source (written, literary and narrative) – and the TV series *Rome* is considered as relation between literary and audiovisual culture¹¹. Written, literary and narrative sources are not only the bedrock of a filmmaker's creative process, but they are also an invisible inspiration. This matter refers to research on reception of the ancient history as well as on the ancient literary sources. Therefore, we are to consider to what extent the character of Marc Antony featured in the tranche series is similar to the literary portrayal, which we can find in Plutarch's work. In *Rome*, the figure of Marc Antony is presented in a political and cultural context. In other words, the question is if we can consider the *Rome* series as oscillating between historical sources and the screen portrayal, using Roland Barthes' words if *Rome* transforms *the reality of the world into an image of the world*¹².

Certainly, literary (narrative) sources are imbued with an author's subjective point of view and the same refers to the *Parallel Lives* of Plutarch,

⁷ Gałuszka 1996; Stachówna 1994, 73–89; Kaczmarek 2011; Kaja 2014, 64–82.

⁸ Sokołowski 2011, 188, 193.

⁹ Herlihy 1988, 1189.

¹⁰ Marszałek 1984, 137.

¹¹ On the relation between history and film see: Witek 2005, 154–180.

¹² Barthes 1975, 140; Kisielewska 2004, 205–207.

who was one of the most prolific and widely read ancient authors¹³. He was a well-educated Greek, not only a historian, but also a propagator of philosophy and biography¹⁴. His biographies certainly do not meet the requirements of scientific biography, nor historical biography. The overtone of the *Parallel Lives* dated to the beginning of the 2nd century A.D., including the *Life of Marc Antony*, is moralizing. Already in the ancient time, the work of Plutarch was to play the educational role. His *Lives* vividly portrayed figures with their deeds and virtues worthy of imitating and steering away from what was unworthy. De Wet noticed that Plutarch had a *capacity for creative imagination to transform what his sources offered*¹⁵. Plutarch affirmed that he did not want to be a historian or even to compete with historians. In *Life of Alexander the Great*, he emphasized that he did not intend to comment on history, he wanted to write a biography – he did not wish to focus on facts, he just wanted to reveal individual's virtues and disadvantages. His attitude towards writing biographies was similar to a painter's mindset¹⁶. He was interested in individuality and character, not in historical figures as participants of a broader historical process¹⁷. B.F. Russel affirmed that Plutarch considered Marc Antony as a negative¹⁸ and *emasculated* figure due to Antony's family connections, domination of his wives, his access to luxuries and his innate tendencies¹⁹. Plutarch effectively combined vicissitudes of Antony's life with moralizing comments on his nature.

It should be noticed that Plutarch enjoyed awesome esteem of his contemporaries²⁰. Certainly, his literature belongs to a heritage of the European Civilization Circle. Plutarch's works influenced on education, ethics and politics. The West rediscovered him in the 14th and 15th centuries. The popularity of his works reached the top at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries²¹. Therefore, *Life of Marc Antony*,

¹³ Nawotka 2003, 14.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*: 15.

¹⁵ De Wet 1990, 82.

¹⁶ Plutarch, *Alexander 1*: *For it is not Histories that I am writing, but Lives; and in the most illustrious deeds there is not always a manifestation of virtue or vice, nay, a slight thing like a phrase or a jest often makes a greater revelation of character than battles where thousands fall, or the greatest armaments, or sieges of cities. Accordingly, just as painters get the likenesses in their portraits from the face and the expression of the eyes, wherein the character shows itself, but make very little account of the other parts of the body, so I must be permitted to devote myself rather to the signs of the soul in men, and by means of these to portray the life of each, leaving to others the description of their great contests*; Sinko 1951, 242; Korus 2005, 262–263.

¹⁷ Nawotka 2003, 32.

¹⁸ Russell 1963, 121–137.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ Nawotka 2003, 16.

²¹ Flacelière 2004, 432–433; Nawotka 2003, 17–18.

as the bedrock of modern research and of culture dialogue, including art, is based on the author's vision as well as on sources, which he disposed.

The screen portrayal of Marc Antony should be assigned to the film genre called *peplum*, which refers to mythological, biblical and historical issues²². Carl J. Mora²³ wrote: *When the peplums moved to Hollywood, the genre came to express more universal themes than the Italian epics which often served the demands of Italian nationalism. The two periods in Roman history that Hollywood concentrated on were the 1st century B.C., and specifically the interlocked stories of Julius Caesar, Cleopatra, and Mark Antony.* The romantic and tragic story about Caesar, Cleopatra and Antony entered culture through Shakespeare's plays *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*²⁴. Popularity and timelessness of Shakespeare's characters guaranteed a success²⁵. At the same time, Shakespeare's plays became a *peep-hole* through which the 1st-century B.C. history of the Roman Empire could be reviewed.

At the beginning of the 20th century, a mute movie was overwhelmed by stories on Cleopatra: *Antony and Cleopatra* from 1908, directed by J. Stuart Blackton and Charles Kent; with Maurice Costello as Antony; *Cleopatra* from 1912, directed by Charles L. Gaskill, with Mr. Sindelar as Antony; the Italian film production *Marcantonio e Cleopatra* from 1913, directed by E. Guazzoni; *Cleopatra* from 1917, directed by J. Gordon Edwards, with T. Hall as Antony²⁶. *Cleopatra* (1934) directed by C.B. DeMille, with H. Wilcoxon as Antony was certainly a blockbuster on the subject²⁷. Classical movies based on Antony's story were released in the 1950s and 1970s of the 20th century, when *peplum* aroused public interest, remarkably²⁸. In 1953, Joseph L. Mankiewicz created *Julius Caesar*, with Marlon Brando as Antony. A decade later, Richard Burton played Antony in *Cleopatra* directed by Darryl F. Zanuck, Rouben Mamoulian, and Joseph L. Mankiewicz. In the 1970s of the 20th century, the role of Antony was performed by Charlton Heston – in 1970, in a re-adaptation of *Julius Caesar* (directed by Stuart Burge). In 1972, he performed in *Antony and Cleopatra*, which he directed. In 1981, a series production *Antony and Cleopatra* (directed by Jonathan Miller) was released with Colin Blakely as Antony²⁹.

²² Serrano Lozano 2012, 37–52.

²³ Mora 1997, 225.

²⁴ Mora 1997, 225; García Morcillo 2013, 200–201.

²⁵ García Morcillo 2013, 201.

²⁶ On a film portrayal of Cleopatra see: Arciniega 2000; Egypt in movie see: Lant 2013.

²⁷ Mora 1997, 225–226.

²⁸ Research on *peplum* see: Wyke 1997; de España 1998; Solomon 2002; Cyrino 2005; Lapeña Marchena 2008; Richards 2008; Burgenoye 2008, 74–99.

²⁹ García Morcillo 2013, 200–210.

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, epic screen stories on the ancient world were reborn with *Gladiator* (2000) by Ridley Scott³⁰. Worth noting are *Alexander* (2004) by Oliver Stone, *Troy* by W. Petersen, and *The Passion of the Christ* by Mel Gibson. Filmmakers have become interested again in the eruption of Vesuvius (*Pompeii* directed by P.W.S. Anderson), in the battle of Thermopylae (*300* directed by Z. Snyder), in the adaptation of *Quo Vadis?* (directed by J. Kawalerowicz) and finally, in stories on Hercules (*Hercules* directed by B. Ratner). In 1999, we could watch the series *Cleopatra* with Billy Zane as Antony. In 2002, was broadcast a feature film *Julius Caesar* (directed by Uli Edel) with Jay Rodan in the leading role. As we can see, Antony is one of the ancient figures, who are often *exploited* by (pop) culture. Certainly, the stories on Cleopatra and Julius Caesar eternized the portrayal of Antony in audiovisual media.

Rome series (2005–2007) – a British-American-Italian production released by HBO, BBC and RAI ITALIA – fits within the frame mentioned above. The series recalls one of the main film topics on the ancient Rome – the topic (established in the 20th century) on transformation of the Republic into the Empire. The series vividly pictures politics, power mechanisms and daily life in *Urbs Aeterna*, including a culture, habits, customs and Roman mentality in the 1st century BC³¹. The series focuses on the characters of Julius Caesar, Pompey the Great, Marcus Brutus, Marc Antony, Octavian Augustus, Atia and Cleopatra³². A lot of HBO's series change the concept of film genre and the narrative elements. C. Cascajosa Virino writes: *Los dramas de HBO también se han caracterizado por una serie de innovaciones genéricas y narrativas que no sólo distinguen las series del canal del resto de la producción, sino que sobre todo las diferencian decisivamente entre sí. Por una parte el canal ha apostado por exportar géneros muy poco comunes o directamente inéditos en series con per-*

³⁰ Lacalle Zalduendo 2003; Sciortino 2008, 202–203; Serrano Lozano 2012, 42–43; Elliott 2014, 1–16.

³¹ Polish Reviews of *Rome*: Ciapara 2006, 96: *Oglądamy polityczne rozgrywki i intrygi, bezpardonową walkę o władzę i wpływy. To wszystko zostało obudowane soczystym tłem obyczajowym, bo serial ma ambicje wyjść poza ramy gatunku „sword and sandals” [...] „Rzym” robi wrażenie jako widowisko zrobione z rozmachem; Felis 2006, 86: *Preczyżje widać tu na każdym kroku. [...] Historyczni konsultanci zadbali, by serial miał mocne zakotwiczenie w faktach. [...] Walka o władzę i korupcja, bezsensowne okrucieństwo i hipokryzja, nieślubne dzieci i wymuszone rozwody; Skorupska 2006, 81: *Główne postacie historyczne potraktowano bez uwagi [...] Historyczne postacie nie mają w sobie nic z bohaterów. Celem nadrzędnym twórców serialu było odtworzenie antycznego świata, nie w oparciu o stereotypy, lecz dokumenty. Pokazano Rzym pławiący się w luksusie i Rzym biedaków. Wojny toczone przez Cezara, intrygi walkę o władzę. Rzym który przestrzega prawa, ale nie przestrzega zasad. Słowem – Rzym skrajnie niemoralny i okrutny.***

³² See more: Cyrino (ed.) 2008a; Eadem (ed.) 2015; Elliot 2013, 576–593.

*sonajes continuos, como el carcelario con Oz, los gangsters con Los Soprano y el peplum con Roma*³³.

Marc Antony is certainly one of the main characters of the political-social-cultural plot and one of the foreground figures in two seasons of the series. The role of Antony was performed by an English actor, James Purefoy, who performs also for the prestigious “Royal Shakespeare Company”.

THE WORLD OF POLITICS

The political activity of Marc Antony is considered in terms of his public and private relations with politicians like Julius Caesar, Cicero or Octavian. The character of Marc Antony is featured in particular topics of the series, primarily in the dialogues.

Plutarch referred often to the relations between Antony and Caesar. He affirmed that the nature of these relations was professional (military-political) and personal. According to the author, Caesar valued Antony’s charisma, bravery and command skills³⁴. The relations between them were featured in the first season. Antony was pictured as Caesar’s loyal follower and warrior. Antony shared a grief with Caesar, who lost his beloved daughter Julia (s. 1, e. 1). He valued his military achievements and character. While they were both returning to Rome, Antony replied: *I applaud you. You’re about to enter Rome as a bloodstained conqueror, and yet you look as calm as a cup of water* (s. 1, e. 3).

The only person who could restrain Antony’s impetuosity was Caesar. One of the scenes features Caesar intending to dismiss Pompey with a truce to his father. As a result, Antony raises his voice and almost strives to pounce on Pompey. During the conversation with Caesar, Antony gives him clearly to understand that he disagrees with his decision. Caesar admonishes Antony not to challenge his decision in the presence of the enemies. Antony nods to him obediently (s. 1, e. 4). The same situation takes place when Antony is to stay in Rome to keep the order. He becomes angry about it, but even though he respects Caesar’s decision (s. 1, e. 5).

While Caesar was out of the City, Antony overwhelmed the entire political area of Rome, using the methods well-known to him. As a *magister equitum* he was arrogant towards senators, sassy and rude towards petitioners. At the same time, he affirmed cynically that he did not fit in with the role of politician. He

³³ Cascajosa Virino 2006, 30–31.

³⁴ Plutarch, *Antonius* 5–7; 10–11.

hands out offices in exchange for favors, silently disregarding the eldest senator Servilius and his wife Pompeia. He appears as an impudent warrior. The representative of the Roman people, Pullo, who was a simple soldier, raised a comment on Antony: *Mark Antony has his odd ways, there's no denying that* (s. 1, e. 6). This portrayal corresponds to the description contained in the work of Plutarch. In *Life of Antony*, the author refers to the account of Cicero, who claimed that Antony was not a friend of nobles, neither of decent people and he indulged himself only in one entertainment³⁵.

Another scene takes place in Caesar's camp at Farsalos in Greece. Antony is dwelling on maps. Together with Caesar they are considering a retreat. Antony replies calmly, sneaking grapes: *We shall just hale to fight the wretches here where we stand. [...] We shall crush them doubtless. Dinner for worms.* The next scene features a feast raised in Caesar's camp after capitulation of Brutus and Cicero. Antony, seething with emotions, is boasting of his battle deeds (s. 1, e. 7). He is usually pictured by Caesar's side, for example, in the triumph scene, in which Antony – dressed in festive clothes with a bay leaf on his head – is sitting on Caesar's right side (s. 1, e. 10).

Caesar's death had a huge impact on Antony's character. He solemnly swears a revenge on Caesar's assassins. He screams towards Atia: *I swear I will pee on them as they die! That I should run and hide from those... those worms!* – and then – *You know nothing of violence. Twelve mangy dogs can kill a lion. [...] I will go north and raise an army of monsters. Then I will come back here and I will crucify every last one of those son of bitches* (s. 2, e.1). This scene pictures Antony as an impulsive and vindictive individual, a pawn at political stage, striving for a showdown.

We can notice that he manifests the same attitude towards Senators. During the feast at Atia's (Octavian's mother) house, Cato reprimands Antony – he was still wearing a soldier's coat, although he stayed within the sanctified boundaries of Rome. Insincerely, he asked Cato for forgiveness. In this scene, Antony was pictured as a rude Roman officer (s. 1, e. 1)³⁶. Caesar's follower appears a cold-hearted player at the political arena. The film creators featured him negotiating with Pompey on behalf of Caesar, dressed in the soldier's coat and threading

³⁵ Plutarch, *Antonius* 9: *This course naturally made him odious to the multitude, and to men of worth and uprightness he was not acceptable because of his life in general, as Cicero says, nay, he was hated by them. They loathed his ill-timed drunkenness, his heavy expenditures, his debauches with women, his spending the days in sleep or in wandering about with crazed and aching head, the nights in revelry or at shows, or in attendance at the nuptial feasts of mimes and jesters.*

³⁶ Plutarch, *Antonius* 4: *For whenever he was going to be seen by many people, he always wore his tunic girt up to his thigh, a large sword hung at his side, and a heavy cloak enveloped him.*

with invasion of Rome. The only methods he uses is threading and intimidating. He is focused only on one purpose – on final settlement with enemies, as we can see in his relation with Pompey (s. 1, e. 5).

Plutarch describes relations between Antony and Cicero already in the preface of *Life*. He emphasizes that they both were hostile to each other³⁷. Plutarch referred to Cicero's negative comment on Antony³⁸. The author marked that Cicero incited *all mankind* against Antony³⁹. The series reveals Antony's intransigence and vindictiveness towards Cicero. He confirmed Cicero and Brutus, who sat in the Senate that he realized he was not regarded as a "merciful man". Pretending kindness towards Cicero, he whispers: "nothing escapes me". Looking in Cicero's eyes and squeezing his hands, he forces him to knee and replies: *If a pigeon dies in the Aventine, I hear it. So be assured, brother. If I ever again, hear your name connected with murmurs of treachery, I will cut off these soft, pink hands, and nail them to the Senate door* (s. 1, e. 8). Cicero considered Antony as extremely dangerous for the State (s. 2, e. 1). Antony – negotiating with Cicero, Cassius and Brutus – calls himself *a simple soldier*, however, at the same time, he shows his skills in diplomacy, oratory and state affairs. Antony controls also the Senate. He emphasized that he was supported by common people and by Caesar's followers. He proposes truce, avoids civil war, extends amnesty, he wants to retire from politics; (*I shall serve out the rest of my term as consul, and then retire quietly to the provinces where I will plough my fields and fuck my slaves*). He regards himself *a simple soldier* and he is still using extortion and threats; (*Well if we cannot be friends, then we shall be enemies. And I will do my very best to annihilate you*). At end of the scene, Antony and Brutus hug each other (Brutus: *Consul Antony. We shall be friends. Kissing Brutus, Antony replies: Friends?*). Afterwards, Quintus, one of the robbers who attacked Antony after Caesar's death, was immediately struck down by a blow of Antony's sword (s. 2, e. 1).

After Caesar's death, Antony as the leading figure of the Roman politics shows Cicero a list of candidates for offices (*a list of every dishonest rascal in the*

³⁷ Plutarch, *Antonius* 2: *This would seem to have been the origin and ground of the violent hatred which Antony felt towards Cicero; 16: When, however, the young man made common cause with Cicero and all the other haters of Antony, and with their aid won the support of the senate, while he himself got the goodwill of the people and assembled the soldiers of Caesar from their colonies, then Antony was struck with fear and came to a conference with him on the Capitol, and they were reconciled.*

³⁸ Plutarch, *Antonius* 9.

³⁹ Plutarch, *Antonius* 17: *But Cicero, who was the most influential man in the city, and was trying to incite everybody against Antony, persuaded the senate to vote him a public enemy, to send to Caesar the fasces and other insignia of a praetor, and to dispatch Pansa and Hirtius to drive Antony out of Italy.*

city) and he demands from him to plead for the candidates at the Senate. Noticing Cicero's disapproval, he claims: *Today I need you. Tomorrow...* (s. 2, e. 2).

In another scene, Antony approaches Cicero rapidly, almost striving to pounce on him. They are talking about Antony's lieutenancy – Antony is interested in Gaul. If he is given Macedonia, he will lose Italy and Rome out of sight. Therefore, he holds Cicero responsible for granting him lieutenancy upon Gaul. As a reply on Cicero's refusal, he describes in details how painful death was given to Crassus. The orator was immediately softened (s. 2, e. 3). Conscious of his own position, Antony confessed to Atia that he was holding his *leg on Cicero's throat*. The relations between Antony and Cicero grew worse after the orator did not appear at the Senate council, where he was ought to plead for Antony's lieutenancy upon Gaul. One of the senators read aloud Cicero's speech with comments on Antony like *drink-sodden, sex-addled wreck* or *Rome's Helen of Troy* (s. 2, e. 3)⁴⁰. The first term corresponds to Plutarch's note⁴¹. Antony is responsible for Cicero's brutal death.

In turn, relations between Antony and Octavian are featured as confrontation of ill-mannered officer and a teenager, who was so far only a novice in political stage. A significant confrontation of Antony and Octavian took place on the occasion of opening Caesar's will. Feeling overlooked, Antony is asking: *What else? What else?* and with a hint of jealousy congratulates Octavian. In relations with Octavian he appears as an ill-mannered and short-tempered soldier (s. 2, e. 1). In the following scene he is leaving the house. He ignores Octavian and refuses to pay him a part of Caesar's property. Octavian insists on Antony to pay him the due, however, Antony refuses: *If I did give you the money, what on Gaia's great ass would you do with it?* (s. 2, e. 2). The question of Caesar's inheritance raises another conflict. Octavian drove Antony to fury as he was handing out money to people. Antony considers his behaviour as an affront. Octavian proposes a truce and a public declaration of a friendship, but on the contrary, some brawl takes place between them. Certainly, Antony would have strangled him, if not for Atia's help. Afterwards, Antony is leaving Rome.

The Roman people announced Antony *a traitor* and *a mutineer* and Octavian was acclaimed *a noble patriot* (s. 2, e. 3). The defeat at Mutina did not change Antony's attitude. He appeared a battle-hardened leader and he decided to continue the struggle. He gave a fiery speech in front of his soldiers and swore to take revenge on Octavian (s. 2, e. 4).

⁴⁰ Plutarch, *Antonius* 6: *Upon this, Caesar took his army and invaded Italy. Therefore Cicero, in his "Philippics," wrote that as Helen was the cause of the Trojan war, so Antony was the cause of the civil war.*

⁴¹ Plutarch, *Antonius* 9.

Conversation of Antony and Lepidus confirms Antony's methods of extortion and threats that he used in political affairs (s. 2, e. 5). Antony emphasizes that soldiers appreciate *a little spit and dirt in their leaders* and he replied to Lepidus: *You are too noble for them, perhaps, too aristocratic* (s. 2, e. 5)⁴².

Due to Atia's efforts, Octavian and Antony become reconciled in Gaul and they discuss a strategy. Antony plays a role of a strategist. Octavian shows Antony a proscription list and he replies to him: *a brave nit you are in writing, aren't you?* Antony demands to put Cicero on the proscription list and, at the same time, he expresses a concern about brutality of his death. In the same episode, Antony increases the number of those who are to be proscribed, for he *has many enemies* (s. 2, e. 6).

Antony's battle-hardened spirit appears at Philippi. Calm and confident of victory he replies to Octavian: *If you need to urinate, now would be the time. Watch closely, boy. This is how history is made. Now let's have some fun* (s. 2, e. 6).

Antony leads the way in the alliance of triumvirs. The reconciliation was arranged at Posca's wedding. Antony comes too late, explaining that he drank too much at the celebration (*Posca's wedding yesterday. I'm afraid I drank rather too much. I could not get out of bed no matter how hard I tried. I have the most shocking headache*). Afterwards, it comes to a segregation of duties. Handing out lands, Antony assigns himself Egypt and the East (s. 2, e. 7).

Antony does not avoid corruption in political affairs. While he is discussing with Octavian the benefits of an agreement with Herod, he appears as a confident player of the Roman throne. He greets Octavian sarcastically: *Now what's new, young Caesar?* When Octavian defines an agreement with Herod a bribe, Antony replies: *pedantry... he's from the boy whose so-called father has been declared a god* – and he adds: *And still fucking your mother* (s. 2, e. 7). In the same episode Antony and Octavian discuss their further action plan. Afterwards, Atia encourages them to shake hands. Antony agrees, reluctantly. Octavian's mother proposes the wedding between the families. Antony mocks: *I don't care if all Italy burns, I'll not marry him*. Octavian agrees with the proposition. Antony nods indifferently: *I have no objections* (s. 2, e. 7).

In political affairs Marc Antony was featured as a simple, ill-mannered soldier, irresponsible in rendering decisions and, moreover, as a man who solves the problems by force, uses corruption, extortion, threats and who has no fear of using violence.

⁴² cf. Plutarch, *Antonius* 18: *He [Antonius] treated Lepidus with the greatest kindness. Indeed, he embraced him and called him father; and though in fact he was in full control himself, still he did not cease to preserve for Lepidus the name and the honour of imperator.*

THE WORLD OF CULTURE

Customs, ceremonies and rituals played the crucial role in the Roman world. Plutarch affirmed that boastfulness, mockery and alcohol abuse were typical for Antony. However, he also noticed that there was something exciting about him⁴³.

In the first episode of the first season, Antony appears as a soldier, who disregards rites and customs. The future triumvir ignores sanctified rites, which usually are performed within appointing a plebeian tribune. Boring for the rite, he shouts: *About time! I need a drink!* (s. 1, e. 1). His attitude towards religion is also featured in the scene of Caesar's preparing for the triumph, when Antony comments on dictator's clothes: *Jupiter in life. Resemblance is uncanny – he adds – It's absurd, isn't it? Dressing up, playing at being god?* (s. 1, e. 10). On the day of Caesar's cremation, Antony wakes up calm, surrounded by slaves, and he speaks to Atia: *I don't think I've ever fucked a woman in a funeral dress before..., I am not rising from this bed, until I've fucked someone* (s. 2, e. 1)⁴⁴. Suicide in Rome was usually a dramatic ceremony and so was featured Servilla's death. Antony watched a tragedy of Brutus' mother, with a cold heart. Servilla mortified herself in front of Atia's house, before the eyes of Atia and Antony. Antony's words – *Now that is an exit* – reveal him as a cold-hearted cynic, who always throws his comments around (s. 2, e. 7).

Plutarch describes Antony's wits in the following words: *Cleopatra observed in the jests of Antony much of the soldier and the common man, and adopted this manner also towards him, without restraint now, and boldly*⁴⁵. In *Rome* more suggestive wits and witty comebacks were twined into dialogues. Antony's manners are revealed within the scenes picturing an artistic life of Rome. For example, during the spectacle he laughs heartily at obscene gags

⁴³ Plutarch, *Antonius* 4: *However, even what others thought offensive, namely, his jesting and boastfulness, his drinking-horn in evidence, his sitting by a comrade who was eating, or his standing to eat at a soldier's table, – it is astonishing how much goodwill and affection for him all this produced in his soldiers.*

⁴⁴ Toscano 2012, 124.

⁴⁵ Plutarch, *Antonius* 27; 43: *For, to put it briefly, no other imperator of that day appears to have assembled an army more conspicuous for prowess, endurance, or youthful vigour. Nay, the respect which his soldiers felt for him as their leader, their obedience and goodwill, and the degree to which all of them alike – men of good repute or men of no repute, commanders or private soldiers – preferred honour and favour from Antony to life and safety, left even the ancient Romans nothing to surpass. And the reasons for this were many, as I have said before: his high birth, his eloquence, his simplicity of manners, his love of giving and the largeness of his giving, his complaisance in affairs of pleasure or social intercourse. And so at this time, by sharing in the toils and distresses of the unfortunate and bestowing upon them whatever they wanted, he made the sick and wounded more eager in his service than the well and strong.*

(s. 1, e. 9). Using a rustic slang, he does not avoid obscenities and curses. Certainly, all his wits are imbued with sexual hints. He swears repeatedly *On Juno's count* (s. 2, e. 2). He calls Cleopatra and Atia *whores* (s. 2, e. 2). He comments on loyalty of Lucius Vorenus: *He'd follow the Eagle up Pluto's ass*. Commenting on Pompey, he replies to Caesar: *He'll suck Posca's cock if asked nicely* (s. 1, e. 5). Certainly, Antony is a greedy lecher. Already in the first episode of the first season we recognize him as a lothario. Returning to Rome, he rapes some poor barbarian shepherdess in front of his comrades-in-arms. Antony was portrayed in the series as a *drunken lecher*, as we can see in his relations with Octavian's mother, Atia⁴⁶ and Cleopatra (in the 1st and 2nd seasons). Plutarch describes Antony as Cleopatra's passionate lover. The author affirmed that the Egyptian queen was the woman, who brought Antony to disaster as she awakened in him undisclosed and *fury passions*⁴⁷.

Antony's transformation – from a Roman soldier into an amateur of culture and Eastern abundance – was inspired by Cleopatra. Certainly, it was another significant manifestation of his individuality. Antony's transformation as well as his affair with Cleopatra is developing within the plot. The scenes picturing their intimate moments are imbued with eroticism and lust. Their passion explodes in Alexandria. In the capital of Egypt, Antony made up and dressed in Egyptian clothes flirts with Cleopatra, incessantly. In the scenes picturing their pleasures (s. 2, e. 9), he is considered as *orientalizing and womanizing*⁴⁸. His masculinity was transformed, as we can see in comparison between him – dressed in female attire – and Lutius Vorenus, a Roman soldier. He does not bother himself with politics and he strives to keep on feasting (s. 2, e. 9). Having tasted in Egyptian culture, he appears as “a traitor” disrespecting the Eternal City, its rules and even his own family. He does not wish to see his wife Octavia, nor his lover Atia, who are waiting for him at Cleopatra's palace. He prefers to lose himself in ardent moments with the queen (s. 2, e. 9).

In conclusion, Antony's cultural life was shown in the light of rusticity, sex and wine. Antony was pictured as a foremost feast amateur, *an insatiable male*, who regards women with disrespect, as seen in his attitude towards Atia and Cleopatra, although he cannot resist them. Sex scenes in *Rome* are a few

⁴⁶ On Atia's sexual relations in the series *Rome*, see: Cyrino 2008b, 130–140. On relationship of Atia and Antony see: Harrison 2015, 155–167.

⁴⁷ Plutarch, *Antonius* 25: *Such, then, was the nature of Antony, where now as a crowning evil his love for Cleopatra supervened, roused and drove to frenzy many of the passions that were still hidden and quiescent in him, and dissipated and destroyed whatever good and saving qualities still offered resistance.*

⁴⁸ Toscano, 2012.

minutes' sequences, not just a couple of seconds' interlude. In the first season Antony appears as a male sex symbol⁴⁹.

The series *Rome* maintains Antony's portrayal established in the culture. It combines the sources with a modern narrative form. The series is becoming more popular nowadays, ravishing with its grandeur of costumes and adornments. Some elements of *Life of Antony* can be found in the first and the second season. The series reveals Antony's typical attributes, although they were featured in compliance with a modern culture code. HBO, BBC and RAI ITALIA production is a visual study of history. The series refers to those issues of Plutarch's description, which are common for Antony's established portrayal. Thereby, the production refreshes and interprets the literary sources at the same time. It also updates Plutarch's description regarding Antony's nature and temperament, in compliance with the modern culture patterns. A series as such is imbued with sex and violence nowadays⁵⁰. In *Rome* sex scenes are a few minutes' sequences. In the words of C. Cascajosa Virino: *En Roma la sexualidad explícita es frecuente, aunque uno de los elementos más relevantes es la eliminación de la intimidación mostrando cómo los actos sexuales casi siempre se realizan delante de sirvientes, esclavos y familiares*⁵¹. As we can see, the portrayal of Marc Antony presented in *Rome* fits well into this canon⁵². In Barthes' words we can say *Rome* mythologizes the personality of Marc Antony.

Streszczenie

Osobowość Marka Antoniusza w serialu *Rzym* a przekaz Plutarcha z Cheronei

Media audiowizualne są współcześnie dominującym nośnikiem treści historycznych. Film historyczny, nieprawomocna forma dyskursu naukowego, jest ekranową opowieścią o życiu i działalności postaci zapisanych na kartach historii; to obraz zawieszony między realnością czyjegoś życia a jego przedstawieniem. W przeciwieństwie do historiografii, film fabularny, w tym serial, trwa nienaruszony, nie ulega rewizji. Twórcy filmu selekcionują fakty z życia postaci, wybierają te, które odpowiadają ich wizji. W szerszym kontekście jest to relacja pomiędzy historiografią a historiofotią.

⁴⁹ Raucci 2008, 208–209.

⁵⁰ de Groot 2009, 199–200.

⁵¹ Cascajosa Virino 2006, 30.

⁵² On reactions to violence, nudity and sex scenes in *Rome* see: Elliot 2013, 587–588.

Film historyczny zapewnia widzów, że za oglądaną fabułą stoją realne postacie i ich rzeczywiste czyny; jest zależny od faktów, te zaś są „ukryte” w źródłach. Problem sprowadza się do pytania o to, czy (i na ile) w serialu *Rzym* odnajdujemy literacką wizję osobowości Marka Antoniusza, przedstawioną w *Żywocie Antoniusza* autorstwa Plutarcha z Cheronei. Związek między tekstem Plutarcha, tj. źródłem historycznym (pisanym, literackim, narracyjnym), a serialem *Rzym* jest relacją pomiędzy kulturą pisma i kulturą audiowizualną.

Osobowość Marka Antoniusza uwidacznia się na dwóch płaszczyznach – politycznej i kulturowej. Na jej wizję zasadniczo wpłynęła forma i treść dzieła – serial transzowy, którego odcinki nie stanowią osobnych, skończonych epizodów, lecz poszczególne wątki kontynuowane są przez całą serię odcinków. *Rzym* podtrzymuje utrwalaony w kulturze obraz Antoniusza. Łączą się w nim informacje źródłowe oraz współczesna forma narracji. Obecnie seriale zyskują coraz większą popularność, olśniewają przepychem kostiumów i scenografii. Tak też jest w przypadku analizowanego dzieła. Motywy z tekstu Plutarcha pojawiają się zarówno w pierwszym, jak i drugim sezonie. Autorzy serialu oddali cechy, dyspozycje psychiczne triumwira nadające spójność jego zachowaniu, uczyniono to jednak zgodnie ze współczesnym kodem kulturowym. Obraz wyprodukowany przez HBO, BBC i RAI ITALIA to wizualne studium historyczne, wykorzystujące te wątki z dzieła Plutarcha, które ugruntowują topos postaci Antoniusza. Serial tym samym ożywia źródła literackie, jednocześnie je interpretując. Aktualizuje opisaną w słowach Plutarcha mentalność, temperament i umysłowość triumwira. Sceny pełne przemocy i seksu to już nie kilkusekundowe przerywniki, a niejednokrotnie kilkuminutowe sekwencje. Język bohaterów zaś jest daleki od literackiego. Pozbawiony wyszukanych metafor i patetyzmu epatuje mową potoczną, w tym wulgaryzmami.