

challenge and try to overthrow the cosmic order (p. 76). Her rage embroils in a cycle that feeds on vengeance and generation. Hence the originality of Apollodorus' Gaia resides in her active role in the theomachic struggle, unlike, for example, in Hesiod's *Theogony*, where she is well incorporated into the new Olympic rule.

In connection with Pelops' banquet, A. surveys once again the 'diacronia della tradizione', taking into account primarily Pindar's first *Olympian*. In Apollodorus the θεῶν ἔρανος does not have an intrinsically impious undertone. Rather, 'l'attenzione del mitografo si concentra, piuttosto, sulla rinascita dell'eroe e sugli effetti che conseguono alla sua bollitura' (p. 106), as a process necessary to produce Poseidon's infatuation with the boy and the subsequent abduction. The key to the understanding of the passage in the *Bibliotheca* lies in ὠραιότερος γέγονε. The predicative ὠραιότερος has to be interpreted as 'physically mature', as 'in a suitable age for sexual intercourse', instead of 'beautiful'. This interpretation puts the rejuvenation aspect into the spotlight. A. examines other examples of dismemberment and boiling with the intention of immortalising, such as Medea's deception of Pelias' daughters or Demophon in the *Hymn to Demeter*. These parallels highlight the return to ἦβη as a necessary condition to access a state superior to humans and adjacent to the gods. A. amply demonstrates that there are mythical variants in Apollodorus that reflect ancient traditions, such as this rejuvenation ritual, which, due to its entanglement with the cannibalistic episode, had lost its positive meaning for later authors.

Scholars interested in myth re-telling and the case of Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca*, in particular, will find this volume profitable. A. successfully acknowledges how necessary it is to understand the syntax, connections and associations that a mythical image establishes with others, in as much as 'la tradizione ha conservato la sequenza di immagini mitiche, che costituiva il nucleo più antico dei racconti, pur attribuendo loro valori e giustificazione diversi' (p. 122). A.'s fruitful method helps us recognise the processes that create an original narrative in a particular temporal stratum of the tradition.

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A NEW SURVEY OF PLUTARCH

ROSKAM (G.) *Plutarch. (Greece & Rome New Surveys in the Classics 47.)* Pp. vi + 211. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, on behalf of the Classical Association, 2021. Paper, £16.99. ISBN: 978-1-009-10822-5.

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R. undertook a daunting challenge in this volume: to survey one of antiquity's most prolific and polymathic authors in a mere 166 pages of text. The last English-language monograph to attempt such a survey was published 20 years ago (R. Lamberton [2001]), during which time research on all aspects of Plutarch's work has only increased. R., however, has more than met the challenge, presenting his reading with a compelling unified theory of Plutarch's thought and a thorough demonstration of its manifestation in text. Not only that, but R. accomplishes this feat with a lively and engaging style that invites readers

to take pleasure in thinking with Plutarch as much as R. himself does. The result is an invaluable resource for students of Plutarch at all levels, from advanced undergraduates and graduate students preparing for exams to specialists in any niche of Plutarchan studies who are seeking to contextualise their work within the larger corpus.

The success of this work is due to R.'s approach to Plutarch as a thinker, who looked upon all aspects of his world with an open-minded curiosity, gentle humanity and desire for the truth. The first chapter, 'Plutarch's Life', does an admirable job of combining the sure evidence we have about Plutarch's upbringing, career and personal life with our current understanding of the historical and social milieu of the first and second centuries CE. In this way R. fills in any gaps in Plutarch's biography with what we could reasonably expect for a man of his time, place and status. The chapter therefore serves as a reconstructed portrait of Plutarch as an individual as well as a likely model of the lives of his Greek and Roman elite contemporaries about whom less is known for certain.

In the rest of the volume R. eschews an expected *Lives vs Moralia* structure for a more integrative and scaffolded series of six chapters, taking the reading from the foundations of Plutarch's philosophical perspective in Middle Platonism, to his ecumenical search for truth in any field in his dialogic works, to his understanding of character and ethical development, to his use of historical figures as fodder for philosophical reflection in the *Lives*, and finally upwards to Plutarch's theology. The thread that ties these chapters together is a focus on Plutarch's consistent attitude of *zetesis* or a seeking or searching approach to the truth: for Plutarch 'a good philosopher raises an interesting question and then comes up with different answers' (p. 22). Through a careful reading of texts including *Platonic Questions* and *On the E at Delphi*, R. demonstrates that Plutarch does not simply designate one right answer among the many options he presents, but rather that each solution has 'a relative value on [its] own, and omitting them would mean a clear loss in our attempt to reach the truth' (p. 23). This concept of a zetetic approach becomes the key to unlock many of Plutarch's mysteries and a warning to readers that attempting to determine which answer is truly 'Plutarch's' is an inaccurate oversimplification of a much more complicated picture.

In turning to Plutarch's dialogic works in Chapter 3, 'Learning in Abundance: the Ramifications of Plutarch's Erudition', R. examines how *zetesis*, combined with a strong grasp of traditional knowledge, becomes situated in lively social settings. Plutarch's sympotic and other dialogic literature includes a diverse array of Greek and Roman interlocutors, united by a shared interest in having a good time while seeking for the truth of whatever topic they may alight upon. These interlocutors do more than allow Plutarch to show off his network of elite contacts; they also give him the opportunity to present an even wider array of approaches to a particular problem, whether it is that of the doctor, grammarian, historian, philosopher or statesman. R. deftly demonstrates that these texts are models of *syzetesis*, a collective search for the truth, which is constructive, rather than degrading, in its friendly mode of intellectual competition. The following chapter, 'The Complicated Path to Virtue: Plutarch's Ethical Thinking', again illustrates the centrality of *zetesis*, rather than prescriptiveness, in Plutarch's writings on virtue. R. shows the consistency in approach between Plutarch's theoretical ethics, his practical ethical writings and his political ethics, which are all grounded in a sense of human reality, psychological insights and Platonic metaphysics. Throughout, Plutarch acknowledges the autonomy of his readers to make their own choices towards moral development.

R. commits two chapters to the *Lives*: the first being an overview of Plutarch's mode of writing (and reading) biography as a philosophical practice enacted on material from the past, and the latter consisting of case study readings of the *Themistocles–Camillus* and *Sertorius–Eumenes* pairs. R. is careful to highlight the multidirectional dialogues that

Plutarch creates in the *Parallel Lives*: Greeks and Romans; authors, subjects and readers; present and past; and from one pair to another. As in all of his works, Plutarch's open-minded spirit of *zetesis* is present in the *Lives*, and his many modes of parallelism in their composition invite his readers into the search for the truth, just as he models it for them. The two case studies presented in Chapter 6 are exemplary of the way in which Plutarch scholars have been reading the *Lives* since the groundbreaking work of C. Pelling, P. Stadter and T. Duff (among many others). R. uses the case study mode to illustrate efficiently the variety of outcomes that can result from Plutarch's consistent general approach.

In the final chapter R. traces Plutarch's upward gaze towards God, which combines a deep respect for traditional Greek polytheistic beliefs with a critical spirit and zetetic mind-set. The priest of Apollo at Delphi neither fell into superstition, nor did Plutarch's philosophical inquiries drive him to atheism. Instead, as R. shows through a careful synthesis of several essays, Plutarch adopted an attitude of *eulabeia*, 'caution', towards the gods.

In the end matter R. helpfully includes a list of Plutarch's works with abbreviations and Stephanus numbers. Yet the greater service to his readers, and an indication of his own erudition and deep study of Plutarch, is the 35 pages of bibliography, including an impressive and international array of works on Plutarchan matters large and small. The footnotes in the chapters are comprehensive without distracting from R.'s presentation. Overall, the volume appears error-free and well produced.

Critical yet earnest, detail-oriented yet concise, lively and scholarly at once: R.'s slim volume has captured not only Plutarch's works, but his spirit as well.

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PLUTARCH AND CITIES

ATHANASSAKI (L.), TITCHENER (F.B.) (edd.) *Plutarch's Cities*. Pp. xx + 378, maps. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. Cased, £90, US\$115. ISBN: 978-0-19-285991-4.

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As I made my way through this wonderful collection of essays that originated from a symposium in honour of the Plutarchan scholar Anastasios Nikolaidis, I found myself repeatedly asking: 'Why hasn't anyone attempted such a collection before?' Indeed, as Athanassaki and Titchener explain in the introduction, previous looks at Plutarch's use of the *polis* have focused on his political thought. They, in contrast, have arranged this collection in the hopes of discussing Plutarch's city 'as a physical entity and as a social organization with emphasis on Plutarch's representations of the intellectual, religious, cultural, and artistic landscape as lived experience in the present and past, and of the significance of the *polis* as a paradigm to think with' (p. 7). They have done so successfully. There is much in this book that offers new directions, while it also gives useful and rich details on topics that are essential to Plutarch's intellectual thought. The book is divided organically into four parts: 'Contemporary Cities: Travel, Sojourn,