

Chapter 4 addresses the much-debated issue of the role of fortune in the *Histories*, investigating ‘the possibilities of successful action that Polybius discerns against a background of high complexity and uncertainty’ (p. xv). M. points out that, in Polybius’ view, historical knowledge, when combined with practical experience, is essential to helping aspiring leaders prepare for what they may face, so as to perform their duties more effectively. This does not mean that Polybius is over-optimistic about human capacities for prediction and anticipation. As is repeatedly stressed, Polybius is perfectly aware that the implementation of his characters’ plans is always subject to a variety of unpredictable factors. In M.’s interpretation, however, Polybius is more concerned with exploring ways to cope with the mutability of fortune than with highlighting fortune’s astonishing workings.

Finally, Chapter 5, centred on the collective dimensions of leadership, discusses key aspects of Polybius’ presentation of the Romans. M. begins by identifying in the narrative of the First Punic War and in the analysis of the Roman constitution characteristics of the mentality and behaviour of the Romans that played a major role in the expansion of their dominion. He then turns to Polybius’ last ten books and makes a compelling case about the criticism often levelled against the Romans in this part of the work. M. argues that the history of Alexander has influenced Polybius not only in the descriptions of successful leadership but also in the way in which he handles the more problematic aspects of Roman rule. Thus, by pointing out similarities and parallels with the history of Alexander and also with Herodotus and Thucydides, M. offers an interpretation of this critical distance from Rome ‘which is not based on the details of Polybius’ life or his intentions with regard to his various audiences, but rather on his familiarity with central themes and ideas of the literary tradition to which he belongs’ (p. 137).

Overall, the book is well written and contains many interesting insights. M. combines thorough close analysis of individual episodes with broader-scale considerations of the *Histories’* overarching themes. His attempts to dissolve seeming (and actual) contradictions between different passages are usually convincing and reveal his excellent mastery of Polybius’ narrative. The volume thus contributes to a deeper understanding of the *Histories*, leading readers to appreciate Polybius’ work afresh. It is expected that all scholars and students of Polybius and Greek historiography will profit from this book.

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PLUTARCH’S VIEWS ON GENDER

WARREN (L.) *Like a Captive Bird. Gender and Virtue in Plutarch*. Pp. xiv + 365. Ann Arbor: Lever Press, 2022. Paper, US\$26.99. ISBN: 978-1-64315-039-0. Open access.

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One of the most common questions beginner students of Greek and Latin literature will ask, when they are working with a text in which women appear, is where the author falls on a spectrum from ‘feminist’ to ‘misogynist’. The question is problematic, given the inherent difficulty of applying modern theoretical (and political) constructs to ancient sources and individuals; while it may not be a helpful heuristic tool for understanding

ancient authors, it often sparks productive conversations about ancient and modern conceptualisations of gender, sex, morality and social roles. This question is almost inescapable when teaching the works of Plutarch of Chaeronea, whose profound interest in the moral education of humans led him, quite naturally, to reflect on women and their morality at both the most abstract and the most concrete historical modes. Plutarch created vivid, negative portrayals of women including Fulvia, Aspasia and Cleopatra; encomia of Cornelia, Octavia and Timocleia; advice to a bride to conform her mind to her husband's will (*Advice to a Bridegroom and Bride*); as well as a whole treasury of examples of women's actions that proved that 'the virtue of a man and a woman are one and the same' (*Virtues of Women* 242f). Depending on where scholars have looked and at what angle, Plutarch has appeared as a sexist product of his times or as a proto-feminist ally.

W.'s monograph is an important reframing of the scholarly conversation away from (re-)evaluating Plutarch on modern criteria of feminism to a comprehensive understanding of 'what Plutarch's views on women mean for women and gendered others, and this necessarily includes men' (p. 2). W. accomplishes this task with an impressive synthesis of Plutarch's theoretical-philosophical, practical-philosophical and biographical works; recent Plutarchan scholarship; and feminist and queer critical theory. Women and gender are not just a side interest for Plutarch but, as W. argues, virtue and gender are inextricably linked in his moral-educational project. She labels Plutarch's ultimate aim as *psychagogy*, a process of leading the student to virtue through the application of therapeutic ethics. Plutarch's psychagogy consists of 'the historical mechanisms and educational strategies that enable and encourage the internalization of this matrix into the very structure of the self' (p. 20). In the introduction W. extrapolates from the existence of Plutarch's female addressees Clea (*On Isis* and *Virtues of Women*), Timoxena (*Consolation*) and Eurydice (*Advice*) to build a picture of a primary audience of literary elite with a prior knowledge of philosophy and a secondary audience with indirect exposure to Plutarch's works (perhaps through oral performance) and limited or no technical background in philosophy. Crucially, women are part of both audiences, and therefore Plutarch's psychagogy must be understood as not only aimed at a male audience but also directly and indirectly at women.

After the introduction, five chapters lay out this complex, and at times meandering, argument. Chapter 2 provides W.'s arguments about Plutarch's psychagogic goals for men and women, and for how men should use Plutarch's material to provide moral education to their wives, and how these aspects of Plutarch's project manifest throughout the *Moralia* and *Lives*. *Parrhesia* is analysed as a psychagogic tool that only those higher in the matrix of domination ought to wield to correct and guide those below them; this standard helps us to understand better the conditions in which women's *parrhesia* is praiseworthy in Plutarch's narratives.

In Chapters 3 and 4 W. examines Plutarch's perspective on the differences between men and women, women's capacity for virtue, and the tension between ideal womanhood and the reality of women in Plutarch's time. His views are contextualised by comparison to the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions, from which he makes subtle but important departures. Virtue for Plutarch is inherently masculine and heteronormative, but W. goes to great lengths to demonstrate that vice is not inherently feminine in this schema, but is instead anything that goes beyond or confounds a binary understanding of gender. While 'male' and 'female' are categories of the physical body, 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are categories of the soul, which are then expressed in the signs of the physical body (similarly, other differences of geography, culture, social status, sexuality and ability, which W. states are 'interdependent and mutually constitutive' of gender, p. 22). Building on the work of scholars such as T. Duff, J. Beneker and D. Russell, W. does impressive philological tracking throughout Plutarch's corpus to draw together the consistent vocabulary that Plutarch uses

for virtue/masculinity and vice/femininity, and uses this analysis to show that the women Plutarch writes about with admiration express ‘female masculinity’ within a conjugal self, in other words, conform themselves to a masculine ideal of virtue, expressed through the limitations of their female body, performed within the context of a marriage relationship. Deviations in one or more facets of difference create hierarchies of power and domination, within which the virtuous free Greek woman can ‘rank’ morally higher than even some free Greek men who are vicious/effeminate in their souls, for example tyrants. This phenomenon is clearly evident in the historical tales Plutarch collects in the *Virtues of Women* as well as in the complex dialogue *On Love*. Plutarch’s model of moral education depends on his female readership buying into the matrix of domination he has established, willingly submitting themselves to their (ideally virtuous) husbands, in order to be able to dominate others who are of lower social status (children, foreigners, enslaved people, poorer people). Through sacrificing an independently defined sense of self to Plutarch’s notion of the conjugal self, his ideal woman gains a modicum of power by supporting a patriarchal system that will never grant her full power (Chapter 4).

Chapter 5 provides a far-ranging ontological analysis of *On Isis* and *On the Creation of the Soul*, to argue that Plutarch did not view masculine and feminine as directly oppositional forces in nature, but that instead his metaphysics have a tripartite structure in which Reason is masculine, Matter is feminine and Motion is chaotic, destructive and in some sense queer. While every chapter could have benefited from a clearer structure or signposting to guide readers along, the highly theoretical content of this chapter was particularly difficult to follow. In comparison, Chapter 6 brings the book to a more philological close by examining how Plutarch’s use of *andreia* and *malakia* (and related terms) in the *Lives* gives concrete, memorable examples of gendered virtue to Plutarch’s readership. W.’s reading of the *Artaxerxes* is particularly enlightening, and is an important contribution to the relatively slim bibliography on this stand-alone *Life*.

While the prose is dense at times, W. should be commended for the ambition and comprehensiveness of this monograph, which has surely moved the conversation concerning Plutarch’s views on women away from trite ‘feminist or not’ critiques. Instead, the complexity, coherence and consistency of Plutarch’s attitudes towards gender and virtue are fully revealed by W.’s careful philology and impressive synthesis of ancient philosophy and modern theory. Scholars with an interest in Plutarch or the history of gender will benefit greatly from this impressive undertaking.

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GALEN ON HEALTH

SINGER (P.N.) (trans.) *Galen: Writings on Health. Thrasybulus and Health (De sanitate tuenda)*. Pp. xxvi + 510, ills. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. Cased, £120, US\$155. ISBN: 978-1-009-15951-7. doi:10.1017/S0009840X2300207X

Of Galen’s dozens of surviving works, that on *Health* (known to scholars by its traditional title in Latin, *De sanitate tuenda*) is one of the most interesting to modern readers. Its