being made available with great scholarly accuracy, and they make one wish for more soon.

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PLUTARCH IN A NUTSHELL

R. LAMBERTON: *Plutarch*. Pp. xx + 218. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002. Paper, £10.95. ISBN: 0-300-08811-6 (0-300-08810-8 hbk).

Lamberton disposes his book in three chapters, followed by two appendices listing Plutarch's works, and citing some English translations and a rudimentary bibliography.

L. aptly characterizes Plutarch as a thinker and writer who constantly and untiringly interrogates the phenomena, asking what they *mean*. His inquiries yield a pluralism of explanations and interpretations displaying intellectual rigour and a deep sense of the abyss separating us from the truth. This characterization certainly gives his personality *in nuce*. However, in describing the discussions in the *Table Talk*, L. goes too far in emphasizing Plutarch's demand for a plurality of answers to the questions. Several discussions reach a conclusion, mostly delivered by Plutarch himself.

L. rightly concludes that Plutarch possessed a large private library at Chaeronea. For the *Lives* he read Thucydides and Herodotus and lots of other historians, and he was certainly widely read in philosophy, including commentaries. Evidence: the innumerable citations. L. (p. 16) assumes that Plutarch was not interested in logic and did not write about it. However, perhaps he did. The Lamprias Catalogue no. 56 cites a work entitled *Τῶν Ἀριστοτέλους Τοπικῶν βιβλία η′*, and no. 45 another one called *Περὶ τῆς εἰς ἑκάτερον ἐπιχειρήσεως βιβλία ε′*.

Plutarch was obviously well acquainted with Latin literature. He had a need to know Latin historical texts, but L. underlines his extensive knowledge also of the works of Cicero. L. acknowledges (p. 17) that he had a command of philosophical literature 'not as a thinker with only secondhand knowledge of the texts'. He designates him (p. 33) as 'a lucidly original interpreter of Plato', and makes an illuminative comparison (pp. 35–36) with Dante, who had NT as his essential background, just as Plato formed the indispensible substrate for Plutarch's philosophical thinking.

L. (p. 45) would leave the question of the authorship of *De lib. educ.* open. His doubts about Wyttenbach's suggestion that this essay was written by a pupil of Plutarch on his advice leads him to doubt even that Plutarch had some kind of school in Chaeronea. This is excessive scepticism. Plutarch's hints at his educational activity with young students are few, but clear enough. Incidentally, L. himself observes (p. 12) that Plutarch is careful to avoid self-advertisement, and he notices (pp. 46–7) that he shows serious engagement in pedagogic matters, as seen, for example, in *De aud. poet*.

Treating of Plutarch as a priest at Delphi, L. could have spared himself of a striking understatement (p. 56): 'Plutarch thus believed in the existence of the gods he served'. Generally speaking, L. takes a critical, mostly apposite, position to Plutarch, but sometimes shows a propensity to excessive, idiosyncratic (a term he loves to use) judgement, e.g. when stating (pp. 64–5) that the *Parallel Lives* exhibit a 'radical ahistoricity' and that this collection 'provides the new context, the substitute for history, . . . elevating Greece from its marginality'.

Throughout his book L. excessively underlines the importance of rhetoric in

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Plutarch's education and writings. Rhetoric certainly plays an important rôle in Plutarch's writings, but only as an ancillary device for effective display of the content. His thinking, characterized by truly intellectual mistrust of dogmatism and incessant inquiring about any aspect of our existence in our world, is always what attracts new readers.

Lamberton has succeeded in combining a critical, sceptic approach and an attitude of positive assessment in dealing with Plutarch and his vast bulk of writings. The result is a book that incites the reader to (further) study of this central intermediary between antiquity and modern times.

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PLUTARCH'S TABLE TALK

A. Caiazza (ed.): *Plutarco:* Conversazioni a tavola*, Libro secondo. Introduzione, testo critico, traduzione e commento*. (Corpus Plutarchi Moralium 36.) Pp. 403. Naples: M. D'Auria Editore, 2001. ISBN: 88-7092-198-0.

Antonio Caiazza has previously demonstrated his evident competence as an editor, translator, and commentator in his excellent edition of Plutarch's *Political Precepts*, published in the CPM in 1993. The present edition fulfills great expectations equally well.

The vast and detailed introduction bears upon the work as a whole, not only the second book. The author shows that he has indeed imbibed the cultivated, intellectual atmosphere of the Plutarchean symposium, where the majority of participants are men of nimble wit, who, whenever they meet, either in Plutarch's home in Chaeronea or elsewhere, seize the opportunity to make an amicable reunion, enlivened by wine, and devoted to elegant intellectual entertainment and partly more serious discussions. The characterization by C. appears entirely just and proper, founded on precise observation of content and style, personages, and environment, as well as the shape of each particular symposium, and thus gives a vivid picture of the Plutarchean circle.

C. uses a conservative philological practice, avoiding hazardous emendations, and succeeds in proposing some well-founded conjectures. At p. 154, 633C10, the reading <ἀδύνατόν <τινα> ὑποδείκνυς τὴν σωτηρίαν is plausible, and at 633D7 the author rightly observes that ταῦτα refers to the defects, and thus he adopts προσέτι, δόξας Wytt., Bern. At p. 160, 634D9 he argues convincingly in favour of <εἰς τὴν φιλοινίαν> Wytt., at p. 170, 636A2, C.'s conjecture εἶλκον is obviously preferable to εἵλκετο Hubert, at p. 178, 637C5, he rightly adopts τὸ ζῷον Doehner instead of τὸν ἄνθρωπον Hubert, and at p. 180, 637E5–6 ἐκ τῆς ἰλύος MSS Planudei (*Π*) is doubtlessly correct.

At p. 184, 638C3–6, C. succeeds in explaining a difficult passage only through the choice of πᾶν T instead of πάντες O (*Ω* by mistake in app.). At p. 194, 640C3, he preserves τὰ ἐλαιώδη T, probably rightly; at p. 198, 640E8–10, he shows that no change is necessary, while at p. 198, 640F1, Hubert's conjecture ἐμβολάσιν could have been put in the text.

At p. 202, 641C11, the author rightly prefers συμπτώματος Wil. to συμπτωμάτων Madvig, Paton. The generic sense 'coincidence' is likely to be expressed by the singular. In pp. 202–3, 641D11–E6, C. preserves καί after διαλαβεῖν, thus constituting the long

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