Laetitia Demarais presents a careful literary analysis of scholars of Plutarch, and more precisely, to scholars of Plutarch's dialogic style that outlines an intriguing similarity of dialogic style to those of the ancient authors. This volume includes 23 papers that were presented at the conference ‘Plutarch and the Hellenistic Age’, held at Florence in September 2004. According to the book’s preface, the conference was part of a larger effort to coordinate and promote research in Plutarch among European scholars. The majority of the chapters are written in Italian, French and Spanish, while Portuguese and English are represented by two chapters each.

The theme of the conference naturally gives some unity to the publication, and the editor, Angelo Casanova, has done an admirable job in organizing the volume and making it relatively easy to navigate. In addition to arranging the papers by topic under five subheadings, C. has provided four indices to the persons, places and ancient works cited by the contributors. Modern works cited are not collected into a bibliography, however. They appear in the footnotes or, in eight instances, at the ends of the individual papers. The index of modern names is helpful, but a list of works cited consistently appended to each chapter would have made this volume even more useful.

Much of the book’s content will appeal primarily to scholars of Plutarch, and more precisely, to scholars of Plutarch’s Moralia: citations of the Moralia comprise three columns in the index of passages discussed, while those of the Lives take only one column. Citations of all other ancient authors take just under five columns. The first section of the book, ‘Plutarch and Hellenistic history’, contains five papers, three of which focus on Alexander or his successors. In addition to these, Laetitia Demarais presents a careful literary analysis that outlines an intriguing similarity of dialogic style between the symposium settings of Plutarch’s Dinner of the Seven Sages and the Hellenistic Letter of Aristaeus to Philocrates. She is rightly cautious about arguing too strongly for the letter’s influence on Plutarch, but her comparative reading nonetheless illuminates the largely obscure context of his work.

The second section, ‘Plutarch and the theatre of the Hellenistic Age’, contains four papers. The editor’s own contribution surveys some of the approximately fifty citations of Menander in Plutarch. C. draws a general conclusion, that Plutarch saw Menander as a source for ethical philosophy, and then moves on to engage with recent scholarship in a discussion of the philosophical notion of eros as the unifying element of Menander’s comedy. In another piece, Françoise Frazier questions the application of the term ‘dramatic dialogue’ to the Amatorias, a particularly useful contribution in light of the recent interest in this work.

The third section, ‘Plutarch, Hellenistic poetry and literary criticism’, also contains four papers. One, by Christophe Bréchet, is a well-researched survey of Alexandrian influence on Plutarch’s text and interpretation of Homer. In another, Luc Van der Stockt cites textual evidence in support of Plutarch’s dependence on ‘Longinus’, or perhaps a common source, for his criticism of Timaeus in the Life of Nicias. In light of this argument, V. further proposes an interesting and, I think, convincing emendation of the Nicias text which suggests that Plutarch, again in step with ‘Longinus’, was critical of the prose style of Xenophon.

The fourth section, ‘Plutarch and Hellenistic philosophy’, is the largest with eight papers, no doubt reflecting the abiding interest in Plutarch as philosopher or interpreter of philosophy. Seven of the chapters focus on Plutarch’s response to particular schools or philosophers (Theophrastus, Chrysippus, the Sceptics, and Epicurus), while Cécile Grossel takes up the range of influences to Plutarch’s discussion of kolakeia in the De adulatore et amico.

The fifth and final section, ‘Plutarch and Hellenistic medicine’, contains two papers, both of which may well contribute to further study in this field. One, by Rosa Aguilar, catalogues citations of medical texts by doctor, the other, by Ignacio Rodríguez Alfageme, by category. The minor misprints in the table of contents notwithstanding, this is a carefully edited book and an important contribution to the growing collection of Plutarchan scholarship.

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