It is a common error to discuss late antique poetry with the preconceptions of the Classical or Hellenistic heritage in mind. But these times are different. This is an era, after all, in which the precepts contained in Theon’s *Progymnasmata* or in the handbook of Menander the Rhetor eclipsed Aristotle’s word. This book is a timely reminder of that fact.


The Italian Quattrocento has been called more than once the *aetas plutarchiana*, and with good reason. Plutarch was one of the authors most widely read in these days, as is shown for example by the enormous amount of manuscripts containing works by Plutarch, especially his *Parallel Lives*. In the volumes under review, Marianne Pade seeks to deepen our knowledge of the fortuna of Plutarch’s *Lives* in the Quattrocento by studying the Latin translations of these *Lives*. The seminal article on this subject is Giustiniani’s contribution to *Rinascimento*,¹ which lists almost all translations (P. adds a few more) and discusses the manuscripts in which they are found. In a two-volume work, P. builds forth on this work. She succeeds in enhancing our insight in the dynamics of reading and translating Plutarch in the heyday of the Italian Renaissance.

The first volume is a monograph on the subject, the second volume contains editions and lists of all sources used by the author. In practice, both volumes will be used together. I found myself in turn consulting the monograph, then an edition of one of the letters of dedication, then the monograph once more, and later checking the bibliography in the second volume, and again returning to the monograph. Therefore, the division in two volumes works extremely well. And to add some comments on the overall lay-out of this work, P. has tried to make the book as easy a read as possible and succeeded. E.g. more than once, passages are compared to each other in this study; mostly, these passages are printed next to each other, enabling the reader to make close comparisons. In the remainder of this review I will first discuss the monograph, and afterwards the editions and lists of the second volume.

In the introduction to the first volume, P. formulates three questions to be answered in this study (p. 15): 1) why Plutarch’s *Lives* attracted the attention of humanist translators at such an early date; 2) why some *Lives* were translated before others, or repeatedly; 3) what the manuscript tradition tells about the popularity of different parts of the corpus and about the way the translations were read. To answer these questions, she makes use of a well-known theory in

Renaissance research, ‘civic humanism’, and a recently defined approach in Medieval studies, ‘new philology’.

‘Civic humanism’ has been devised by the German historian Hans Baron. The main idea of this theory – i.e. that the rise of Quattrocento humanistic culture, especially in Florence and Venice, was closely tied to political ideas in the city states – has been criticized by Hankins among others. Nevertheless, P. believes that the nucleus of this theory remains valid, and rightly so, in my opinion. She convincingly shows that this theory can explain why a humanist chooses to translate a specific Life of Plutarch. Some may not be convinced by all her arguments and P. could have paid more attention to others reasons for making a translation (e.g. interest in the philosophical contents or a general scholarly interest), but, considering the whole, it is very probable that the translations of Plutarch’s Lives should be regarded in their political context as well.

‘New philology’, or ‘material philology’ was articulated in a special issue of the journal Speculum in 1990. Its main goal is not to reconstruct a single ‘best text’, which is caricaturally said to be the goal of traditional philology, but to consider each text in its material context, i.e. the manuscript. In this approach, all parts of a manuscript (other texts in the same codex, illuminations, marginal notes etc.) are drawn into the assessment of a text. This is also done in P.’s study. Another important characteristic of new philology is that variants between manuscripts and even in one manuscript do not urge for an apparatus criticus to ‘bury’ the ‘worse’ variant, but that every variant is studied and turns out meaningful in its own context. This last feature is only scarcely taken into account by P. It will be shown that more might have been gained here.

After the introduction, the first chapter discusses the reception of Plutarch in the classical and medieval period. This chapter strangely deviates from the remainder of the book in both style and quality. The style is far more descriptive, making this chapter a difficult read. It consists of an overview of every passage in classical times where Plutarch is mentioned (P. makes a mistake when she discusses the reception of Plutarch by the Neo-Platonist Proclus, since that author actually refers to Plutarch of Athens, not the one of Chaeronea) and a discussion of Plutarch’s fortuna in Byzantium and the Medieval West (scant). This chapter does not contribute much to the argument of the whole book; it should rather be considered a ‘status quaestionis’, which serves as a first step to the book’s actual subject.

The discussion of the subject proper starts in chapter 2, which focuses on the «revival of interest in Plutarch in the Latin West» during the Middle Ages. P. discusses the Institutio Traiani, a pseudo-Plutarchian work whose date of origin (either late antiquity or the twelfth century) is still heavily debated, and its use by the Englishman John of Salisbury (the Institutio is only known by fragments quoted in John’s Policraticus), who creates the image of Plutarch as a preceptor of a prince. After this first impetus to a revival of Plutarch, Petrarch provides the second landmark. He regularly refers to Plutarch in his works, often as the teacher of Trajan, and thus makes Plutarch’s name known, although none of his works had been translated by then. The first work of Plutarch translated in Latin is De cohibenda ira (1373). The translation was commissioned by Cardinal Pietro Corsini, made by Simon Atumanus, and later revised by Coluccio Salutati, but
did not gain much popularity. The last step of the Plutarchan revival in the Middle Ages is constituted by the translation of 39 Lives into Aragonese by Nicholas of Drenopolis (ca. 1388). When Salutati learned about this translation, he arranged for a copy to be sent to Italy. There it was translated into Tuscan. Although P. proves that this translation was more widely read than it is generally assumed, it was mostly neglected by Italian humanists. Nevertheless, at the end of the fourteenth century, Plutarch’s name was generally known to Italian intellectuals.

The chapters 3–8 discuss in chronological order all Latin translations of the Lives made by Italian humanists in the first half of the fifteenth century. The third chapter is devoted to Florence in the beginning of the Quattrocento (1390–1414). P. argues convincingly that the arrival of the Greek teacher Chrysoloras (who directly or indirectly influenced almost all fifteenth-century Plutarch translations) in 1397 had a major influence on the rise of Florentine interest in Plutarch. Her extensive quotation from a letter of Chrysoloras to Salutati proves that the former did his best to promote Plutarch as an important writer (not in the last place to stress the unity of Greek and Roman culture) and succeeded in so far that many references to Plutarch are found in works by Florentine humanists around 1400.

In advance of her discussion of individual translations, P. again stresses the importance of the idea of ‘civic humanism’. The rise of Florentine humanism was closely linked to the problems in the Florentine Republic around 1400. The humanist movement was a response to those problems and was strongly influenced by republican sentiments that could be found in the classical authors. In P.’s opinion, this focus on the republic can also be observed in the selection of Plutarchan Lives that were translated. Florentine humanists most often chose one of the Lives of Roman republicans, like Brutus, Cicero and Cato Maior. This is shown time and again in the discussion of the individual translations, beginning with the 1400-translation of the Brutus by Iacobo Angeli and later translations by the same author, followed by many translations by Leonardo Bruni, and ending with some translations by Guarino Veronese in his Florentine period. In her discussion of every specific Life, and of the available letters of dedication, P. focuses on the translations’ political context. In my opinion, P. has a strong case in linking these translations to ‘civic humanism’.

Chapter 4 deals with Venetian translations from the period 1414–1440. Whereas Florentine humanism concentrated on the Roman republic, Venice was from medieval times onwards focused on the Greek-speaking part of the world, and humanists merely shifted their attention from Byzantine Greece to ancient Greece. According to P. (following Margaret King) Venetian humanism was a patrician business, emerging ‘as the result of the final consolidation of the leading families in Venice’. In this respect, Venetian humanism is as much a ‘civic humanism’ as the Florentine humanism, but focused on a different example (ancient Greece vs. Rome) and expressed by a different group (patricians vs. republicans). P. uses this background to explain the notable attention in the Venetian Plutarch translations for the Greek Lives (made by Guarino Veronese, Francesco Barbaro, Leonardo Giustinian, and Antonio Beccaria). Again, this conclusion is supported with a discussion of the letters of dedication and other contemporary documents.
More or less the same approach is used in the following chapters, except for the fifth, in which the somewhat isolated Northern Italian translations are very briefly discussed. The sixth chapter treats again of translations by Guarino, who could be found at the court of Niccolò d’Este III in Ferrara during the 1430s. P. argues that Guarino’s interest in Plutarch in that period can be linked to the so-called ‘Scipio-Caesar controversy’: the Florentine and republican humanist Poggio Bracciolini defended Scipio the Elder as the best Roman leader, but Guarino and others rooted for Julius Caesar, in actual support of d’Este, whom Guarino – as P. shows – compared to Caesar. By studying Guarino’s marginal notes in some translations of Plutarch’s Lives (among others the Caesar) in a Vatican ms., P. is able to illuminate the prominent role that Guarino ascribed to Plutarch in this debate. Some new translations are also discussed against this background.

The next chapter focuses on the Roman Curia in the 1430s and ‘40s. It mainly discusses translations by Lapo da Castiglionchio, and pre-eminently shows how a humanist looking for a patron could use the translations of Plutarchan Lives together with the letters of dedication, in which the highplaced dedicatee was often compared or contrasted to the hero of the Life by way of flattery. It seems that, besides this general function of nearly all humanistic literature, the Plutarchan translations did not hold any special position at the Curia.

The last chapter on the individual translations discusses those of the remaining Lives, made in the 1450s. Apparently, Plutarch’s work comes more and more to be seen as a unity, and, generally speaking, formerly untranslated Lives are chosen to be translated in this period. There is furthermore an interesting paragraph on Florence under Medici rule, which argues that the translations in that period can also be categorized as part of ‘civic humanism’. The Medici tried to camouflage their absolute power by pretending that Florence was still a republic. In the letters of dedication accompanying the 1450s Florentine translations, the Medici are, almost without exception, compared to Greek and Roman heroes who liberated their cities.

The first volume is completed with a conclusion, two appendices (one recording the marginal notes of Guarino in some manuscripts, the other comparing two similar letters of dedication with each other), and a discussion of the printed editions of Plutarchan Lives in the Quattrocento. It is impossible to give an overview of all P.'s arguments in this very rich volume. The volume as a whole sheds light on many more issues in Quattrocento research than the Plutarch translations alone.

The second volume is a real gold mine for researchers of Plutarch’s fortune in Western Europe and especially Italy. For each known translation of one or more of the Lives, it contains: the incipit and explicit; the manuscripts in which it can be found; and, most importantly, an edition of the letter(s) of dedication. In addition, the second volume contains a list of all relevant manuscripts – of which use is facilitated by lists of scribes, owners, and dated or datable manuscripts –, an extensive bibliography, and, of course, an index of manuscripts and incunables, and one of names. P. states in her preface to this volume that she «cannot claim to have produced final critical editions», but her editions are often based on a collation of several important manuscripts and do contain an apparatus criticus. It is very clear that many hours of research and writing have been spent on this second volume. My brief discussion of this second volume does not
do justice to this tour de force. It is this kind of catalogue that takes research to a higher level, but it is almost impossible to discuss it extensively.

Nonetheless, considered from a viewpoint of 'new philology', P. could have made more use of the variant readings. For example, P. mentions the two different letters of dedication to Piero de'Medici accompanying Rinuccini’s translation of Nicias and Crassus, and gives an edition of both, but does not discuss their differences, which are, in my opinion, very significant. In the 'official one', found in most manuscripts, the Medici are praised, but in the other one, probably not meant to be read in public, but for the eyes of Piero alone, the Greek teacher appointed by him, gets the most praise. It would have been interesting to hear P.’s view on this difference. In a new-philological approach, a discussion of the marginal note in a figure on page 120, stating that Roman and Florentine religious habits were the same, might have been illuminating with regard to ‘civic humanism’, and a treatment of the variant readings between manuscript ‘u’, ‘m’, and ‘c’ in the letter accompanying the translation of Timoleon by Pacini (10.1) might have been of some interest as well. These examples serve to show that a keener eye for variant readings could have yielded even more arguments supporting P.’s main thesis.

However, these are just some quibbles that do not detract from the value of this very important study on Plutarch in the Quattrocento. This book will be invaluable not only for readers interested in Plutarch and his fortuna, but also for those who are studying the political and cultural atmosphere of fifteenth-century Italy.¹

Nijmegen

Werner Gelderblom


In the vast sea of Virgilian bibliography there are few dedicated studies of the hero of the Aeneid himself. This is partly no doubt because the topic is so large as to be virtually coextensive with a study of the poem as a whole, and partly because characterization is not a currently fashionable topic. In this Habilitationsschrift submitted to the Freie Universität, Berlin, Sch(auer) sets himself the clearly delimited task of analyzing Aeneas not as a character, not as a hero, but in his role as a leader within the Aeneid, as that role defines itself through the actions of Aeneas and the reactions of others, in deeds and words, to Aeneas as Anführer; the word ‘Führer’ is avoided because of its obvious connotation, and also because it imports historical presuppositions, of a kind that have often attached to Augustus, and that might prejudice our estimate of Aeneas as dux. Discussions of Aeneas as a leader have often started with the assumption that the legendary leader of the Trojan exiles is to a greater or lesser extent a reflection of leadership models in later Roman history (for example R. G. M. Nisbet’s classic article ‘Aeneas imperator. Roman generalship in an epic context’, in: S. J. Harrison (ed.): Oxford readings in Vergil’s Aeneid (Oxford 1992) 378–89), and in

¹ I thank dr. Bé Breij for correcting my English.