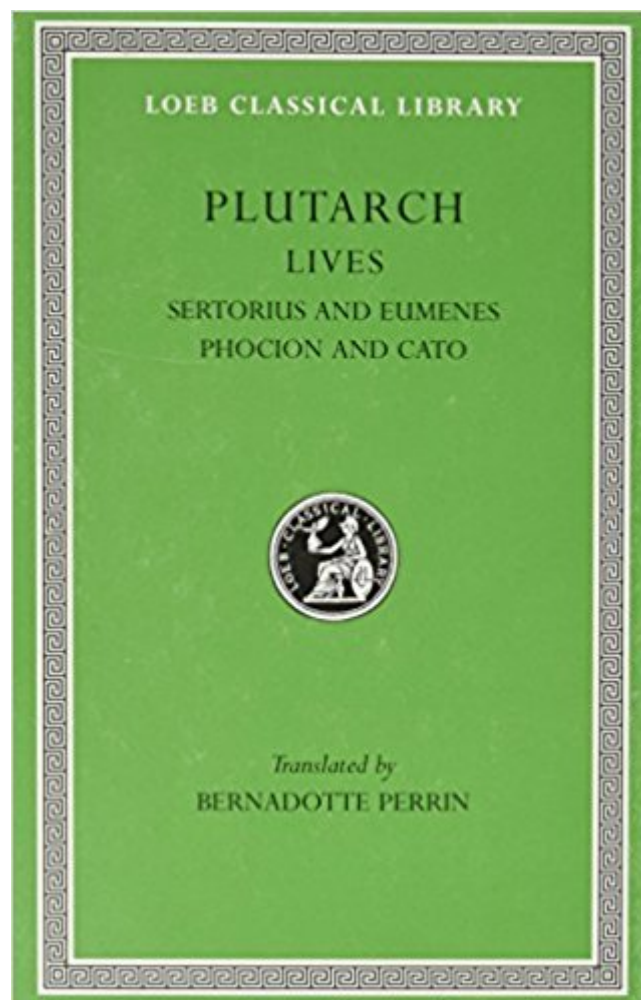




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Plutarch Lives, VIII, Sertorius And Eumenes. Phocion And Cato The Younger (Loeb Classical Library®) (Volume VIII)



Synopsis

Plutarch (Plutarchus), ca. 45–120 CE, was born at Chaeronea in Boeotia in central Greece, studied philosophy at Athens, and, after coming to Rome as a teacher in philosophy, was given consular rank by the emperor Trajan and a procuratorship in Greece by Hadrian. He was married and the father of one daughter and four sons. He appears as a man of kindly character and independent thought, studious and learned. Plutarch wrote on many subjects. Most popular have always been the 46 Parallel Lives, biographies planned to be ethical examples in pairs (in each pair, one Greek figure and one similar Roman), though the last four lives are single. All are invaluable sources of our knowledge of the lives and characters of Greek and Roman statesmen, soldiers and orators. Plutarch's many other varied extant works, about 60 in number, are known as Moralia or Moral Essays. They are of high literary value, besides being of great use to people interested in philosophy, ethics and religion. The Loeb Classical Library edition of the Lives is in eleven volumes.

Book Information

Hardcover: 432 pages

Publisher: Harvard University Press (January 1, 1919)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0674991117

ISBN-13: 978-0674991118

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 4.9 x 1 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #766,969 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #130 inÂ Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Europe > Greece #283 inÂ Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Reference & Collections #1026 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Movements & Periods > Ancient & Classical

Customer Reviews

Since there are so many of these darn things the review shall be divided into three sections. First, a brief description of the Loeb series of books and their advantages/disadvantages. Second shall be my thoughts on the author himself, his accuracy, as well as his style and the style of his translator. This is of course only my opinion and should be treated as such. The final part shall review what this particular book actually covers. The Loeb series date back to the turn of the last century. They are designed for people with at least some knowledge of Greek or Latin. They are a sort of compromise

between a straight English translation and an annotated copy of the original text. On the left page is printed the text in Greek or Latin depending on the language of the writer and on the right side is the text in English. For somebody who knows even a little Greek or Latin these texts are invaluable. You can try to read the text in the original language knowing that you can correct yourself by looking on the next page or you can read the text in translation and check the translation with the original for more detail. While some of the translations are excellent mostly they are merely serviceable since they are designed more as an aid to translation rather than a translation in themselves. Most of them follow the Greek or Latin very closely. These books are also very small, maybe just over a quarter the size of your average hardcover book. This means that you'll need to buy more than just one book to read a complete work. They are also somewhat pricey considering their size. The Loeb Collection is very large but most of the more famous works can be found in better (and cheaper) translations elsewhere. If you want to read a rarer book or read one in the original language then you can't do better than the Loeb Editions. There are 11 volumes of Plutarch's Lives as well as a further 16 of his Moralia in the Loeb series which includes all his known works. Plutarch is without doubt my favorite Classical author. His books are personal, entertaining, and he just comes across as a generally warm and friendly guy. That last part is very rare in Classical authors. His most famous works are his Lives. These were basically mini-biographies of famous men. The writing of Lives was very popular in Antiquity with Suetonius being perhaps the most famous example. What makes Plutarch's different however is the way that he captures the character and the ability of his subjects. Unlike other Lives which divide their subject into topics and then record these out of context, Plutarch's ones follow a chronological order. He also took more care over them than others did. Lives were considered less reputable than Histories but Plutarch treated his like mini-Histories. The interpretation might be different but he is rarely caught out in errors except where his sources make the same errors. Also unlike most Classical writers he doesn't go overboard on the moralizing. These works were written to educate and instruct but the basic lessons are simple enough and he only goes into ethical conclusions in his comparison after each paired life. This is one of the rare times where I really think that the Loeb translations are the best ones out there. While these works are available for cheaper elsewhere (Modern Library's Volumes 1 and Volume 2) they are generally based off the Dryden translation. Avoid the Dryden translation. It is very old (1683) and a lot of these "new" translations are simply the Dryden translation with a few spelling and wording changes to make it sound more modern. While the Loeb translations may seem older (the 1910s) they are at least written in modern English translated directly from the Greek. The Penguin ones are better but for some reason they felt the need to split them up by era (On Sparta's [Lycurgus,

Agasilaus, Agis, Cleomenes, and some Spartan Sayings],Â The Rise and Fall of AthensÂ [Theseus, Solon, Themistocles, Aristides, Cimon, Pericles, Nicias, Alcibiades, Lysander],Â The Age of AlexanderÂ [Agasilaus, Pelopidas, Dion, Timoleon, Demosthenes, Phocion, Alexander, Demetrius, Pyrrhus],Â The Makers of RomeÂ [Coriolanus, Fabius Maximus, Marcellus, Cato the Elder, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, Sertorius, Brutus, Mark Antony],Â Rome in CrisisÂ [Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, Sertorius, Lucullus, Younger Cato, Brutus, Antony, Galba, and Otho],Â The Fall of the Roman RepublicÂ [Marius, Sulla, Crassus, Pompey, Caesar, Cicero]). These were dual Lives. They paired off famous Greeks with famous Romans and compared their careers, the idea being that they had similar virtues and vices. Splitting them up like that ruins the original intent of the author and removes the analysis after each pair. Even when the comparison seems forced it is at least evident why Plutarch included what he did. Sertorius and Eumenes. Phocion and Cato the Younger.

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