



Plutarch

Greek Lives

A new translation by Robin Waterfield

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS



Greek Lives

Plutarch, Robin Waterfield (Translator), Philip A. Stadter (Introduction)

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Plutarch's biographies of eminent Greeks and Romans are renowned not just for their historical importance but also for their insights into the personalities they describe. In prose that is rich, elegant, and sprinkled with learned references, Plutarch explores with an extraordinary degree of insight the interplay of character and political action. He portrays virtues to be emulated and vices to be avoided, but his purpose is implicitly to warn and educate those in his own day who wielded power. Plutarch brought to biography not only a clear moral objective, but also a natural storyteller's ear for a good anecdote. Influential in their own day, the Lives were drawn on by later historians and writers, including Shakespeare. This selection of nine Lives, chosen for their range and interest, offers a new translation as well as a lucid introduction and helpful notes and indexes.

Lycurgus, Solon, Themistocles, Cimon, Pericles, Nicias, Alcibiades, Agesilaus, Alexander

Greek Lives Details

Date : Published April 1st 2009 by Oxford University Press (first published 100)

ISBN : 9780199540051

Author : Plutarch , Robin Waterfield (Translator) , Philip A. Stadter (Introduction)

Format : Paperback 483 pages

Genre : History, Classics, Biography, Nonfiction, Ancient History, Academic, School, Cultural, Greece

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From Reader Review Greek Lives for online ebook

Claudia says

Or "Come for Alexander, stay for Alcibiades".

I wanted to better my knowledge of Alexander the Great but my copy of Herodotus's Histories was looking excessively large so when I saw "Greek Lives" for sale I snapped it up.

I wish I'd bought a "Complete Lives" instead. It's so good.

Plutarch brings the lives and times to life in an interesting way, and the translator does a very good job of making the work flow and be understandable without resorting to artificial modernising.

I could have done with some of the chapter introductions being fuller, some of them assumed knowledge I most certainly didn't have (the 4 out of 5 is because of that, Plutarch himself gets 5/5). Some of the footnotes/endnotes were a bit enigmatic too.

I think I agree with the idea put forward in the introduction that Plutarch wrote these to suggest good ways to be a public person of power, particularly if you consider the different way Cimon is treated depending on the message Plutarch is conveying in a life.

Poor Agesilaus who, after a certain point, couldn't get anything right for trying to the right thing, was completely new to me, and I learned a lot about Ancient Greece.

Definitely worth reading.

Tamar says

Two stars for the Oxford edition - I found the endnotes mostly useless - they are for a more educated reader - and the choice of subjects seemed kind of random.

Three stars for Plutarch who has me rooting for Nicias and then a few pages later for Alchiabades. Still, I didn't find these as compelling as the Roman lives, not sure why.

Moses Operandi says

Only read a few of the Lives, but my professor told us that the Lives were meant to be paired together: one Greek to one Roman, to highlight similarities between them. It seems to me, then, that an edition that divorces the Greek Lives from their Roman twins is flawed.

Jay Wright says

Plutarch is an interesting way of doing biographies. Instead of just dates and accomplishments, he goes into their personalities. I was not an expert on Greek history, but the reading was interesting and thought provoking.

Peter says

To-Read: The audiobook narrator was very good on the Audible.com version of Roman Lives.
