



## Introduction to the issue

### *Plutarch of Chaeronea: between philosophy, biography and education*

Though perhaps not the most original of thinker, Plutarch of Cheronea remains an important figure in the history of European culture. A philosopher, moralist and biographer, he remained one of the most popular Greek authors throughout the modern era, his *Vitae parallelae* forming an important part of the school curricula throughout the centuries.

Inspired by the 2011 workshops held in Warsaw, the collection of seven essays addressing the leading theme of this issue investigates the nature and the impact of Plutarch's works, touching on various aspects of his legacy: his philosophy, his biographical writings and their historical as well as literary dimension, his reception. In a manner, the very variety of Plutarchean legacy is reflected in the varied nature of the collected essays — produced by historians, historians of philosophy and historians of literature, they attest to the versatility of the Cheronean and to the continued interest in his legacy, as well as emphasizing the importance of the moralist within the larger framework of European intellectual culture. As manifested by the present collection, whether as a moralist, as an erudite, or as a biographer (and historian), Plutarch has continued to influence the imagination of European intellectuals in very varied forms.

As for the essays assembled in the present collection: while the study of Plutarch's philosophy is greatly impeded by the loss of his more advanced treatises (such as *On matter*), the survival of his moralizing and polemical writings aimed at the stoics (e.g., *On the common notions*, *On the ethical virtue*) and the epicureans (e.g., *Against Colotes*) facilitates the study of his ethical thought, as manifested by the essays of Krzysztof Łapiński and Michał Damski. While Łapiński deals with Plutarch's polemics against the epicureans and their notion of *hedone*, Damski discusses the Cheronean stand against the stoics and his polemics against the

doctrine of the equality of vices. Next, in her inquiry into the *De Herodoti malignitate*, Anna Marchewka studies the Plutarchean attack on Herodotus' alleged subjectivity, duly noting the cultural importance of the text, which appears to locate Plutarch within the relatively recent current of second sophistic. In turn, the historian's perspective on the ancient author is provided by Tomasz Ładoń, who investigates the actual worth of Plutarch as a historian or, to be exact, as a historical source for the Roman Sullan war. Finally, Lucyna Kostuch, Katarzyna Jażdżewska and Dawid Nowakowski deal with Plutarch's *Nachleben*. First, Kostuch stresses the literary importance of the *Vitae* by investigating the peculiarities of *Vita Antonii's* presence in Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra*. Next, Jażdżewska provides insight into the Byzantine reception of the author and his position within Theodore Metochites' work, while Nowakowski highlights some features of Erasmus' use of the Plutarchean material.

The following six contributions, not related to Plutarch, address the East Asian Buddhist philosophy of religion and selected questions raised in Heidegger's, Ricoeur's, and Suites' writing. The author of the first paper, Kamil Nowak, discusses the system of doctrinal classification (*pànjiào*) created by Guifeng Zongmi, a Buddhist scholar of the Tang Dynasty China (618–907). First he describes the Zongmi's doctrinal classification, focusing on the process of the deconstruction of consecutive Buddhist doctrines, and then compares particular doctrines with the most important theories on the essence of religion. The following paper by Łukasz Kołoczek is dedicated to Heidegger's philosophy of Being (*Sein*). Whereas, Anna Czepiel offers her interpretation of Heidegger's Manichaeism. This paper together with two following ones are included in the "Polemics and debates" section. The author of the second polemics, Daniel Roland Sobota, focuses on Paul Ricoeur's view on finitude. The third article by Anna Karnat deals with burial culture in Poland and more exactly with its fundamental elements within the context of their permanence and changeability. In the subsequent section "PhilosOFFer's lense", designed for less formal philosophical reflections, we publish an essay by Filip Kobiela, who shares his observations as a critical reader and Polish translator of *The grasshopper: games, life and utopia*, the widely commented on and influential book by Bernard Suits. The final column is made up of two short book reviews by Jakub Gomułka and Grzegorz Trela. An announcement of the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy, to be held at the Pedagogical University of Cracow, June 8–11, 2018, closes the contents.

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