

LESAGE GÁRRIGA, Luisa, *Plutarch: On the Face Which Appears in the Orb of the Moon*. Introduction, Edition, English Translation and Commentary to the Critical Edition (Brill's Plutarch Studies 7), Leiden, Boston: Brill 2021, IX+230 pp. ISBN: 978-90-04-45807-7 (hardback); 978-90-04-45808-6 (e-book).

The large international Plutarch community must be thankful for the recent publication of a new edition with extensive commentary of one of Plutarch's most intriguing treatises, the one commonly known as *De Facie*; even if such commentary, all along its almost 100 pages, only deals with the work of the critical editor, as the subtitle of the book clearly expresses. The book, elegantly printed, is the result of the Author's PhD dissertation, successfully completed in 2018 at the University of Málaga, and will certainly mark its position within Plutarch's studies and editions.

The major value of the book, as I see it, is to collect centuries of philological work upon the text that is being edited, the result of a hard and sometimes never-ending work with manuscripts, printed editions, and several commentaries, not to mention the critical studies presented in the footnotes and latter given in the final Bibliography. The possibly short Introduction (22 pages for textual, transmission and thematic issues) is nevertheless mostly clear, while still leaving some questions unanswered, even in the mind of a non-Plutarchan philologist as myself. After reading, at the very beginning, that the work "has attracted the attention of a wide range of scholars throughout history" (p. 1), one cannot help but asking for the reasons that might have reduced the manuscript copies of such an extraordinary book into two, and regret that the A. made no elucubration on this subject. The ten pages on the manuscripts, textual transmission and main printed editions of the *De Facie* are straightforward and clear, as well as the stemma provided for the *branches* (maybe this is the word that the A. meant by "lines", in page 2) of E and B. One can only feel the lack of information regarding the phonetical and writing characteristics of these codices, any one besides the lack of subscribed iota in both of them. This

would not be a minor issue, as it could, for instance, contradict several so-called “discrepancies” of Appendix 1 (pages 209-212). To give some examples, I don’t believe that κατ’ εὐθυωρίαν/ κατεὐθυωρίαν (921A), νη/ νῆ (921C), or ἐξηλιοῦσθαι/ ἐξηλλοιοῦσθαι (930F) are actually different readings, rather elision, accentuation or iotization characteristics of the codices; in the same way, υ/ οὐ (927B) could also be a matter of pronunciation, even if in this case (as in many others) the transcription of more text would help to illuminate the existence (or not) of a different reading. In a related issue, it is impossible to know, for instance, which one of the several καὶ of 929A is omitted by E. Not to mention the readings opposed in 922D (ἄμαυροῦσθαι/ ἄμαυροῦσθαι), being the last one not a variant at all, but rather an error of the scribe, as there is no such verb with rough breathing. Furthermore, as I can understand it might have been useful when preparing the edition, and even in the context of a PhD dissertation, Appendix 1 is actually unnecessary in any critical edition (and more in the case of a two-manuscripts recension), as its conclusions are supposed to be (and globally are, indeed) in the critical apparatus. And the same goes for Appendix 2, surely a useful work document that is of no interest for readers of the edition, who are supposed to believe in any author’s ability to read Greek manuscripts.

The “Editorial criteria” are well explained in pages 25-26, as the A. reinforces (two times in the same page 25) that she follows “the on-going trend in textual criticism” when avoiding unnecessary corrections to the mss. Still, it is not completely truth that “E B are only mentioned when not accepted”, if only one reads the first entry of the critical apparatus, where the reading of B is printed, in spite of being the one chosen for editing; or, among many other examples that could be pointed out, in 929B (p. 60, line 11) the apparatus prints ὕελον B ὕελλον E, being the reading of E, again, also the one chosen for editing. The last example also illustrates what I consider another handicap of the apparatus (and also the large textual commentary that justifies it): the inclusion as variants of cases that are actually errors (or otherwise paleographically motivated differences); as far as I was able to check out, ὕελλον (sic) is only found in an anonymous scholium to Euclid’s *Data et Catoptrica* (ed. H. Menge [1916], *Euclidis opera omnia*, vol. 8, p. 292, l. 5), and even there it means “glass”, as in the Plutarchan text.

While a deep analyze of all the editorial choices performed by the A. is out of this review’s goals, I must say that, in general, the arguments

provided in the commentary seemed correct to me. Even so, any future review of the book must be attentive to some problematic issues, as it is the case for some corrections and the filling of lacunae. For instance, in 921C 11, the correction of ἴσης as ἰσοῖς, in the phrase εἰ τῆς οἰκουμένης εἶρος ἴσης καὶ μῆκος transmitted by EB does not seem correct, as the verb ἰσώω, according to *LSJ*, would for start require the dative for the second term in comparison, which is by no means the case. Furthermore, a search in *TLG* returned not a single occurrence of this second-person singular ἰσοῖς, what would make the conjecture a *hapax legomenon* very difficult to accept. As for the lacunae, the way the A. sometimes demises the need to fill them is somehow contradictory to the intention “to maintain the manuscripts readings or conjectures” (p. 25). What I mean is, unless otherwise is explained, the existence of lacunae in EB must suppose that the scribes found them in their source(s), and cannot be dismissed without further discussion, just because the phrase happens to be coherent without the missing text (e.g. p. 161, on 933F 13-15).

An evaluation of the Bibliography listed, again, would require the knowledge of a Plutarchan scholar. Nevertheless, the list seems sufficient and up-to-date. I could only regret the total absence of the *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Plutarch*, especially when considering that it was published in October 2019 in the same editorial house that hosted this book. Also, in a more personal note, I dislike the presence of Liddell-Scott (*LSJ*) in the Bibliography, as its space, if any, should be in the Sigla.

I hope the abovementioned notes may not take the merit of the book reviewed, as I truly believe that it has its own-right place within the most recent Plutarchan studies for being, at first, a good sample of the philological attention that Plutarch's texts, continuously edited in the main editorial houses, may still require. At the same time, I am confident that these and other observations may result, in the case of a second edition, in a clarification of some points and the simplification of others. While the value of the information contained in the book (both the apparatus and the commentary) is undeniable, the observance of certain principles of textual criticism would result in a clearer and more straightforward volume.

**CARLOS JESUS**

carlos.jesus@uc.pt

Centro de Estudos Clássicos e Humanísticos da Universidade de Coimbra

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8723-690X>

[https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-1718\\_79\\_8](https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-1718_79_8)

(Página deixada propositadamente em branco)