



Lives of the noble Grecians and Romans Plutarch

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Plutarch's Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans, commonly called Parallel Lives or Plutarch's Lives, is a series of biographies of famous men, arranged in tandem to illuminate their common moral virtues or failings, written in the late 1st century.[not verified in body] The surviving Parallel Lives comprises twenty-three pairs of biographies, each pair consisting of one Greek and one Roman, as well as four unpaired, single lives.[citation needed] It is a work of considerable importance, not only as a source of information about the individuals described, but also about the times in which they lived.

The chief manuscripts of the Lives date from the 10th and 11th centuries, and the first printed edition appeared at Florence in 1517.[citation needed] Jacob Tonson printed several editions of the Lives in English in the late 17th century, beginning with a five-volume set printed in 1688, with subsequent editions printed in 1693, 1702, 1716, and 1727.[citation needed] The most generally accepted text is that of the minor edition of Carl Sintenis in the Bibliotheca Teubneriana (five volumes, Leipzig 1852-1855; reissued without much change in 1873–1875).[citation needed] There are annotated editions by I. C. Held, E. H. G. Leopold, Otto Siefert and Friedrich Blass and Carl Sintenis, all in German; and by Holden, in English.

Several of the lives, such as those of Epaminondas and Scipio Africanus, are lost, and many of the remaining lives are truncated, contain obvious lacunae and/or have been tampered with by later writers.[citation needed]

Plutarch's Life of Alexander is one of the five surviving secondary or tertiary sources about Alexander the Great, and it includes anecdotes and descriptions of incidents that appear in no other source. Likewise, his portrait of Numa Pompilius, an early Roman king, contains unique information about the early Roman calendar.

Plutarch has been criticized for his lack of judicious discrimination in his use of authorities, and consequent errors and inaccuracies, but he gives an abundance of citations and, incidentally, a large number of valuable pieces of information, which fill up numerous gaps in historical knowledge obtained elsewhere.[citation needed] He has been praised for the liveliness and warmth of his portrayals, and his moral earnestness and enthusiasm, and the Lives have attracted a large circle of readers throughout the ages.



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