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Articles
1. E. Almagor, "Characterization Through Animals: The Case of Plutarch's Artaxerxes"
2. J. Boulogne, "La philosophie du mariage chez Plutarque"
3. K. Jazdzewska, "Not an 'innocent spectacle': Hunting and venatio in Plutarch's De sollertia animalium"
4. P. Licausi, "Strange Animals: Extremely Interspecific Hybridization (and Anthropoiesis) in Plutarch"
5. P. Marzillo, "Plutarch's views on donkeys"
6. G. Steiner, "Plutarch on the Question of Justice for Animals"
7. F. Tanga, "Mulierum Virtutes: atti di virtù individuale e collettiva"
8. E. Texeira, "Plutarque et le politique à la lumière du théâtre Grec"
9. G. Weaire, "Plutarch versus Dionysius on the first triumph"

Notes and Varia
1. F. E. Brenk, "†Professor Shigetake Yaginuma"
2. F. Frazier, "†Professeur Daniel Babut (1929-2009)"
3. P. Bernardakis, "A 1897 postcard sent by Friedrich Blass to Geogoriou Bernardakis"

Book Reviews
3. Plutarco, "Vidas semblantes. Versión aragonesa de las Vidas paralelas, patrocinada por Juan Fernández de Heredia, edición de Adelino Álvarez Rodríguez, 2 vols., Zaragoza, Prensas Universitarias, 2009 (M. González González)"

Bibliography Section
Plutarch versus Dionysius on the first triumph*

by

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Abstract

Plutarch’s account of the establishment of the triumph by Romulus should not be taken at face value, for it contains parody of the version in Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Plutarch’s disagreement with Dionysius here further reflects a more fundamental disagreement between the two writers about the legitimate uses of spectacle and fear as political tools.

Key-Words: Plutarch, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Life of Romulus, Triumphs.

Triumphs are prominent in Plutarch’s Roman Lives¹. They may mark significant turning-points and so articulate the structure of a life². This interest in triumphs is not in itself particularly surprising. The ritual offered attractive material as a pre-eminent Roman expression of a prominent Plutarchan theme, φίλοτιμία³. Triumphs also offered contemporary resonance. Triumphal imagery formed

* An earlier version of this argument was presented at the panel (“Plutarch as Antiquarian and Collector of oddities”) sponsored by the International Plutarch Society at one Annual Meeting of the American Philological Association in 2008. I am grateful for comments that I received on that occasion.

1 E.g. Publ., 9.5-6; Cam., 7.1-2; 30.1-2; 36.1; Fab, 2.1; 24.3; Marc., 4.3; 8.1-3; 21-22; Flam., 13.6-14.1; Cat. Ma., 11.2; Aem., 30-34; Mar., 12.2-5; 24.1; 27.5-6; Sull., 3.3; 34.1-2; Luc., 37.1-4; Cat. Mi., 29.3-4; 31.2-4; Pomp., 14; 22.1; 45; Caes., 13.1-2; 55.2-4; 56.7-9; Cic., 37.1; note also important “quasi-triumphs” at Sert., 22.2-3; Crass., 32.1-5; Cat. Mi., 39.1. The Moralia display less interest, but triumphs do crop up: e.g. 196E; 282F-283E.

2 E.g. Aem., 34.8-35.3; Pomp., 45-46.4; Caes., 56.7-9; on the significance of the latter see C. Pelling, 1997, p. 222.