as a school text, and, 'once an author fell out of the curriculum, he also fell out of the general favour'. So too, 'our records for ancient *ethopoiiai* show little that can be traced directly to Menander' (259). That Menander's plays spoke little about the glorious Greek past also diminished their appeal (260), though this aspect aided his comeback in modern Greece through theatrical productions.

Two appendices provide lists of Roman *palliatae* with their playwrights and Greek models, and paintings and monuments representing scenes from New Comedy.

Nervegna has produced an excellent study on a difficult subject, and her book will be an indispensable tool not only for anyone interested in Menander but also in the reception of the classics. It is a first-rate achievement.

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BENEKER (J.) **The Passionate Statesman. Eros and Politics in Plutarch's *Lives***. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. xii + 258. £55. 9780199695904.
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In his introduction, Beneker states his intention to juxtapose Plutarch's ethical outlook with his methodological approach in the *Parallel Lives* by focusing 'on how *eros* can act as a lens both for [Plutarch's] interpretation of historical sources and for his composition of political biographies' (3). He makes a cogent case that Plutarch uses *eros* in both those ways and that awareness of these devices enhances our appreciation of Plutarch's art. It is always a challenge in Plutarchan studies to avoid the extremes of over-sampling the abundant material with 'bits' or restricting examples to such a narrow area that generalizations aren't meaningful. Beneker succeeds, partly because his points are well-argued and amply documented, and partly because of the creative way the book is structured.

There are five subdivided chapters in two sections. Section 1 includes chapters 1 and 2 and features an extended and dense discussion of those themes and examples, using *eros* as a lens. Section 2 incudes chapters 3, 4 and 5, and examines *eros* as a compositional device. Each chapter is subdivided as follows. Chapter 1: '*Eros* and marriage' ('The parts of the soul'; '*Philia* and marriage'; '*Eros*, philia and marriage'; 'Brutus and Porcia'; 'Pericles and Aspasia, idealism and realism'). Chapter 2: 'Moral virtue, *eros*, and history' ('Historical-ethical reconstruction in the *Lives*'; 'Moral virtue in the *Pelopidas-Marcellus*'; 'Dion, Dionysius, and Plato's tyrannical man'). Chapter 3: '*Eros* and ambition in the *Alexander-Caesar*' ('Building an empire: Alexander's *sophrosyne* and ambition'; 'Xenophon's Cyrus and Plutarch's Alexander'; '*Eros* in the *Alexander*'; '*Thymos*, ambition, and *sophrosyne*'; '*Eros* and ambition in the Caesar'; 'Limits to *eros* and ambition'). Chapter 4: '*Eros* and the fall of Mark Antony' (see next paragraph). Chapter 5: '*Eros* and the Statesman' ('*Sophrosyne* in Xenophon and Plutarch'; '*Eros* in the *Agesilaus-Pompey*'; 'Concluding remarks'). The transition from the biographies in general, viewed in connection with one another, to the *Lives* in particular, helps make one of the author's points for him, that structure can be flexible if there is a strong enough anchoring theme, *eros* in this case.

What does this dual and flexible usage of *eros* as lens and compositional device look like in practice? Cleopatra is crucial to the biographies of both Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, yet she is a very different figure in the two biographies. Chapter 4, '*Eros* and the fall of Mark Antony', is subdivided into '*Eros* in the *Demetrius*', 'Antony's Women' ('The early years'; 'Fulvia'; 'Fulvia and Cleopatra'; 'Octavia and Cleopatra'; 'Cleopatra') 'in order to demonstrate how Plutarch has used Antony's various wives to represent the psychological struggle between reason and *eros* in his soul. During each period, Antony's struggle with *eros* advances, while the boundaries of the periods are marked by important changes in the status of Antony's women' (173). Here *eros* is a lens. By breaking down the biography into sections dominated by one or more wives, Beneker imports a whole new layer of structure to the biography, what he calls a 'blueprint for examining the Life' (173). This blueprint, or compositional device, has the additional virtue of showing starkly how inseparable Cleopatra is from almost three-quarters of the *Antony*. In contrast, Beneker shows, Plutarch's presentation of Cleopatra in *Caesar* is minimal and not particularly erotic, so that 'Plutarch is able to account for the Roman statesman's celebrated eroticism by redirecting it toward his military and political objectives, and so he represents both Alexander and Caesar as fundamentally the same in their ability to withstand the lure of physical beauty, despite their very different reputations with regard to sex' (150).

Beneker, in arguing that character development is more clearly seen through a lens like *eros* and that 'an exploration of the confluence of *eros* and politics, and of the private and public spheres in general, is crucial to the historical-ethical reconstructions that form the basis of the *Parallell Lives*' (225), adds a fresh perspective to ongoing work on Plutarch's literary technique.

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JONES (M.) **Playing the Man: Performing Masculinities in the Ancient Greek Novel** (Oxford Studies in Classical Literature and Gender Theory). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. 303. £55. 9780199570089.
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This highly interesting book can be seen as a major contribution in combining the fields of classics and gender studies. Jones has chosen to analyse 'what are commonly referred to as the five "ideal" Greek novels – those of Chariton, Xenophon of Ephesus, Achilles Tatius, Longus and Heliodorus'; this seems to be an adequate selection with which to analyse the construction of masculinities in the Greek novel. The book's analysis also focuses on the social norms and practices of the period; as Jones writes, the men in the novels 'reflect real concerns experienced by real men in the real world'.

The book's first two chapters focus on two Greek terms, *paideia* and *andreia*, which might feel comfortable for a classicist but slightly unfamiliar for gender researchers. Jones takes the reader by the hand and explains the terms with various examples from different novels, so that the terms are understandable for a non-classicist. This is done while focusing on different areas of importance for the construction of masculinities. It is exemplary that Jones also discusses the two terms in regard to females.

The third chapter takes a different approach and deals with the complicated issue of sexuality and male same-sex sexuality. In a very short space (174–79) Jones introduces the reader to the discourse of sexuality and antiquity. Jones also clearly explains why she tries to avoid terms like homosexual(ity) and heterosexual(ity), which I would consider most helpful for the non-classicist. Again, Jones takes the reader by the hand and helps them to understand different aspects regarding male same-sex sexuality by using quotations from the novels and explaining the novels' importance for the construction of masculinities.

Jones' brief conclusion (265–73) opens with a statement about the three major problems she faces: firstly, masculinity is not something fixed; secondly, the 'shortfall between reality and representation in literature'; and, thirdly, that it is not possible to be comprehensive in one's treatment of the novels and masculinities. These problems where hinted at in the introduction; it might have helped the reader to understand better why Jones made her selections of topics for analysing the novels if this discussion was included in the introduction.

In her writing, Jones shows that she has a great knowledge both of ancient literature and of the field of critical studies regarding men and masculinities, and clearly demonstrates how they can be combined. Sometimes the book might feel overloaded with quotations and references to other scholars and researchers that drown Jones' own voice. It would also have been interesting to include a discussion of R.W. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, since all the areas Jones discusses could be connected to it.

Overall, this book has the possibility to open up the debate for researchers not only in classics but also in gender studies, especially those focusing on critical studies regarding men and masculinities. It is a book that not only explores aspects of constructions of masculinities during the imperial period, and maybe even before, but it can in many ways also be used as a sourcebook for constructions of masculinities in classical literature. It is a book that has succeeded in its purpose to be accessible for classicists, gender researchers and a broader public, and to introduce them to the topic of 'performing masculinities in the ancient Greek novel'.

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LEITAO (D.D.) **The Pregnant Male as Myth and Metaphor in Classical Greek Literature**. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xii + 307. £60/$95. 9781107017283.
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Leitao's book is an extremely useful re-examination of the 'thought as giving birth' motif, famously seen in Plato. The author's engagement with the idea stems from Platonic discourse, but his intention is to trace the emergence of the