Synopsis

The last chapter of the volume comprises articles that illuminate Plutarch’s many-sided personality from yet another angle, by discussing works or passages with a scientific, anthropological, religious, and historical interest.

Thus, Jacques Boulogne, using a precise typology, explores the function of scientific digressions in *Parallel Lives* so as to decipher some information about Plutarch’s personality. The 40 digressions studied deal with 8 scientific fields: physics and astronomy mainly, geography, geometry, zoology, medicine, psychology, and music. These digressions correspond to 4 goals, i.e., to please the reader, educate him, enhance a quality, as well as express a personal opinion. But they also disclose some aspects of the author’s mindset as a historian influenced by a mythical “imaginary”, stamped by a prudent and prosaic rationalism and, still, believing in free will.

Rosa Mª Aguilar Fernández will survey the word φάρμακον in Plutarch’s corpus. It appears that the meaning of the 96 matches found in the TLG is not always the same: sometimes ‘pharmakon’ has a medical signification, while other times it is employed in a figurative or rhetorical sense. Her purpose then is to obtain a complete, as far as possible, picture of the various connotations of this word.

Zlatko Plese, starting from the applications of the term ἀναπηρία in Aristotle’s theory of reproduction, explores Plutarch’s appropriation of Aristotle’s biological model in various passages from the *Moralia* and *Lives*, focusing primarily on its heuristic function in Plutarch’s cosmology. Taking as a case-study the ‘corrupt’ passage from *De Iside* (54.373A–C) about Isis’ premature birth of a deformed offspring (Horus the Elder), the paper shows how parallel passages from the *Lives* (e.g. *Publ.* 21, *Caes.* 69) and *Moralia* (e.g. *Quaest. conv.* 3. 4) can elucidate many of the alleged obscurities in this passage.

Paola Volpe Cacciatoré studies the myth of Isis in two Plutarchean passages, and comes to the conclusion that the controversy at *Quaestio convivialis* VIII, 8, in which the interlocutors debate the same theme and provide different solutions, supports the religious-anthropological statements in the *De Iside*.

In their joint article Jane Francis and George W. M. Harrison argue that Crete, as it emerges from the *Lives*, is very different from references in the
Moralia: Crete of the *Lives* is static and dated, while mentions in the *Moralia* have little overlapping and very much center on Plutarch’s own world and Plutarch’s own times. This is not surprising since Plutarch made the positive statement in his writings that he had relatives in Crete and had stayed there, presumably on his journey to and from Egypt. When speaking of Britomartis, a Cretan version of Artemis known from three sites, the statement is made that he saw one of her sanctuaries. Similarly, a statement in the *Life of Theseus* about how the site of the palace at Knossos was deserted seems to be based on personal observation and not taken from secondary witness. This paper not only collects and arranges the references to Crete and Cretans in Plutarch’s works, but also categorises them by which mentions seem likely to be based on his own first hand investigation. This speaks directly to issues of Plutarch’s sources and his reliability, and, since several of the places mentioned by Plutarch have been excavated, it is possible to compare what has come to light of sites with Plutarch’s memory and impressions of the same locations.

Carlos Schrader inquires into the tradition that wants Chelidonian islands (35 miles SW from Phaselis) as the limit-line for operations of the Persian fleet, according to Callias treaty in 449 B.C. As such boundary, however, our sources first mention Phaselis (Isocrates IV 118; VII 80; XII 59), while Chelidonian islands are referred to in this connection after Demosthenes (XIX 273). This paper examines why we have two different traditions and, particularly, why Plutarch favours the latter.

Finally, Israel Muñoz Gallarte inquires into what Plutarch thought about the Jews and what picture of them he conveys to us. There are 25 matches of Ἰουδαῖοι in *TLG*, most of them appearing in the *Quaestiones Convivales*, *Life of Pompey*, and *Life of Antony*. The interest varies from case to case, but most occurrences concern religious concepts that seem strange to those imbued with Greek *paideia*.