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2008

Moralia in the Lives

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Moralia in the Lives:
Tragedy and Theatrical Imagery in Plutarch's Pompey

Diotima Papadi

One tends to look into the Moralia for examples of Plutarch's views on poetry, or his uses of theatrical language. There is indeed quite a big amount of quotations from tragic poets, and Plutarch comments on them developing a dynamic relationship with the tragic poets and with their words, by accepting, rebutting or amending them according to the specific purpose of the essay.

Yet, in the Lives it is rather the theatrical imagery, the theatrical scenes than the direct use of tragic citations in which one finds analogies to tragedy and the theatrical world, and in this sense 'theatricality' and the 'tragic' are here subtler and more complex notions than in the Moralia.