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Praise and blame in Plutarch's *Lives*

Plutarch's *Lives* are famously moralistic. We might expect therefore that explicit narratorial praise and blame of the subjects would be common, and that readers would be left in no doubt as to the kind of lessons they should learn. In fact, things are a good deal more complicated. In this paper I will construct a typology of praise and blame in the *Lives* and explore the ways in which the text does or does not guide the audience's response to the subjects of the *Lives*. I will argue that Plutarch constructs his readers not as passive recipients expecting instruction but as actively and critically engaged.