

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Medicine and Philosophy in Classical Antiquity: Doctors and Philosophers on Nature, Soul, Health and Disease.* By PHILIP J. VAN DER EIJK. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. [xiv] + 404.

Medicine has always had a seat at the table of ancient philosophy. For years, though, it seemed that the name inscribed on it was not Hippocrates, but rather Eryximachus, that is, not the venerable Coan praised by Plato for laying the groundwork for an art of the *psychê*, but the *Symposium*'s pompous "belch fighter," better at curing hiccups than at diagnosing arguments. Recent years, however, have seen ancient medicine's stock rise in the Anglophone world—there has always been a strong tradition of scholarship on the Continent—and historians of ancient philosophy have grown more circumspect about reproducing their own disciplinary rules and boundaries in the texts they study.<sup>1</sup> Ever-evolving explorations into mind-body problems created by the weakening of Cartesian dualism have renewed interest in how ancient thinkers negotiated these problems beyond and indeed within Platonic dualism, which has always been something of a straw man. And the medical writers' rich engagement with epistemological and methodological questions is appearing in a more favorable light as their cultural and intellectual milieu is clarified and the complexities of these questions respected. The philosophical interests of physicians are no longer just a joke, nor are they stuck with philosophy's charity.

Over the past fifteen years, Philip van der Eijk has played a major role not only in bringing medicine and philosophy together, but also in challenging the labels—some ancient (Empiricism, Dogmatism, Methodism), some modern (rational-irrational, natural-supernatural)—that have dictated the terms in which medicine is sometimes

1. Our understanding of the relationship between medicine and philosophy in antiquity and the philosophical interests of the medical writers has, as a result, increased markedly. See, from a range of different perspectives, e.g., J. Allen, "Pyrrhonism and Medical Empiricism: Sextus Empiricus on Evidence and Inference," *ANRW* 2.37.2 (Berlin, 1994), 646–90; C. Atherton, *The Stoics on Ambiguity* (Cambridge, 1993); J. Barnes and J. Jouanna, eds., *Galien et la philosophie*, *EntrHardt* 49 (Geneva, 2003); J. M. Cooper, "Method and Science in *On Ancient Medicine*," in *Knowledge, Nature, and the Good* (Princeton, N.J., 2004), 3–42; M. Frede, *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford, 1987), 225–98; R. J. Hankinson, "Galen's Philosophical Eclecticism," *ANRW* 2.36.5 (Berlin, 1992), 3505–22; G. E. R. Lloyd, *Magic, Reason, and Experience: Studies in the Origins and Development of Greek Science* (Cambridge, 1979); P. Manuli and M. Vegetti, eds., *Le opere psicologiche di Galeno: Atti del terzo colloquio galenico internazionale, Pavia, 10–12 settembre 1986* (Naples, 1988); P. Pellegrin, Introduction to *Galien: Traités philosophiques et logiques* (Paris, 1998); C. D. C. Reeve, "The Role of *Technê* in Plato's Construction of Philosophy," *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 16 (2000): 207–28 (response by M. Schiefsky, pp. 223–27); M. Schiefsky, *Hippocrates on Ancient Medicine: Translated, with Introduction and Commentary* (Leiden, 2005); H. von Staden, "Body, Soul, and Nerves: Epicurus, Herophilus, Erasistratus, the Stoics, and Galen," in *Psyche and Soma: Physicians and Metaphysicians on the Mind-Body Problem from Antiquity to the Enlightenment*, ed. J. P. Wright and P. Potter (Oxford, 2000), 79–116.

seen to do philosophy. E.'s interests are impressively catholic, and he has published prodigiously on a wide range of topics and periods, in addition to editing a number of collections and a magisterial two-volume commentary on the fourth-century B.C.E. physician Diocles of Carystus. His training spans disciplines (linguistics, philology, ancient philosophy, social and cultural history, reception) and scholarly traditions old and new. In addition to scope, his work is marked by a distinctive combination of patient textual analysis and a command of detail; a deep familiarity with histories of interpretation; an awareness of intellectual contexts; and a sensitivity to genre and rhetoric. These are strengths that are well suited to his ongoing attempts to develop appropriate strategies of reading the overlaps between medicine and philosophy and the interaction between these modes of thought and declensions of "the divine." *Medicine and Philosophy in Classical Antiquity* offers an excellent opportunity to survey and gauge these strategies at work in various contexts, particularly as they meet texts that have proved resistant to synthesis. Given the precision of E.'s analyses and the volume's breadth, I will devote most of this review to thinking in general terms about how these resistances respond to his analyses.

*Medicine and Philosophy* gathers together ten previously published papers, including two translated into English here for the first time, and one new essay incorporating earlier work on the Aristotelian treatises on dreams and divination. Also new is an introductory essay cataloguing the impact of historical, anthropological, and linguistic methods on the study of ancient medicine and science over the past twenty-five years. In light of the increasingly perceived relevance of ancient medicine to other disciplines inside and outside of classics, this synopsis is a welcome and accessible overview of the state of the field. The level of detail in E.'s analyses, on the other hand, may be daunting for those only slightly familiar with ancient medicine. Nevertheless, the payoff of his meticulousness is almost always valuable reconsideration of problems that go well beyond medicine. The papers in part 1, on the Hippocratic Corpus and Diocles, and part 3, on Galen and Caelius Aurelianus, address the medical writers' engagements with problems of causality, the relationship of experience to knowledge, the uses and limits of explanation, and medicine's own definitions of its function and its relationship to other therapeutic practices. The last chapter in part 1, on the location of cognitive processes in the Hippocratic writers, Diocles, and Aristotle, segues nicely into the papers in part 2, which concentrate on the role played by psychophysical factors in Aristotle's accounts of human thought and imagination, particularly in the *Parva naturalia*. Part 2 closes with a reexamination of the vexed chapter 10 of the *History of Animals*, on the basis of which E. concludes that the chapter may, in fact, be our only surviving medical treatise by Aristotle.

This last example of philological spadework lays bare the twofold nature of the boundary crossings that interest E., that is, their affirmation of both sameness and difference. For it is the assumption that the medical *treatise* is a recognizable genre—E. opposes its "technical," "diagnostic," "therapeutic" nature to a "thoroughly theoretical, comprehensive and systematic work such as *Generation of Animals*"—that allows us to see Aristotle as a thinker who brings medicine and philosophy together. Indeed, Aristotle takes it for granted that while the cross-fertilization of medicine and philosophy is salutary, they remain separate modes of inquiry, and E. agrees that "there were important differences between the two areas" (p. 10). But

while the book's title assumes these differences, we are never given an account of what exactly they are. What we are told in the introduction is how the lines between doctors and philosophers should not be drawn, that is, "in terms of interaction between 'science and philosophy,' the 'empirical' and the 'theoretical,' the 'practical' and the 'systematical,' the 'particular' and the 'general,' or 'observation' and 'speculation'" (p. 10). In practice, however, this does not mean that these are useless terms, since for E. they belong in most cases—the chapter on *History of Animals* 10 turns out to be an exception—to aspects of authors or disciplines or texts, rather than to the authors and disciplines and texts themselves (e.g., chap. 6, "Theoretical and Empirical Elements in Aristotle's Treatment of Sleep, Dreams and Divination in Sleep"). Difference—not in terms of medicine and philosophy, but in terms of the very oppositions rejected as criteria for distinguishing between the two disciplines—more typically happens at the local level, that is, within texts and *œuvres* as they move across a field of inquiry.

This atomizing of generalizations defines E.'s "moriologic" perspective, to adopt a term that he uses to describe Aristotle's practice of thinking about sense organs in terms of their particular functions in *Parts of Animals* (p. 210). E. is interested in how a term like "empirical" describes a given author working on a given problem in a given milieu, and is chary of extrapolating too much from individual passages. Yet he also does not shy away from recognizing that the "-isms" we use are ancient creations, used not only in doxographies or polemics but also, at least in some cases, as terms of self-definition. The book's last chapter, "The Methodism of Caelius Aurelianus: Some Epistemological Issues," showcases E.'s ability as a reader to navigate between the disciplining power of methodology and doctrinal authority, on the one hand, and the flexibility, on the other, that persists in the face of this power in Caelius' writing. The issues in question concern the status of the "paradoxical" elements in the *Acute* and *Chronic Affections*, namely, Caelius' occasional willingness to inquire into the "unobservable" and his tolerance, at times, of causal explanation, the use of definitions, and reason as a means towards knowledge—all practices rejected by what can be reconstructed as orthodox Methodism. E. resists, here as elsewhere, developmental explanations of these discrepancies (pp. 304–5, 327). While he is more sympathetic to the idea that there may be tensions inherent in Methodism itself, his solution ultimately derives from replacing tension with a "criterion of relevance." The following sections, then, run like trials: the evidence that Caelius holds, but has violated, a given methodological principle is weighed, and he is let off the hook after his position has been justified in terms of its therapeutic usefulness. The mitigating circumstances are specific to medicine: "the point is that doctrinal and methodological tensions may, in the case of Methodism, find their origin in the fact that the primary concern of Methodism is the successful diagnosis and treatment of diseases" (p. 305). The "practical" and "systematical" converge.

One of E.'s great strengths is precisely his patience and precision as a reader. His resistance to generalization and pigeonholing is complemented by a desire to demonstrate how a range of perspectives interact with one another in a given text—rather than simply dismissing them as eclectic or inconsistent. And while "criterion of relevance" is E.'s term, elsewhere he is interested in demonstrating how the ancient writers themselves formalize the need for flexibility within their methodologies. Chapter 10 traces the development in Galen of a concept of "qualified ex-

perience” (διωρισμένη πείρα). In chapter 3, E. argues that Diocles’ fragments on dietetics show him developing a notion of the limits of causal explanation that offers a genuine improvement over Hippocratic ideas of causality and shares the concerns of Aristotle and other Peripatetics about infinite regress. In these cases, the texts themselves are shown to contain the conceptual tools that can aid us in making sense of their ostensibly competing elements.

But what happens when these tensions cannot be explained away through appeals to functionality? In the first chapter, “The ‘Theology’ of the Hippocratic Treatise *On the Sacred Disease*,” the kinds of analyses that serve E. well elsewhere sometimes distract our attention from thornier problems, and the positive conclusions that do emerge seem ungrounded, despite the article’s methodical progression. E.’s aim in the piece is to address the apparent discrepancy between the two concepts of the divine in this well-known treatise, which long buttressed claims of Hippocratic enlightenment and continues to play a pivotal role in scholarship on the relationship between magic, religion, and medicine in the Classical period. While the author describes the divinity of the disease in terms of its *phusis*, that is, the regularities that govern its origins and development, and/or in terms of its external causes (cold, heat, wind), he also meets his magico-religious opponents on their own ground by accusing them of impiety (*asebeia*). The problem, at least from one perspective, is how seriously we are to take this latter rhetorical persona *qua* defender of the faith. Some of the author’s arguments are clearly strategic. Others, however, seem to draw on a belief in “personal” gods and divine dispensation in the case of moral errors (τὰ ἁμαρτήματα); hence the alleged discrepancy between the author’s naturalistic perspective on divinity and his traditional one.

E.’s stated goal—to “find out how these two sets of religious opinions are related to each other” (p. 48)—is modest, albeit crucial to an understanding of the text. And his solution, that the author is striving to disengage epilepsy from the sacred sphere without denying that sphere’s legitimacy, appears right. Yet that solution seems more like an epiphenomenon of the preceding argumentation, rather than its *telos*. For much of the intervening material suggests that the article’s stakes are quite different from the problem laid out in its opening paragraphs. In essence this is a corrective reading, which seeks to challenge scholars who attribute a novel theology along the lines of “nature is the divine” to the author. As E. sees it, the danger of associating the treatise too much with natural philosophy is that “we read into the text ideas which simply are not there.” The result of our projection of labels like “rational” or “irrational” is that “we are too much guided in our interpretation of the text by what we expect [the author] to say” (pp. 68–69).

The problem is that in pursuing this challenge E. is led to make claims that appear equally informed by an agenda. The first section offers a meticulous look at the two proposed interpretations of *theios* as the author uses it vis-à-vis the disease, typically in statements like “this disease is in no way more divine than the others.” His analysis is justified on the grounds that the two interpretations “are different and incompatible,” although both have textual support. Unsurprisingly, then, the analysis proceeds as a defense of one of them, namely, that the disease is divine in that it has a *phusis*. This tack commits E. to rejecting the other possibility, namely, that the disease is divine on account of the divinity of its external causes (*prophaseis*). The complexity of these arguments precludes detailed analysis here. But in any case, the real question

is why the defense of the two interpretations' ostensible incompatibility is necessary at all, especially given the costs of E's line of argument.<sup>2</sup> While not perfect, the solution recently adopted by Jacques Jouanna, who sees no contradiction between a disease that is divine by virtue of its *phusis* or a disease that is divine by virtue of its *prophaseis*, is easily the best suited to the text, which seems more concerned with piling up arguments than strict systematicity.<sup>3</sup> So why the barrage of arguments against the divinity of external forces?

E. is treading a difficult path here. He is arguing, on the one hand, that the divine has something to do with the regular pattern taken by the disease. On the other hand, he seems to want to keep this concept of divinity from becoming coherent enough to found a theology. As a result, he resists any reading that attributes to the author a sense of "natural law." His insistence on the incompatibility of the readings of *theios* seems to be based, then, on the fact that to admit that the author recognizes the "divinity" of the hot and the cold, or of winds, makes it harder to deny his extension of regularity beyond the body to the cosmos as a whole. Yet this skepticism about the author's attitude towards necessity in nature becomes absurd. He uses analogical reasoning, for example, to claim that every material body, from clay vessels to the moon, "feels" (*aisthanetai*) the damp force of the south wind: every material body is affected by this force. And indeed, it is in this context that we find one of the seven instances where the author speaks of the necessity (*anankê*) that compels the body to undergo certain changes, a necessity "proved" by the observation of changes to clay vessels. While lacking in explicit statements about natural law, the author's analysis of the sacred disease clearly depends on the *necessary* interconnectivity of the material world. Thus, E.'s analysis seems driven more by the desire to counter a tradition of past scholarship than by responsiveness to the text, in contrast to his methods elsewhere.

The vigor of E.'s efforts to invalidate interpretations crediting the author with a conception of (divine) natural law and the long analysis of the meaning of *theios* start to make more sense once it becomes clear that he is interested in locating "the writer's religious convictions" elsewhere (p. 65). Rejecting the passages that smack of natural philosophy, he turns instead to the author's early statements in the first-person plural affirming the sanctity of divine precincts and the gods' capacity to purify us of our greatest *hamartêmata*. Despite the wiliness of the rhetorical persona in the opening polemics, of which this passage forms a critical part, and the dangers of being an *atheos*—anyone with unconventional ideas about the gods—in the late fifth century, E. argues that these statements reveal true and pious belief, albeit one impossible to reconcile with divinity *qua phusis*. While the critique of "natural law" interpretations clearly helps this argument, it is worth noting that it does not compel us to believe in the author's stated piety.

But the point, in fact, is not that the treatise is a manifesto on the divinity of nature or that we can rule out the author's sincerity. The point is that because the

2. Such as the adoption of the awkward reading ταύτη (θ) for ταῦτα (M edd.) at chap. 18 (Littré 6.394 = 32.1 Jouanna); or the forced reading of τὰ ἀπίοντα as "excrements," whose unlikely divinity then becomes another stone to throw at the competing interpretation; or the exclusion of chapter 13.5 (Littré 6.386 = 25.8–11 Jouanna) from the relevant passages listed on pp. 50–51.

3. J. Jouanna, ed. and trans., *Hippocrate: "La maladie sacrée,"* vol. 2, part 3 of *Hippocrate: Oeuvres* (Paris, 2003), 130–31.

aims of the essay are never fully acknowledged, the questions of how secure we can ever be in recovering the author's religious beliefs and why they matter—questions that have been debated for years and are mostly now abandoned in Euripidean scholarship, for example—go unasked. As a result, so do many other questions that might clarify the import of this treatise. E. does not, for example, probe the conflict between, on the one hand, the author's desire to maintain boundaries between diseases and *hamartêmata*, and his argument, on the other hand, that all our pleasures and pains, as well as our ability to use critical judgment, arise from the material state of the brain. Nor is he interested in the split produced by a body allied with "divine" mechanical necessity and a moral subject allied with personal gods. The essay remains invaluable for its clarification of the different connotations of divinity that may be discerned in the treatise, but what feels unsatisfying is that the solution to its stated problem—the insistence on boundaries for the sacred and moral error—is alienated from the argumentation and left undeveloped as a way of thinking about the specificity of the treatise's tensions.

I stress this unexplored tension in *On the Sacred Disease* between the body and ethics, and between body and thought more generally, because it returns as a leitmotif in E.'s more recent work on Aristotle, which forms part 2 of the book. In "Aristotle on Melancholy," he not only seeks to compare the ideas about melancholy in the famous pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata* 30.1 and Aristotle's own works, he also examines the way in which the problem of melancholy reveals Aristotle's views on the relationship between ethical capacity and physiological constitution, melancholics having a constitution that is, like that of women, inherently pathological. *Phusis* also informs variations in how the divine works through irrational and rational people ("Divine Movement and Human Nature in *Eudemian Ethics* 8.2"): the moist nature of irrational persons makes them susceptible to disturbances, as well as to "divine movements." In chapter 6, too, on dreams, the "daemonic" nature of *phusis* emerges as the mind becomes sensitive to the movements in the body that usually stay below the threshold of perception. In "The Matter of Mind: Aristotle on the Biology of 'Psychic' Processes and the Bodily Aspects of Thinking," E. recognizes a tension between Aristotle's "normative view" of a human being and a "technical" or "relativistic" perspective that looks to the body as a cause of variations in, or divergences from, this norm. As he notes, "this difficulty is especially urgent with variations in intellectual capacities; for these are explained with a reference to differences in bodily conditions of the individuals concerned, which raises the question of what the bodily conditions for a 'normal' operating of the intellect are and how this is to be related to Aristotle's 'normative' view of thinking as an incorporeal process" (p. 214). In the work on Aristotle, then, one gets the strongest sense of a tension that can only be partially accommodated by a "moriologic" perspective or a "criterion of relevance," a tension generated and sustained by the corporeality that Aristotle "is conspicuously reluctant to recognise" (p. 237).

Yet corporeality is also conspicuously absent from E.'s subtitle ("Nature, Soul, Health, and Disease"), an omission that is, no doubt, deliberate. Studies on "the body" appear in the introduction, together with women and gender studies, almost as an afterthought, situated at the end of a long list of disciplines credited with expanding the field of ancient medicine. The perfunctory mention of women and gender studies is striking in light of how important research into the gynecological treatises has

been to pioneering the new methodologies (e.g., anthropology and cultural history) that E. privileges in his opening story of the field's progression "from appropriation to alienation."<sup>4</sup> The corraling of "the body" into scare quotes is more understandable, given how trendy and pervasive the body has become in current scholarship. Yet if, on the one hand, medicine and philosophy remain different disciplines and if, on the other hand, both harbor the binaries once used to divide them, what is it but the body that constitutes the overlap between them? In raising this question, I do not mean to suggest that the diverse and challenging range of topics covered by the essays in *Medicine and Philosophy in Classical Antiquity* can be reduced to and homogenized by "the body." Rather, it would be fascinating to see E. step back and reflect on what emerges from the middle essays, in particular, as a nuanced and prolonged engagement with what Aristotle calls *daimonia phusis* and the intersection of the medical body with Aristotle's meditations on the nature of the human subject.

The opportunity to observe not only E's long engagement with Aristotle, but also his equally rich examinations of the methodological intricacies of the medical writers makes this collection a seminal contribution to the study of these authors. His work undoubtedly raises the bar for the incorporation of medicine into discussions of epistemology, causality, philosophical method, and embodiment. By modeling scholarship that approaches these texts, as much as possible, on their own terms, E. teaches us how to read them again with care and curiosity and opens the door to a reconsideration of their peculiar capacity to unsettle the primacy of reason in ancient philosophical accounts of the person.

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4. See, e.g., P. Manuli, "Fisiologia e patologia del femminile negli scritti ippocratici dell'antica ginecologia greca," in *Hippocratica: Actes du Colloque hippocratique de Paris, 4-9 septembre 1978*, ed. M. D. Grmek (Paris, 1980), 393-408; A. Rousselle, "Images médicales du corps: Observation féminine et idéologie masculine; Le corps de la femme d'après les médecins grecs," *Annales* 35 (1980): 1089-115; G. E. R. Lloyd, *Science, Folklore and Ideology: Studies in the Life Sciences of Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 1983); A. E. Hanson, "Continuity and Change: Three Case Studies in Hippocratic Gynecological Therapy and Theory," in *Women's History and Ancient History*, ed. S. B. Pomeroy (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1991), 73-110; "Conception, Gestation, and the Origin of Female Nature in the Hippocratic Corpus," *Helios* 19 (1992): 31-71; L. Dean-Jones, "The Cultural Construct of the Female Body in Ancient Greek Science," in *Women's History and Ancient History*, ed. S. B. Pomeroy (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1991), 11-37; *Women's Bodies in Classical Greek Science* (Oxford, 1994); H. von Staden, "Woman and Dirt," *Helios* 19 (1992): 7-30; H. King, *Hippocrates' Woman: Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece* (London, 1998); R. Flemming, *Medicine and the Making of Roman Women* (Oxford, 2000). The recent overview by V. Nutton, "Ancient Medicine: Asclepius Transformed," in *Science and Mathematics in Ancient Greek Culture*, ed. C. J. Tuplin and T. E. Rihll (Oxford, 2002), 248-52, gives feminism more credit, but is equally dismissive of work on "the body," which Nutton equates with "a positively narcissistic concern with the body and with body image, with perceptions of self and the ideal of beauty" (254).

*Dining Posture in Ancient Rome: Bodies, Values, and Status.* By MATTHEW B. ROLLER. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006. Pp. [xiii] + 248. \$39.50 (cloth).

Matthew B. Roller's study of dining posture between 200 B.C.E. and 200 C.E. addresses the problems inherent in the much-repeated view that dining posture was

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