Reviews in Brief

A LIFE WORTHY OF THE GODS: THE MATERIALIST PSYCHOLOGY OF EPICURUS. BY DAVID KONSTAN. LAS VEGAS: PARMENIDES PUBLISHING, 2008. XX, 176 PAGES.

This is the English translation of Konstan's *Lucrezio e la psicologia epicurea* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2007), which is itself a new edition of his *Some Aspects of Epicurean Psychology* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973). Although careful attention is given to the *De rerum natura*, the new English title seems more fitting, as Lucretius is generally used to recover and reconstruct the thought of Epicurus. The reappearance of this work is good news for specialists as well as for those with a general interest in Hellenistic philosophy—if only because each of the four chapters presents a controversial thesis on an aspect Epicurean psychology. The eighty-two page original is now one-hundred and seventy-six pages, and there are English translations of the generous quotations from Greek and Latin sources (making the work more accessible to students), along with extensive explanatory footnotes which have been added to accommodate references to the fruits of the last thirty-five years of scholarship on Epicureanism. In his notes Konstan quotes, often at length, not only English but French, German and Italian scholars, as well as additional Greek and Latin sources (though generally in the notes only the latter are accompanied by translations). The original three page bibliography is now fourteen pages, and the original indices (passages cited, subjects, Latin words, Greek words) have been replaced by a single, more comprehensive general index. The new first chapter, "Epicurean 'Passions'," is an expanded version of "Epicurean 'Passions' and the Good Life," originally published in *The Virtuous Life in Greek Ethics*, ed. B. Reis and S. Haffmans (Cambridge: Cambridge U Press), 194–205. In chapter 1 Konstan develops his "radical claim" (ix) that for Epicurus, the *pathê* are simply pleasure and pain, and reside in the non-rational (*alogon*) part of the soul. Epicurus' distinction between the *pathê* and the emotions (a distinction Konstan admits is not always observed by later Epicureans) nicely prefaces the arguments of the subsequent chapters. Chapter 2 develops a novel, circular account of the relation of irrational fears and limitless desires. The first half of the argument considers the precise mechanism by which the fear of death creates limitless desires; the second half contains the more controversial claim that these desires contribute to the irrational fear of death. Chapter 3 examines the emergence of these fears and desires in human history, specifically in relation to Epicurean theories about the origins of language and law. Chapter 4 dissolves the apparent contradiction in Epicurean assertions that the life of the sage is divine *and*

that the longing for immortality must be abolished. Konstan acknowledges the "palimpsestic" (viii) quality of his new edition, which is meant to replace the now out-of-print original. While this metaphor might suggest a greater difference than one finds between the original and what is 'written over' it, the fact that the three revised chapters have largely been expanded rather than amended attests to the durability of his original arguments and justifies the republication of what is now a more than thirty-five-year-old book.

Michael Fournier Dalhousie University

Ancient Scepticism. Ancient Philosophies. By Harald Thorsrud. Berkeley: U of California Press, 2009. xvi, 248 pages.

This is the fifth volume in the *Ancient Philosophies* series, adding to those on Stoicism, the Presocratics, Cynics, and Neoplatonism. Since it was published, volumes on Plato, Epicureanism and the ancient commentators on Plato and Aristotle have also appeared. The aim of the series is to provide students with reasonably priced introductory works that are clear yet rigorous. Thorsrud's specific aim is to provide "a coherent historical narrative in which to situate the development and transmission of ancient sceptical arguments and strategies" (x). Thorsrud achieves both of these aims with a book that is closely argued yet clearly written. He employs Greek and Latin terms (always appearing initially with translations and an explanation of their technical sense) sparingly. In addition to a lucid and engaging narrative there are generous quotations (in translation) from sources that extend far beyond Cicero's *Academica* and the works of Sextus Empiricus (e.g., Eusebius and Photius). Chapter 1 is an introduction to the scope, methods and basic questions of the book. Thorsrud treats the Sceptics of the period between the third century BCE and the second century CE in chronological order, providing reconstructions of various positions and evaluating the arguments that may fairly be attributed to each thinker. Given the fragmentary nature of our sources, Thorsrud also offers philosophical speculations about likely criticisms of, and possible replies consistent with, these positions. The central questions involve the scope of *epochê*, various ways sceptics dealt with charges of apraxia and inconsistency, and differences between the Academics and the Pyrrhonists. After chapters on Pyrrho and Timon (2), Arcesilaus (3), Carneades (4), Cicero (5), Aenesidemus (6) and Sextus Empiricus (7), Thorsrud concludes with chapters on "Pyrrhonian arguments" (8) and "The (ordinary) life of a Pyrrhonist" (9). In addition to general references and an index, each chapter has notes and a guide to further reading. The narratives in chapters 2 to 7 are essentially versions of chapters 8 and 9: after careful analysis of the rational arguments, Thorsrud shows how, in the end, there is for the sceptic

an answer to charges of *apraxia* and inconsistency in his *way of life* (acquired habits and dispositions). Thorsrud makes a clear distinction between the Academics and the Pyrrhonists, not by (with the Pyrrhonists) making the Academics negative dogmatists, but rather by identifying disagreements on the scope of *epochê* (i.e., the Academics' move towards fallabilism) and on the purported end of scepticism (i.e., the Pyrrhonists' promise of *ataraxia*). One of the virtues of the book is the focus on the specific character of ancient scepticism. Thorsrud briefly delineates the difference between ancient and modern scepticisms. The discussion of the ways scepticism shaped and was in turn shaped by dogmatic philosophies is mostly in relation to Stoicism and Stoicised Platonism (there is no mention of the influence of Pyrrhonian arguments on Plotinus or Academic arguments on Augustine, though this seems to be a choice determined by the historical scope of the work). Overall this is a valuable book for students and teachers of Hellenistic philosophy.

MICHAEL FOURNIER DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

L'EMBRYON: FORMATION ET ANIMATION. ANTIQUITÉ GRECQUE ET LATINE, TRADITION HÉBRAÏQUE, CHRÉTIENNE ET ISLAMIQUE. EDITED BY LUC BRISSON, MARIE-HÉLÈNE CONGOURDEAU, AND JEAN-LUC SOLÈRE. PARIS: LIBRAIRIE PHILOSOPOHIQUE J. VRIN, 2008. 290 PAGES.

This book, part of the "Histoire des doctrines de l'antiquité classique," seeks to explain various historical views of the threshold between the living and non-living in the generation of animals: the embryo. It is a collection of fourteen papers (thirteen in French, one in English) presented in 2005 at a conference at the Collège de France entitled "L'embryon (constitution et animation) dans l'Antiquité et au Moyen âge." Most of the papers treat the various positions taken on a certain network of questions: at which point does the soul enter the developing embryo or fetus? What are the stages of embryonic and fetal development? What do the male and female parents provide in the reproductive process? The editors frame this series of investigations into the history of ideas about embryos in terms of contemporary ethical debates on abortion, assisted reproduction, research using embryos, for which the question of when the embryo becomes a human being is central. Yet almost none of the contributions make any reference to these contemporary debates—the scope of the collection is in general purely historical. The book is mainly focused on the various responses to the most important sources of ancient theories of animal generation—the Hippocratic tradition, Aristotle, and Galen. Also crucial in this history is the treatise *Ad Gaurum* ("On the way the embryo receives the soul"), previously attributed to Galen, but which is now believed to have been written by Porphyry, following

Kalbfleisch's 1895 study (Tiziano Dorandi's contribution to this volume attempts to solidify our reasons for accepting Porphyry's authorship of this treatise). The first eight papers focus primarily on these foundational texts, while the last five address the ways in which these ancient views are taken up in Christian, Jewish and Islamic thought, as well as the early modern revolution in embryological thought.

Jacques Jouanna's contribution, which compares two Hippocratic treatises ("On the generation of man and semen" and "On the formation of man") not only outlines many of the questions which will occupy the other essays, but also includes a new edition of "On the generation of man and semen," as well as an *editio princeps* of Alexander the Sophist's "On the generation of man." Pierre Marie Morel's excellent article "Aristote contre Démocrite" plays an important role in the book as a whole, since the contrast with Democritus brings out the radical originality of Aristotelian embryology and its integration of concepts like final cause and the potentiality/actuality distinction. Morel presents five Democritean doctrines concerning the embryo and then provides Aristotle's arguments for their dismissal. Unfortunately the article does not make explicit the reasons behind Aristotle's anti-Democritean view that there is only one seed—male sperm—while this feature of Aristotle's embryology is the most emphasized in the other contributions, since it is the principal contrast with the Hippocratic/Galenic view. Jean-Baptiste Gourinat portrays the Stoics as the most radical proponents of view that the embryo is a purely vegetative, non-animal being, for whom birth involves the transformation of a merely natural *pneuma* into a living animal *pneuma*. Both Véronique Boudon-Millot and Ann Ellis Hanson turn to Galen's analysis of the first stages of life. Boudon-Millot concludes by psychologizing the ancient views of the embryo and fetus—these thinkers believed that the embryo and fetus possessed life only very incompletely in order to detach themselves from these beings in the face of high miscarriage an infant mortality rates. Véronique Dasen investigates certain problems that the birth of twins presented to the astrological, medical, legal and philosophical thinking in ancient Greek thought and in the Church fathers. The most philosophically substantial contribution to the volume comes from Gwenaëlle Aubry. Aubry shows that Porphyry's notion of *epitêdeiotês*, which he uses to classify the mode of potential being of the embryo, employs Aristotle's three-stage articulation of potentiality from *De Anima, Physics*, and *Generation of Animals* in order to arrive at a distinctly unAristotelian embryology, where the embryo receives the soul only at the culmination of its development. Aubry's article shows, brilliantly on my view, how the meaning of this term *epitêdeiotês*, which designates a capacity to develop animal capacities, is transformed from Philo the Megarian, to Alexander of Aphrodisias, to Plotinus, to be taken up by Porphyry in the *Ad Gaurum*.

The essays focused on the reception of these ancient sources opens with Bernard Pouderon's article on the theological implications of Aristotle's and Galen's embryology (only male seed vs. male and female seed) in the thought of the Church Fathers. Pouderon traces the way these different models imply a certain understanding of Incarnation (God's relation to Mary) and Creation (God's causation of the world), as well as how they influence the Fathers' views of the resurrection of the body and abortion. Marie-Hélène Congourdeau traces the later influence of Porphyry's *Ad Gaurum*, especially in byzantine thought, moving from Philoponus to Michael Psellos to the *Hermippus* (which is of disputed authorship). Since there appears to have been very little direct influence, the focus of Étienne Lepicard's study of the embryo in ancient rabbinic literature is on the difference between the *Ad Gaurum* and these rabbinical texts. Carmela Baffioni examines the ways that Islamic thinking about the status of the embryo from the eleventh to the thirteenth century is determined by the quest to reconcile the Hippocratic-Galenic and Aristotelian traditions with the Qur'an. Maike Van der Lugt looks more generally at the developing understanding of the embryo in medieval thought, driven by a deeper assimilation of Aristotle and a renaissance of Hippocrates and Galen translations in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The book concludes with Jean-Claude Dupont's reflection on the sixteen- and seventeenth-century dialogue with these classical sources on the embryo.

L'embryon: formation et animation should be of interest to historians of science who study the history of theories about animal generation. For scholars of Porphyry's *Ad Gaurum*, this collection will be indispensible.

ELI DIAMOND DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

ARISTOTLE ON LIFE. EDITED BY JOHN MOURACADE. KELOWNA: ACADEMIC PRINTING AND PUBLISHING. A SPECIAL ISSUE OF *APEIRON: A JOURNAL FOR ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE*, XLI.3, SEPTEMBER 2008. X, 197 PAGES.

This volume, a special issue of the journal *Apeiron*, collects seven papers from the 2007 "Aristotle on Life" conference held at the University of Alaska Anchorage. The collection as a whole belongs to the encouraging trend in recent Aristotelian scholarship which seeks the connection between Aristotle's biology and metaphysics, investigating the role that living beings play in Aristotle's ontology. The papers in general are bold and synthetic in nature, never looking in too much detail at any particular passage or at the place of each passage in the larger argument of its book or treatise. Paul Studtmann opens the volume with an investigation into the meaning of form in Aris-

totle. He lists 6 pages of citations from *Metaphysics* on form, from which he abstracts 14 distinct meanings of the term in that treatise, arguing that these multiple senses can best be unified by understanding form as a "principle of order." Margaret Scharle makes the important argument that Aristotle's dissatisfaction with material and efficient causal explanations extends beyond his study of living beings, since formal and final causes operate all the way down to the inanimate elements. Devin Henry, in his "Organismal Natures," offers an extremely rich investigation into Aristotle's conception of the nature of a living being, and how such a nature unites the four causes into itself in a way that saves Aristotle from both Galen's and Molière's criticisms. Julie K. Ward's article is an interesting extension of her recent work on homonymy, investigating a possibility she ultimately rejects: whether the notion of core-related homonymy could resolve the tension between Aristotle's metaphysical claim that human nature does not admit of degree and his ethico-political exclusion of women, slaves, and barbarians from possessing full deliberative capacities. Errol G. Katayama argues that Aristotle does not consider all living beings to be substances; the inability of hybrids and spontaneously generated organisms to reproduce their form means they are not sufficiently unified to be considered substances. Christopher Shields rejects the common view that living beings are *paradigmatic* substances by making the stronger claim that *only* living beings can be considered to be substances (if Shields is correct, the question arises of exactly *what* kind of being Aristotle assigns to artifacts, if they are not even substances in some derivative way, nor simply one of the non-substantial categories). While many of the articles share in common an interest in what Aristotle can contribute to contemporary biology, only John Mouracade's paper explicitly attempts to draw Aristotle into contemporary biological debates. Mouracade argues that the Aristotelian conception of the relation of form to matter is true once form is translated as "genetic code" or DNA. Besides this final contribution, the other papers focus on uncovering or explaining Aristotle's view of life. One deficiency of the volume is that none of the contributors consider the implications of Aristotle's view of those instances of living being which can seem most surprising to the contemporary philosopher—that the elements have a kind of life, and that both the celestial bodies and god are said to be living beings. While keeping these difficult ideas in mind can help resist any anachronistic reduction of Aristotle's thought to some contemporary position, none of the contributors considers these points in any detail. Nonetheless, this volume should be read by anyone working either on Aristotle's biology or the role that living being plays in Aristotle's metaphysics.

Eli Diamond Dalhousie University