

Suarez für die Kontinuität in der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Begriff des Seins, die durch Suarez' Vermittlungsfunktion zwischen dem Mittelalter und der Moderne gewährleistet wird. Anschließend betrachtet A. in einem weiteren Beitrag die cartesianische Transformation des aristotelischen Begriffs der Substanz. Außerdem werden Kants These zum Begriff des Seins, derzufolge Sein kein reales Prädikat darstellt, sowie ihre aristotelischen Ursprünge behandelt. Der Band schließt mit drei weiteren Beiträgen, die der Frage der Ontotheologie bei Aristoteles und Hegel, der Frage der Aporetizität oder der Relativität der Ontologie mit Blick auf Aristoteles und W. V. O. Quine sowie der Frage des Endes der Metaphysik gewidmet sind.

Alle Beiträge bestechen durch ihren Kenntnisreichtum und ihre Detailliertheit. Sie sind von einem Kenner der aristotelischen Philosophie für Experten verfaßt. Die theoretische Philosophie des Aristoteles kommt vor allem im Hinblick auf die Frage ihrer Methode, der Dialektik und des Syllogismus, sowie im Hinblick auf den Begriff des Seins in Betracht. Darüber hinaus begegnet in diesem Werk ein Aristoteles im Kontext, da sein Denken in Beziehung gesetzt wird zu dem Denken anderer Gestalten der Philosophiegeschichte.

Freiburg

Friederike Rese

\*

**Maria Vamvouri Ruffy:** *Les Vertus thérapeutiques du banquet*. Médecine et idéologie dans les *Propos de Table* de Plutarque. Paris: Les Belles Lettres 2012. 299 S. (Collection d'études anciennes. 146. Série grecque.) 45 €.

The scholarly interest in Plutarch's *Quaestiones convivales* (QC) has clearly been on the rise in recent years. Among the most recent publications is *The Philosopher's Banquet*, edited by Klotz and Oikonomopoulou.<sup>1</sup> The author of the work under review (VR) also contributed to this volume with a paper on the close relationship between the philosophy and physiology of Plutarch's symposium, a topic that ties in closely with the theories set out throughout 'Les Vertus'.<sup>2</sup> In short, 'Les Vertus' is an informative guide on Plutarch's sympotic protocols, as described (primarily, but not exclusively) in the QC. It provides a useful contribution to the scholarly interest in the multi-layeredness of this text, as analyzed especially on the basis of the medical and socio-political agenda beneath it.

It is the formal purpose of 'Les Vertus' to demonstrate (in four chapters) that there is a close connection between the organization of the symposium and 1) contemporary medical theories (chapters 1–3), as well as 2) the socio-political ideals of the author and his milieu (chapter 4). To this end, VR argues that the sympotic discussions Plutarch describes in the QC provide some kind of an

<sup>1</sup> F. Klotz and K. Oikonomopoulou (eds.), *The Philosopher's Banquet*. Plutarch's *Table Talk* in the Intellectual Culture of the Roman Empire, Oxford, 2011. For a *status quaestionis* of research that has already been conducted on the QC, see F. Titchener's contribution in the same volume ('Plutarch's *Table Talk*: Sampling a Rich Blend: A Survey of Scholarly Appraisal', pp. 35–48).

<sup>2</sup> M. Vamvouri Ruffy, 'Symposium, Physical and Social Health in Plutarch's *Table Talk*', pp. 131–157. See *Les Vertus*, p. 29, n. \*.

intellectual therapy for the body and soul of each participant, capable also of playing an important role in the preservation of socio-political order in the group and in society more generally.

Methodologically, 'Les Vertus' is based on two well-reflected hypotheses, which are commensurable up to a certain degree. The first three chapters are informed by theories related to the multifaceted concept of intertextuality (or more generally: interdiscursivity). The text of the QC is understood as a presupposition of other (mainly medical) texts, to which it refers either explicitly or (mostly) implicitly. Consequently, it depends for a large part on the reader's erudition whether the intertext is actually perceived or not.<sup>1</sup> The intertextual method is of an outspokenly non-positivistic kind, since the intertext is considered an effect of the text «dont l'importance consiste dans sa pertinence et non dans son objectivité» (p. 14), a proviso that is echoed throughout VR's study.<sup>2</sup> The fourth and final chapter, by contrast, draws on insights gained in the field of sociocriticism, where the relation between a literary text and its socio-political context is central. VR argues for the relevance of Plutarch's sympotic 'sociolect' as «le langage idéologique d'un groupe plus ou moins institutionnalisé, dont il articule les intérêts» (p. 16). She, thus, recognizes in the QC a social act that implicitly invites the reader to adhere to the socio-political viewpoints and attitudes of the author and his milieu. Both methods are in line with each other, in that they concentrate on the author's use of specific (viz. medical and political) lexical and semantic fields, metaphors, comparisons and allusions.

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, no clear notice is given of the actual level of erudition required on the side of the reader to make such a presupposition, but considering the not too technical character of the medical theories analyzed throughout *Les Vertus*, this seems relatively manageable.

<sup>2</sup> Cf., e.g., p. 40 («Ce lien interdiscursif n'est pas affiché mais plutôt suggéré.»), p. 61 («D'une façon générale, il faut admettre que le rapprochement n'est pas explicite, à une ou deux exceptions près. La dimension médicale de la discussion entre Craton et Théon est plutôt suggérée et demande à être décelée par le convive ou le lecteur.»), p. 68 («ce qui est important n'est pas tant l'objectivité du lien intertextuel mais sa pertinence pour l'interprétation du sens profond du texte»), pp. 218–219 («Il va sans dire que cette mise en lumière des différentes couches de l'interdiscursivité n'est possible que chez un lecteur savant qui saura fonder son interprétation à la fois sur l'explicite et le connu [...] et sur ce qui est plus implicite et plus difficile à saisir [...]»). An important consequence of this proviso seems to be that one should best avoid referring to Plutarch's actual *knowledge* of specific medical literature (or of concrete sources) where parallels can be drawn – an important caveat to which VR generally complies, indeed. The name of Hippocrates, for instance, occurs only twice in the QC (682E, 699C), which is considerably infrequent, but this does not necessarily imply that there is no generally Hippocratic intertext at certain places. Moreover, the indirect influence of Hippocratic knowledge in Plutarch's natural problems *via* the Ps.-Aristotelian Προβλήματα φυσικά cannot be excluded. See esp. K. Ziegler, 'Plutarchos von Chaironeia', *RE*, 21, 1 (1951), cols. 636–962, col. 925, H. Flashar, *Problemata physica*, Berlin, 1962, pp. 338–340 and C. Jacob, 'Questions sur les Questions: Archéologie d'une Pratique Intellectuelle et d'une Forme Discursive', in A. Volgers and C. Zamagni (eds.), *Erotapokriseis. Early Christian Question-and-Answer Literature in Context. Proceedings of the Utrecht Colloquium, 13–14 October 2003*, Leuven, 2004, pp. 25–54, pp. 44–45. See 'Les Vertus', p. 37, n. 31 for further literature on Plutarch's (alleged) acquaintance with Hippocratic literature.

After a compendious introduction of issues related to the enunciation (i.e. the ‘mise en discours’), composition, authorial ethos, and genre of the QC, four chapters follow, where the two methods are put to work. As already noted, the presence of a medical intertext guides VR’s interpretation of the QC in the first three chapters. VR here illustrates that some aspects of the organization of Plutarch’s ideal symposium rely on medical theory.

In the first chapter she aims to demonstrate that Plutarch’s presentation of the president of the banquet (the symposiarch) is reminiscent of the role of the doctor as described in the *Corpus Hippocraticum* (more precisely in the deontological writings). The idea that the symposiarch, just like a doctor, provides health for the body and soul of the symposiasts is analyzed in several more or less inter-related categories: they both have a moderated attitude, they procure harmony (like a musician), they have a fine sense for observation and have sufficient preliminary knowledge of the personal condition of their symposiasts/patients, they know how to adequately dose their wine/medicine, how to be useful and cause no harm, how to steer the symposiasts/patients in the right direction (like a sea captain), and how to exclude the troubling effects of anger on the soul. In her description of these categories, VR recurrently links Plutarch’s text with medical literature and indicates where similar medical intertexts are present in Plutarch’s other writings. She also appropriately shows that there are yet other intertexts present in the QC as well (like those related to the field of music or navigation).

The second chapter is arguably VR’s strongest. It argues for the preventive and therapeutic virtues of philosophical discussions, which assure health for the symposiast’s body and soul. First, the different types of philosophical discussions and their implied physiological and psychological effects are treated. Plutarch distinguishes between topics that are *glischros* and *hugros*, i.e. viscous/pedantic *vis-à-vis* humid/supple discussions respectively (cf. 614DE). He prefers the latter category of discussions, because they stimulate the well-being of the symposiast’s body and soul. The same is true for the concepts of *kairos* and *metron*. These are key to Plutarch’s notion of philosophy, which is in itself considered a way of life (613B: *technè peri bion*). VR analyzes the semantic fields of both these concepts and discusses their sympotic relevance and medical implications. She, thus, demonstrates that Plutarch uses *kairos* in a temporal fashion in the QC, in the sense of an ‘opportune moment’. Sympotic diversions (like musical performances or story-telling) have remedying effects on troubled situations (cf. *thorubôdês* at sea), and it requires (philosophical) knowledge on the part of the symposiast to determine the *kairos* for these diversions. The notion of *metron*, on the other hand, implies an aspect of ‘dosage’ and ‘moderation’. A proper moderation of diversions at the banquet helps with preserving physical and psychological health, and as such contributes to the symposiast’s tranquillity. Bestial desire for food and drinks, by contrast, is the reverse of moderation, causing dysfunction of the symposiast’s body and soul, but this ferocity can be remedied by obeying the Muses, who foster decency, order and intellectual occupations (viz. philosophy).

In a very similar vein, the third chapter reflects on the notion of mixture (*krasis*) and its role in the organization of the symposium on the one hand and in that of the human body and soul on the other. The conclusion is that these two types of *krasis* are basically the same. VR first reflects on the beneficial effects *krasis*

has on several aspects of the symposium (viz. food, diversions and wine), and she then illustrates that the principle of *krasis* also governs the body, soul and character of human beings. The reflections on the bodily *krasis* are paralleled in medical and philosophical literature (viz. Alcmaeon, Hippocrates, Plato). We are not so much dealing with a mixture that has already been fixed in advance but rather with a variable dosage (as was the case with the concept of *metron*). The goal of this correct measure is to avoid any excess, which is in itself detrimental for the working of the body and the symposium. The same aspect of measure also determines the mixture that governs the soul and, more remotely, the society as a politically cohesive unity. This last point is elaborated in the fourth and final chapter.

In the last chapter VR analyzes the socio-political implications of Plutarch's sympotic protocols. In general, she shows that Plutarch depicts the symposium as some kind of micro-society. The regularly used concepts of *kairos*, *metron*, and *krasis* not only refer to the organization of the banquet and the working of the body, but they also play an important role in the political and social organization of the ideal city and, by extension, the Empire. Plutarch's use of such vocabulary is symptomatic of a specific 'sociolect', which is informed by certain ethical norms and values. The rules for social conduct at the symposium reflect the socio-political norms of behavior outside of the symposium, i.e. in society and particularly in political life. E.g., in order to be successful, a leader has to seize the right moment (*kairos*) when he makes political or military decisions; moderation (*metron*) is required on the side of civilians and their leaders in their striving for well-being; and the proper balance is maintained in a society when the different parties and factions are mixed (*krasis*) in accordance with a certain hierarchy.

'Les Vertus' ends with a general synopsis of the four chapters described above and an interesting (but somewhat generic) discussion of the place of the QC in the context of the Second Sophistic and of the therapeutic properties of the act of reading this text. A useful list of abbreviations, bibliography, index of names and places, and table of contents close the book.

In conclusion, 'Les Vertus' is a very welcome contribution to the study of the multi-layeredness of Plutarch's QC. It is a masterful illustration of the author's well-documented acquaintance with the primary text, its place in the wider *Corpus Plutarcheum*, and the medical literature that serves as an intertext for its interpretation. However, in my opinion, presumably the most important disadvantage of the method of intertextuality is the fact that the ghost of 'Hineininterpretierung' is always lurking around the corner. All caution is required, therefore, to avoid the intertext from replacing the actual text while interpreting it. As was already noted (above p. 20 n. 2), it largely depends on the reader's erudition whether or not a specific intertext is recognized, but (even) more subjective factors, like interpretative sensitivity and enthusiasm, also play a role in this process. This does not alter the fact, however, that one can come to striking conclusions with the help of this method, as 'Les Vertus' proficiently demonstrates. In this sense, VR has succeeded in illuminating a generally understudied aspect of Plutarch's QC in an original fashion. The fact, moreover, that she generally avoids lapsing into plain technicisms makes her study accessible and useful for special-

ists and non-specialists alike – by which I leave unmentioned the book’s affordability (€ 45).<sup>1</sup>

FWO (KU Leuven)

Michiel Meeusen

\*

**Holger Essler:** *Glücklich und unsterblich*. Epikureische Theologie bei Cicero und Philodem. Mit einer Edition von PHerc. 152/157, Kol. 8–10. Basel: Schwabe 2011. 400 S. (Epicurea. 2.) 60 €.

«La rappresentazione epicurea della divinità come un essere vivente immortale e beato sembra incompatibile con le leggi della fisica epicurea, secondo le quali tutto è fatto di atomi e tutte le combinazioni atomiche sono destinate a sciogliersi. Non è attestata una risposta certa degli Epicurei. A questa contraddizione si può ovviare in due modi differenti. O si postula come eccezione alla fisica epicurea una speciale e imperitura costituzione corporea degli dèi o si la si spiega come semplice concetto, come proiezione del pensiero che come tale non ricadrebbe nelle leggi della fisica [...]. *Complessivamente considerate le fonti rinviano ad un’origine esterna del concetto, a divinità costituite di atomi speciali. Le fonti concernenti la prolessi e la dottrina teologica epicuree smentiscono tutte la tesi dei costrutti mentali*».<sup>2</sup> Queste parole servono da degna introduzione alla discussione di un lavoro destinato, come credo, a lasciar traccia nella storia dell’*Epicureismuskforschung* e della teologia antica. Poiché esso è stato già recensito da vari colleghi,<sup>3</sup> mi limiterò qui a descriverne gli aspetti fondamentali per poi soffermarmi su qualche elemento meritevole di approfondimento. La prima caratteristica del volume di E(ssler), che costituisce una versione riveduta della sua dissertazione dottorale e il quale si colloca a metà tra una monografia e un’edizione critica, è rappresentata dalla sua duplice rilevanza, papirologica ed ermeneutica, cioè dal significativo impatto che esso esercita tanto nell’ecdotica dei testi ercolanesi quanto nella discussione tuttora in corso sullo statuto ontologico degli dèi epicurei. Il metodo seguito dall’A., infatti, innovativo nella prassi editoriale e solido sia nell’argomentazione che nella critica delle fonti, apporta progressi fondamentali alla nostra conoscenza della dottrina teologica epicurea, contribuendo in maniera decisiva alla soluzione di spinose aporie interpretative. Storicamente parlando, il lavoro di E. nasce dal progetto di una nuova edizione critica

<sup>1</sup> At the risk of becoming somewhat *glischros*, I include a list of (mostly bibliographical) errata that came to my notice: Ti[t]chener (pp. 10, 254); Fle[m]ming (p. 13); Darbo-Pe[s]chanski (p. 13 x2); Fri[e]da (p. 24); [autre] (p. 60); [v]an der Eijk (pp. 64, 255 x2, 256); [«] peu convaincante» (p. 69); «d’après le narrateur» should be ‘d’après [l’]auteur’ (p. 70), since there is no narrative in Ps.-Aristotle’s *Προβλήματα φυσικά*; Van der Stock[t] (p. 96); Guth[r]ie (pp. 99, 204); en[iv]rent (p. 112); *du[nam]eis* (p. 156); *pe[r]i* (p. 188); Te[i]xeira (p. 254); Van der [S]tockt, [L.] (p. 255); Van [H]oof (p. 255); [v]on Staden (p. 257).

<sup>2</sup> H. Essler, *Glücklich und unsterblich*. Epikureische Theologie bei Cicero und Philodem. Mit einer Edition von PHerc. 152/157, Kol. 8–10, Basel 2011 [quarta di copertina]. Il corsivo è mio.

<sup>3</sup> Si vedano D. Armstrong in: *BMCR*, 2013.02.37; W.B. Henry in: *JHS* 133, 2013, 297–298; G. Roskam in: *Mnemosyne* 67, 2013, 165–168; C. Chandler in: *CR* 63, 2013, 381–383.