

At the end of the nineteenth volume of Kühn's edition of the works of Galen we find among the spuria a short unedited treatise replete with the grossest errors of transmission called *περὶ κατακλίσεως προγνωστικὰ ἐκ τῆς μαθηματικῆς ἐπιστήμης*, or *de Decubitu, On Taking to Bed Sick*.¹ This treatise has never received anything but the most cursory attention, and yet it is interesting not only for its textual genealogy, but also for what it can say about ancient intellectual communities and the ways they make use of and appropriate intellectual property.

The treatise falls into five basic parts. First is a defense of the use of astrology in medicine. There follows an exposition of the method used. The core and bulk of the treatise is devoted to the illnesses, treatments and outcomes for patients whose maladies commence when the moon is in a certain zodiacal sign, and the benefic and malefic planets aspect it. There follows a coda devoted to special kinds and conditions of decumbiture and ending with a statement that by making use of this investigation 'you will not go astray in anything'. At this point Kühn's printed text ends. The most important manuscript, the Laurentianus 28.34 (though not all manuscripts), as Cumont points out, continues without a break of any sort to add three sets of lists, one on the sects of planets, one on melothesia, and finally a short passage on phlebotomy and purgation,

¹ Kühn (ed.), *Claudii Galeni Omnia Opera* (reprinted Hildesheim 1964) 19.529-573

which part alone could belong to the general structure of the whole, since it alone makes use of the lunar theory.²

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The core of the treatise itself falls into twelve sections, each devoted to one of the zodia, and within each of the zodia, there are two sub-sections (we call stratum A and stratum B), which clearly have different textual origins. The character of the whole can be seen by referring to the passage pertaining to the celestial situation at the time of the (Ir)rationality conference. The Moon moved into Cancer at 9.13 am (Pacific Standard

² Cumont, "Les 'Prognostica de decubitu' attributes à Galien," *BIBR* 15 (1935) 119-31

Time) February 18, 2005, and at that moment Saturn was in conjunction with the moon and Mars was opposed and Jupiter was square:

If some one falls sick when the Moon is in Cancer and Saturn is in conjunction, in opposition or square, the beginning of the disease will be from baths and shivering, and [there will be] fluxions in the chest and coughs and stoppage of the body, and light fevers and bad temper and light and weak pulse and a pain in the side. All things that heat will be of help in these cases. And if a benefic does not aspect the moon he will prolong his disease and die within forty days. But if a benefic does aspect, he will recover upon the first square. If some one falls sick when the Moon is in Cancer and Mars is in conjunction or square or opposed....

This passage comes from stratum A for Cancer. Its style is straightforward and its structure formulaic. Stratum B uses similar formulae, but is longer and more complicated. It adds the aspecting of the Sun, Mercury and Venus in various combinations and introduces some new theoretical considerations, like *sundesmos*.³

It has long been observed that there are treatises similar in style to the *de Decubitu*. Heeg identified the dependence of our treatise on the *Iatromathematika* and the *Epitome of Pancharius*.⁴ The significance of his important work, however, has been obscured by some false turns later taken by Cumont. Stratum A for each zodiac is

³ Sundesmos is described in various ways. According to Antiochus it occurs when the Moon approaches within 15 degrees of the conjunction or opposition with the sun (*Thesaurus* I.38). Paulus Alexandrinus mentions ten *sundesmoi* ranging within five degrees of their positions (39).

⁴Heeg, "Über ein angebliches Diokleszitat," *SPAW* (1911) 991-1007

essentially the same as a Hermetic text of astral medicine or *iatromathematika* published by Ideler in the 1841.⁵ This *Iatromathematika*, like the *de Decubitu* contains an introduction (whose contents we shall consider below) and a zodiacal core. The zodiacal material of the *Iatromathematika* is incorporated largely verbatim into our treatise, to such a degree that there is significant agreement on contextually unmotivated variations in the text (e.g. αὐτῆ̃ is added to the word σύνοντος at the beginning of Virgo alone in both the *Iatromathematika* and *de Decubitu* A). It is clear that the zodiacal section of the *Iatromathematika* predates the *de Decubitu*. Not only does the existence of the *Iatromathematika* suggest its independence from the *de Decubitu*, but also the theoretical introduction of the *de Decubitu* is better adapted to Stratum B than to Stratum A, and consequently suggests that Stratum A was not originally composed by the author/editor of the *de Decubitu*. Also, it is clear that the author of the *Iatromathematika* has himself pilfered this zodiacal core, since his introduction too includes several passages that are irrelevant to the zodiaca.

This fact has significant repercussions for the dating of the treatise. Cumont had argued that since the Hellenistic names of the planets were used (Στίλβων for Mercury, Πυρόεις for Mars, etc.), the treatise dates from the Hellenistic period. Even accepting this only roughly accurate premise, his argument from names is problematic.⁶ It is true,

⁵ Ideler, *Physici et Medici Graeci Minores* (Berlin 1841), published as two treatises what are clearly two manuscripts of a single treatise: Ἑρμοῦ τοῦ τρισμεγίστου περὶ κατακλίσεως νοσοῦντων περιγνοστικά [sc.], ἐκ τῆς μαθηματικῆς ἐπιστήμης πρὸς Ἄμμωνα Αἰγύπτιον pp. 430-440, and Ἱατρομαθηματικά Ἑρμοῦ τοῦ τρισμεγίστου πρὸς Ἄμμωνα Αἰγύπτιον pp. 387-396. I shall refer to this as a single treatise, *Iatromathematika*.

⁶ There is evidence for post-Hellenistic use of the poetic names: Antiochus of Athens (3rd c. A.D. referred to the poetic names (*Thesaurus* II.8), as did Dorotheus (as quoted by Hephaistio (*Apotelesmatica* I.1).

as Cumont observes, that in the Syntagma Laurentianum (Laur. 28.34), a manuscript codex comprising many astrological works in addition to the *de Decubitu*, the Hellenistic names are used only in that treatise and throughout that treatise. Cumont infers that Hellenistic names come from the archetype and ultimately from the autograph. But since the names are used both in stratum A and stratum B, which clearly have a different textual origin, it is impossible to argue for an early date. The history of the text is clear at least to this extent: the *Iatromathematika* predates its inclusion in the *de Decubitu*, and the *Iatromathematika* for which there is also a manuscript copy in the Syntagma Laurentianum does not preserve Hellenistic names. It is highly unlikely that both stratum B and the version of the *Iatromathematika* copied subsequently into the original version of the *de Decubitu* as Stratum A both preserved these names, when other copies of the *Iatromathematika* do not. It is more likely that the names were a subsequent stylistic addition of an archaizing copyist. Cumont adduced this flawed argument because he did not take account of the stemmatic relationship among the treatises. Heeg for his part did not stress sufficiently how close the relationship is: there is as close a relationship between the *Iatromathematika* and Stratum A as there is between two versions of Stratum A (Kühn and Laur. 28.34). The argument from names, therefore, is very weak and it is Cumont's strongest argument for an early date. It may well be that Heeg's argument that the date of the treatise be fixed no earlier than the fourth century A.D. is preferable.

Stratum B has a textual history of its own. We have under the title of *Pancharii Epitome* (also preserved in the Syntagma Laurentianum) an abbreviated version of the same material from Aries to Scorpio. The *Epitome* omits the lengthy discussion of

symptoms and remedies found in Stratum B, but with the exception of some omissions and transpositions the astrological situations are much the same and sometimes the expression of the *Epitome* is strikingly similar to Stratum B.⁷ What was omitted from Pancharius' original is not certain, but the epitomator may have been more interested in the astrological material and less interested in the lengthy and specific description of symptoms and cures such as we find in Stratum B. The fact that Pancharius also wrote a *Περὶ φλεβοτομίας καὶ καθάρσεως* suggests an active interest in medical matters. It is clear that though Pancharius was a commentator on Ptolemy, this theory did not derive from Ptolemy, whose medical astrology is horoscopic rather than katarchic. Nor is it likely, given the transpositions, that Ps.-Galen took the Pancharius epitome and added the medical details. It is more likely that the medical details were part of the tradition our author was borrowing from.

The most likely compositional story concerning the *de Decubitu* is the following. Stratum B originated in a treatise which included of all of the planets in interaction with the Moon. This treatise was the basis of the Pancharius epitome, and perhaps of Pancharius himself. To this was added (it is not likely to be original) *de Decubitu's* theoretical chapter. Our author probably added Stratum A and finally his own Hellenizing introduction.

Stylistic Archetype

/	\
archetype a	archetype b

⁷ For example, in Aries, Pancharius epitome says ὁ δὲ ἥλιος καὶ ὁ Ἑρμῆς πρὸς τὸ κείμενον σχῆμα μᾶλλον ἀντιλήπτορές σοι νοιείσθωσαν (CCAG 1.118.8-9) where the *de Decubitu* reads εἰ δὲ πυρόεις Ἄρης πρὸς τὸ προκείμενον σχηματισθείη σχῆμα, ἀντιλήπτορές σοι μᾶλλον νομιζέσθωσαν. (Kühn, 19.535)

Stratum A	Stratum B	Pancharius
	\	
Hermetic Additions	\	
	\	\ /
<i>Iatromathematika</i>	<i>de Decubitu</i>	

Common to the theory of both strata is the katarchic form of astrology dependent upon the position of the moon in the zodiac at the onset or *καταρχή* of the disease and upon the aspecting of planets in conjunction, opposition or square to determine the disease's nature and course. The strata clearly have a common generic origin, since they share verbal formulae and even some specific symptoms. Necessarily there was some original *Περὶ κατακλίσεως* from which both Stratum A and B ultimately derive and which included the motion and light of the moon and a full range of symptoms and cures in the tradition of Greek medicine. As for the differences, the *Iatromathematika*/Stratum A considers the aspecting of the malefics, Saturn and Mars only; Stratum B adds the Sun, Mercury and Venus in stratum B. Stratum B makes extensive use of the term “sundesmos” referring to moon's position at or near certain critical points. For the *Iatromathematika*/Stratum A it is unimportant.⁸ Both consider the phase of the moon, which is described as the adding and losing of light, and the so-called “adding and losing in numbers” which seems to refer to the primary lunar anomaly, according as the moon moves faster or slower through the various zodia of the ecliptic. Since the phases of the

⁸ Sundesmos is mentioned in the theoretical chapter of the *Iatromathematika*, but it is not used in Stratum A.

moon and the period of the lunar anomaly do not coincide, we should expect to see four combinations of waxing/waning and accelerating/decelerating. We find all these combinations countenanced in the theory of the *Iatromathematika* (II.7), and occasionally in the zodiacal section, but for practical purposes not all four combinations are important, because in two of them, the influences cancel one another out. Moreover, these effects must be further coordinated with the malefics: hot and aggressive Mars will be abetted by a waxing and accelerating Moon; cold and sluggish Saturn will be abetted by a waning and decelerating Moon. In both sources, then, we find usually an interest in times of waxing acceleration and waning deceleration only. For this reason this prognostica, like others of the genre, will not cover every astronomical situation, but only those in which one or other influence clearly predominant.

The theory is clearly not influenced by the late Ptolemy, nor as some have supposed, by the early Nechepso and Petosiris.⁹ The closest parallel we find to the *Iatromathematika* is in a passage included by Pingree in the Greek fragments of the first century A.D. Dorotheus. However, it is not clear that the passage is by Dorotheus. It is

⁹We cannot accept the statement of Cumont, 131: ‘Cette oeuvre ne peut être postérieure au 1er siècle de notre ère: elle appartient peut-être encore à la période ptolémaïque. Elle reproduisait – ce résultat des recherches de Heeg reste acquis – les doctrine de cette ‘iatromathématique’ égyptienne qui fut exposée en grec à partir du IIe siècle avant J.C. sous les noms empruntés de Pétoisiris-Nechepso ou d’Hermès Trismégiste.’ Pingree (*Yavanajataka of Sphujidhvaja* (Cambridge 1978) 431) directs us to Riess’ edition of the fragments of Nechepso and Petosiris (*Philologus Supplementband 6* 324-394) fragments 28-29. But the surviving material laid out in Riess indicate a vastly different method. They make use of decans, amulets and spells throughout and are very similar to the decanic texts we have from Pitra (*Analecta Sacra et Classica Spicilegio Solesmensi Parata* (Paris 1888) 275-299) and Ruelle (“Hermès Trismégiste, Le Livre Sacré sur les Décans,” *RPh* 32 (1908) 247-277). The attribution of the lunar theory of illness to Petosiris by the late ἄλλη σκέψις (*CCAG* I.126.5-128.2) is certainly made because of his association with Hermes, and is not an independent witness to the works of Nechepso and Petosiris.

found in the *περὶ κατακλίσεων καὶ νόσων* of the *CCAG* I.122-24, which is without attribution in the Laurentian syntagma, but is attested by the Arabic translation of Dorotheus (V.41.30-34). However, the entire chapter V.41 is not found in Hephaestio (who, however, copied much of Dorotheus, and is therefore a witness to his work) and this constitutes an argument from silence against its being attributed to Dorotheus. Moreover, this chapter in the Arabic, uniquely and explicitly bears another attribution, “as Qitrinus the Sadwali says. I took this statement from him”. So this section does not profess to be by Dorotheus either in the Arabic or in the Syntagma Laurentianum. And so another piece of evidence for the early dating of the doctrine disappears.

A careful study of the medical theories and vocabulary (e.g. pulse theory) is outside the scope of the present study. But a cursory investigation reveals nothing inconsistent with a Hellenistic date, nor is anything clearly post-Galenic. Still the enthusiasm for blood-letting may suggest a Galenic influence. Only the heating effect of Mars and the cooling effect of Saturn is a Ptolemaic innovation.¹⁰ We are left with broad parameters for dating: somewhere between the Hellenistic period and late antiquity.

¹⁰ Ptol. *Tetr.* (I.4) classifies the planets according to the four qualities and the inherent capacity of each planet to produce warming, cooling, moistening or drying effects in the human and terrestrial realms. This is the first evidence in the astrological literature to describe the nature of the planets based solely upon their qualities (e.g. Saturn has the power to cool and moderately to dry, Mars to dry and to burn, etc.). In Dorotheus’ section on katarchic illness (V.42), which we question as genuine Dorotheus, he does assign long term illness that arises from heat to Mars and such illness that arises from consumption, coldness and swelling to Saturn (V.41. 4-5). The most detailed exposition of the planets in any of the earlier authors is found in Vett. Val. 1.1, (contemporary of Ptolemy) and this is clearly hermetic in nature as he gives the correspondences between each planet and its body parts, minerals, color, taste, as well as occupations, activities, personality characteristics, and some quality of the soul. In regards to Saturn, he mentions that this planet is indicative of “whatever ailments are formed from moisture and cold,” and in the section on Mars he notes that it “introduces fevers and inflammations, and is the “lord of blood.”

Medical astrology had its proximate origin in Hellenistic Egypt. It was originally (to the extent that its obscure beginnings can be recovered) a fusion of Egyptian, Babylonian and Greek interests and conceptions. Since it draws on all the traditions it behaves as common cultural property and can slip easily between communities and contexts, being an attractive means for all groups to access alien culture. Once the core iatromathematical texts become locked into their characteristic formulaic expression, they become, as it were, integrated blocks of data displaying a high degree of uniformity, and serve as intellectual and cultural commodities. But their story does not end in this universal, identical form; in each case and especially in the *de Decubitu*, the core is reappropriated and reembedded in a specific cultural context.¹¹ The author/editor has made use of a variety of techniques to present the treatise as traditionally Greek and make it safe for Greek rationality.

The ease and superficiality of this cultural transfer is made clearer by the different editorial choices made in different sections of the *de Decubitu* itself. The Hellenizing introduction is a tightly unified and organic piece of Greek philosophical reasoning. It stands in sharp contrast to the episodic lists of the zodiacal section and especially to the thoughtless inclusion of two independent strata side by side. Our author/editor was able to slip easily between two different intellectual styles.

¹¹ As Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes* (Cambridge, 1986) 73 has said: “the Hellenized Egyptian wrote the Greek language, to whose expressiveness he was sensitive, and thought in Greek categories, whose subtlety he exploited. But once he had been moulded by that culture, he became first its bearer, then its arbiter.” Fowden may express the relation as too passive.

The difference between the styles is dictated by their exoteric and esoteric contexts. The esoteric community, though it may be socially marked off from the wider world (as it commonly thought), can leave its peculiar cultural assumptions implicit just because of the initiation and practice required to join the community.¹² Every Hermetic astrologer knows what to do with the lists and is experienced in negotiated conflicting and competing lists. The exoteric treatises, by contrast, must circulate in a world of fewer common assumptions, and for that reason are more rhetorically marked: they require slicker marketing.

The *Iatromathematika* announces itself as Hermetic from the outset: its title claims Hermes Trismegistus as author.¹³ The treatise begins with an apostrophe to

¹² Fowden (193) has well argued that the nature of Hermetic community was similar to the Platonic and especially Gnostic communities: “the texts themselves tell us of small, informal circles of the literature but not (usually) learned gathered round a holy teacher and given up to study, asceticism and pious fellowship.” He describes Hermetism as unfit to be a public doctrine, in so far as they are counter-cultural and reject the mainstream rhetorical and philosophical education.

¹³ There is an interesting passage in C.H. XVI (Asclepius to King Ammon, just as our treatise is to Ammon) on Hermetic style and the Egyptian language. It suggests that the Hermetic community was aware of their peculiar form of discourse as distinct from the Greek (Copenhaver’s translation): “I have sent you a long discourse, my king, as a sort of reminder or summary of all the others ; it is not meant to agree with vulgar opinions but contains much to refute it. That it contradicts even some of my own discourses will be apparent to you. My teacher, Hermes – often speaking to me in private, sometimes in the presence of Tat – used to say that those reading my books would find their organization very simple and clear when, on the contrary, it is unclear and keeps the meaning of its words concealed; furthermore, it will be entirely unclear (he said) when the Greeks eventually desire to translate our language to their own and thus produce in writing the greatest distortion and unclarity; But this discourse, expressed in our paternal language, keeps clear the meaning of its words. The very quality of the speech and the <sound> of Egyptian words have in themselves the energy of the objects they speak of. Therefore, my king, in so far as you have the power (who are all powerful), keep the discourse uninterpreted, lest mysteries of such greatness come to the Greeks, lest the extravagant, flaccid and (as it were) dandified Greek idiom extinguish something stately and concises, the energetic idiom of <Egyptian> usage. For the Greeks have empty speeches, O king, that are energetic only in what they demonstrate (apodeixis), and this is the philosophy of

Ammon, who is addressed on more than one occasion in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, and so assumes the divine Hermes as the author.¹⁴ We find in the first sentence an articulation of the fundamental Hermetic theme of microcosm and macrocosm:¹⁵ “The wise men, O Ammon, say that man is a cosmos.” The authority for the statement is the generic “wise men” rather than the specific authorities we find in the *de Decubitu*, and by this means the author increases the mystery.

The *Iatromathematika* then adds material of its own, two lists of body-cosmos (or melothesiac) correspondences: one between the planets and organs of sense in the head, another between the four large parts, the head, torso, arms and legs, which may be weak in some respect at conception or birth and some master planet which is malefic.¹⁶ This correspondence between organ and heavenly body is originally Egyptian and found in a number of decanic texts.¹⁷ The zodiacal section preserves a single remnant of this theory in the association of Aries with the head: otherwise melothesia is ignored. The Egyptian theory that rays effect the parts of the body through a magical force is mentioned several times.¹⁸ The *Iatromathematika* also adds, in a way reminiscent of Egyptian decan texts and the herbal and magical medical tradition, extensive lists of plants that heat and cool, which though germane to the subject of the treatise, are not incorporated in the zodiaca.

the Greeks, an inane foolosophy of speeches. We, by contrast, use not speeches but sound that are full of action.”

¹⁴ There may be an association between Ammon and decans. In the temple of Amun of Hibis ‘the priests of the temple may have regarded this assemble of decans as a heavenly manifestation of Amun’s universal might,’ Kákosy, “Decans in Late-Egyptian Religion”, *Oikumene* 2 (1982) 179

¹⁵ Festugiere, *La Révélation d’Hermès Trismégiste* (Paris 1950) I.126-27. This theme straddles the Greek and Egyptian tradition.

¹⁶ The fact that the introduction contains this horoscopic method while the zodiacal section is entirely catarchic is another indication of their original independence.

¹⁷ See Pitra and Ruelle.

¹⁸ Ideler, 430.3 and 19. See Fowden, 76.

Finally, the Hermetic treatise assumes the relevance of astral medicine to its purpose whereas the *de Decubitu* self-consciously argues it. This is not to say that the Hermetic text has no account for the effectiveness of astral medicine. In fact it has an elaborate theory of rays. It does not, however, engage any outside community, but assumes only its own Hermetic world. All these features serve partly to establish the community to which the treatise is addressed, and to frame and recontextualize the common core.

As we might expect the Hellenizing text displays an even more explicit cultural awareness. The first chapter of the *de Decubitu* is written in the style of Greek high culture, replete with sophisticated periodic sentences containing a balanced diction and thought, and a simple, but finely structured argument. The author clearly wished to portray himself as a man of liberal education:

Concerning the existence of the astrological science, the opinion of the Stoic philosophers, men who have elaborated arguments and shown what sort of thing life is, has sufficed. But nonetheless, since our present account also concerns things which the medical art professes, it is necessary to set out the accounts of those of highest repute in it, in order that it may be known to all that these very doctors too, because they consider of greatest importance the provident part of their craft, have attributed this to the astrological art; and if not everyone, at least the majority. Hippocrates at any rate, who is great in his antiquity and wondrous in his knowledge says, "Whoever practices medicine without a study of nature, their minds wander sleepy in the shadow and grow old." Not only does he say that they will not be right, but also that they will err. For he said that the mind of those who do not make use of the study of nature wander in the darkness. But the part of astrology that studies nature is the greatest part. And he who praises some part all the more would praise the whole. And Diocles of Carystus even more incisively says – not just himself, as you too know - and also records that the ancients too made prognoses of illnesses from the light and the motion of the moon. So when men of such age and stature in esteem and knowledge – not followers in medical prognostication, but founders of their own schools – have accepted this art and enjoyed the toil of others, why do they doubt about these things? Whence, you too, dearest Aphrodisios, work though the manner of decumbiture and follow the aforementioned men, and you will enjoy the finest part of your own craft, prognosticating and telling in advance what is going to befall those who are sick.

Our author addresses the treatise to the otherwise unknown Aphrodisios (φιλτατε Ἀφροδίσιε, a name attested from at least the fifth century) in the first chapter in a manner typical of Greek technical and didactic treatises and so presents the treatise as a private communication to a friend or patron who has expressed interest in the art.¹⁹ Such an address makes the treatise an act of *xenia* among aristocratic or would-be aristocratic friends, a typically Greek gesture. But such gifts must be publically displayed in order to be effective and so its self-presentation is exoteric rather than an esoteric. The difference can be seen by comparison with the *Iatromathematika*'s address to the divine Ammon, which because it is the address of one god to another refuses to subject itself to the same degree of public scrutiny.

Our author cites Greeks, the Stoics, Hippocrates and Diocles of Carystos as authorities. No particular Stoic is named nor is any particular doctrine; they are merely described as men who have elaborated treatises and “present what sort of a thing life is.” This implies no particular adherence on Aphrodisios' part. We can suppose, however, that Aphrodisios is sympathetic to Stoic philosophy at least as an authority.²⁰ In the transition from the Stoics to Hippocrates we see the Peripatetic shift from generic philosophical considerations to matters appropriate to the special science (medicine) at hand. This is a fundamental *topos* of Greek rationality and displays a self-conscious awareness of the organization of knowledge essential to general *παίδεια*. Similarly the

¹⁹ The fact of the address recommends the idea that the author of the introduction of the *de Decubitu* had a hand in the composition of B: the 2nd person address is present both in the introduction and in the B sections, e.g. in Aries 535.8; Taurus 538.10.

²⁰ The question of the Stoics commitment to astrology comes up, since Tony Long has brought this orthodoxy into question. It is clear that Manilius and others thought that the Stoics were adherents and claimed them. If Long is right, the author's claiming the Stoics as supporters of astrology may argue against a very early date for the treatise.

claim that “if not everyone” of the best doctors, “at least the majority” support astrology sounds like an Aristotelian ἔνδοξον, a statement of the reputable opinion of all men, most men or the wise’, which licences its use as a premise in a dialectical argument.

Although the quote of Hippocrates in the introduction cannot be traced to any known work, and is conceivably spurious, our author carefully preserves the Ionicisms of Hippocrates : 530.5 δόσοι (Laur. 28.13) 530.6 τουτέων (Kühn, Laur 28.34, Laur. 28.13). The fact that the quote alludes to a Hippocratean citation in Plato’s *Phaedrus* (207c-d), confirms the author’s preference for philosophy. All the same, the quote is unlikely to have been fabricated by our author: it is not very useful to his purpose, and he must take pains to interpret it. It concerns the role of physiognomy or study of nature,²¹ and he claims that physiognomy is the biggest part of astrology. Here again our author betrays his Greek philosophical education in his use of another Peripatetic topic of dialectical argument: he who praises some part, he says, would much more praise the whole.²² Again, though our author shows the form of reasoned debate, he falls short of the spirit: the topos is being applied in this case with misleading ambiguity. All the same, as Edelstein has pointed, out Greek medicine distinguishes itself partly through its close

²¹ As also noted by Schöne and Wellmann (cited by van der Eijk). Van der Eijk, *Diocles of Carystus* (Leiden, 2001) II.136-7 notes that commentators have trouble with the term “physiognomy” (which means the relationship between physical appearance and character), and suppose it must mean φυσιολογία.

²² Arist. *Top.* VI. 13 150a35-6: “see if the whole is good or evil, and the parts neither, or vice versa, if the parts are good or evil and the whole neither. For it is impossible either for a neutral thing to produce something good or bad, or for things good or bad to produce a neutral thing.” Again 150b14 “see whether the whole, as produced from a better and worse, fails to be worse than the better and better than the worse element. This again, however, need not necessarily be the case, unless the elements compounded are in themselves good.”

relationship to philosophy.²³ It is nevertheless remarkable that the author did not choose some more appropriate citation from Hippocrates: *Airs Waters Places* discusses the importance of the risings and settings of the stars on ‘knowing beforehand the nature of the year that is coming (I.73). *Prognostics* (20) too relates the cycle of critical days to the days of the year and the month, though the connection to the month is not made very clear. *Aphorisms* 2.23-24 shows a tendency to seven day multiples. This very fact suggests that our author’s acquaintance with the Hippocratic corpus was slight.

Aphrodisios is presented as being familiar with the works of Diocles of Carystus (4th c BC doctor and contemporary of Aristotle) ὧς καὶ σὺ γιγνώσκεις. Diocles says that he and the ancients too prognosticated diseases from the light and motion of the moon.²⁴ This is not likely to have gone beyond the coincidence of moon phases with biological conditions. Aphrodisios is presented, then, as someone who has read Diocles, though perhaps not too much Stoic philosophy: a doctor, then, or at least an educated amateur.

Among other topics in the rhetoric of rationality, which appeal to the public and open nature of rational discourse, our author makes use of the topic of the authority of the human and historical first discoverer and the related topic of the intellectual contest. Hippocrates and Diocles are Greeks and both cited as founders of medical schools, and not just followers: being innovators they enjoy especial authority. The need to innovate and to contest with one’s predecessors is typical of Greek self-representation, as G.E.R.

²³ ‘Hellenism of Greek Medicine’ in *Ancient Medicine*, 372-3.

²⁴ van der Eijk does not reject the fragment, as do Heeg and Jaeger. He does not deny that Diocles could be interested in astrology, but notes that the statement here does not go beyond belief in the effect of lunar and general meteorological conditions. He notes Diocles’ interest in the number seven, in which he follows Hippocrates.

Lloyd has argued.²⁵ For this reason our author also finds it appropriate in the second chapter to fault those who hold that increase in the light of the moon is important as some mistakenly assert, (ὡς τινες πέπληνται), whereas he claims that increase in numbers is the only important issue. The comment is revealed to be an empty gesture of rhetoric, because the author does not adhere to his own theoretical principles, and even contradicts himself within the same chapter.

Finally, we find that most Greek topic of rational medicine, which the treatise bears in its title, *Prognostica*. Our author promises a prognostic method, whereby one will foreknow and foretell what is going to happen to those who fall sick (προγινώσκων καὶ προλέγων τὰ μέλλοντα τοῖς κάμνουσι συμβήσεσθαι). That this purpose is made explicit is typically Greek and is almost a direct quote from the Hippocratic *Prognostics* 1: foreknowing and foretelling to those who are sick what is, what has been and what will be (προγινώσκων γὰρ καὶ προλέγειν παρὰ τοῖσι νοσέουσι τὰ τε παρεόντα καὶ τὰ προγεγονότα καὶ τὰ μέλλοντα ἔσεσθαι).²⁶ By contrast, the prognostic function is not explicitly mentioned in the *Iatromathematika*.

The *Iatromathematika* and the *de Decubitu* both specify their doctrinal commitments beyond what is required by their common core. As a result these commitments are expressions of community membership rather than principles from which the astral-medical theory must necessarily follow. The common product conversely is doctrinally underspecified. In the case of the Hermetic version, most of the Egyptian traditional medical practice has disappeared, overwhelmed by the more sophisticated Greek system. The core of the *Iatromathematika* has given up

²⁵ Lloyd, *Adversaries and Authorities* (New York, 1996)

²⁶ And this makes his not quoting above from the *Prognostics* even more strange.

consideration of plants, stones, amulets, melothesia and the decans. Greek medicine, for its part has tied prognostics firmly to the orientations of the remote planets rather than to local weather and geography.

The author of the introduction of the *de Decubitu* is probably not interested in medicine per se, but in the astrological method which happens to be here applied to medicine. His putative friend is a doctor in the philosophical tradition, and he is using the means of persuasion he thinks will be effective with his friend and others like him. If he is an adept, then his real interest will be in the astrological core, and being of that mindset, he is quite content to throw together the strata which make up our treatise. He affects the manner of a Greek man of liberal education, hitting upon the obvious topoi which he supposes a real liberally educated Greek would expect to see in a preface, without too much regard for the overall cogency of his argument. In this sense he is not trying to make astral medicine safe for Greek rationality; he is trying to export into the Greek tradition something which he sees as foreign, but which is valuable to it. And so we see in the two treatises the evangelist and the initiate, the one who wants to take astral medicine into the broader society and the other who conceives of it as the property of a separate society. This interpretation best fits the peculiarity of the introductory chapter of the *de Decubitu*, the author's weak knowledge of Hippocrates, for example, and his lack of specifics. The *de Decubitu*, then, is informative, precisely because it is a work of average ability. It shows us not just what are the rhetorical elements of Greek rational culture but it reveals them as emblems, as self-consciously chosen symbols, which can

then be put to the further purpose of appropriating and domesticating the works of a shared heritage.²⁷

²⁷ So van der Eijk, 'Towards a Rhetoric of Ancient Scientific Discourse' in E.J. Bakker (ed.) *Grammar as Interpretation: Greek Literature in its Linguistic Contexts* (Leiden, 1997) 114, "What a number of proems in the Hippocratic Corpus have in common is the definition of the author's work in relation to predecessors or competitors, often with great polemical vigor. Famous examples are the proems of *Regimen*, *On the Nature of Man*, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, and *On Ancient Medicine*."