

Hippocratic Commentary forgeries, while Outi Merisalo concludes the volume by considering the interrelated transmission of the genuine and spurious Galenic *On the Seed*.

This volume is noteworthy for the thematic coherence of its contributions, a unity of purpose sometimes lost in edited collections of this nature. This achievement is especially notable given the impressive historical and geographical scope. The arguments are most compelling when rigorous close examination of manuscript traditions also reveal echoes of the medical world beyond the text. Nutton's chapter gives us tantalizing hints of Antonine Rome as an up-and-coming centre of medical education, while Totelin's hints at a growing interest in gynaecological questions beyond anything we witness in Galen. Some contributors offer glimpses at medical encounters and teaching contexts; others, like Bhayro, situate debates about authorship in a broader shifting cultural milieu. Approaches like these represent a promising paradigm shift in studies of ancient medicine. Galen has loomed large for so long that scholarship often judges pseudonymous texts by how well they measure up to him, an impulse hard to avoid even for some contributors in the current volume.

While the book may appeal primarily to scholars of Galenic medicine, there is much of value here for students and those who are new to the Corpus. As Petit and Swain note in their introduction, 'reading Galen is still a confusing experience for many' (ix). The book offers many helpful reminders of the complexities inherent in Galenic scholarship, and numerous close readings of the manuscript tradition to help demystify it. In the interests of accessibility, the editors might have provided an index of Galenic and Pseudo-Galenic works in Latin and in translation; while translating Galenic titles is not a scholarly norm, it could make charting the 'muddy waters' of Galenic scholarship a little easier for the uninitiated. More generally, the book is accompanied by helpful indices, but would have benefited from an overarching bibliography to aid further reading.

In short, this compelling volume offers both a helpful road map through the Galenic Corpus, and a timely reconsideration of the Pseudo-Galenica. It challenges us to rethink the meaning of 'authenticity' and reveals the outline of a medical world long lost in Galen's shadow.

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SALLES (R.) (ed.) **Cosmology and Biology in Ancient Philosophy: from Thales to Avicenna**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. xii + 312. £75. 9781108836579. doi:[10.1017/S0075426924000375](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075426924000375)

*Cosmology and Biology in Ancient Philosophy* is the product of three conferences organized by Ricardo Salles from 2016 to 2017. As a work of ancient philosophy, it is an outstanding contribution to a body of research lending more serious attention to natural philosophy in the long Platonist tradition. The volume holds further interest as a sensitive and important study on the reception of Plato's *Timaeus*, one which clarifies the text's peculiar powers of dissolving and remaking classificatory boundaries.

"'Biology' and 'Cosmology' are not Aristotle's words' (109), James Lennox reminds the reader in Chapter 7 of this edited volume, nor do they correspond to the names of any two premodern 'sciences'. The story this volume tells has less to do with 'biology' and 'cosmology' as independent categories than with a distinctive tradition of ancient 'cosmobiology' rooted in Plato's *Timaeus* and its receptions. The emphasis here is on the philosophical implications of 'cosmobiology,' but Timaeian 'cosmobiology' holds

historical significance as well. Recent scholarship has stressed the significance of the reception of the *Timaeus* to ‘boundary work’ (a phrase I take from Aileen Das, *Galen and the Arabic Reception of Plato’s Timaeus* (Cambridge 2021)); the effort to classify the protean *Timaeus* played a critical role in the formation of scientific disciplines of knowledge in the Graeco-Roman and Islamicate worlds.

In navigating the early chapters of this history, the book’s contributions mount a convincing case that ancient cosmology and ancient biology cannot be understood without understanding their conjunction. Questions that might seem to a modern reader obviously posterior to the independent study of ‘cosmology’ and ‘biology’ could in the ancient tradition be prior: What is a cosmic animal? How does it or does it not resemble earthly animals? What does this mean for the definition of animal, and for the study of any animal? These ‘cosmobiological’ problems emerge from the volume as absolutely fundamental to the ancient study of heavens and earth, and to ancient science and ancient philosophy in general.

Barbara Sattler’s chapter, the first to discuss the *Timaeus*, offers an excellent introduction to its ‘cosmobiology’. Sattler observes that ‘Plato’s cosmology ... seems to be essentially framed in what we could call biological terms’ (29): an investigation into the cosmos as a living being. But the *Timaeus*’ biology of the World Soul envisions a life very different from that of plants and animals, a ‘life tied to reason’ (44) and unencumbered by organs or the bodily functions associated with reproduction and survival. The *Timaeus*’ ‘biology’ is in this sense more accurately a ‘rational theology’ and ‘psychology’. Yet Plato’s framing of his ‘rational theology’ as a ‘biology’ (study of *animal* life) is key. In studying the cosmos as an animal, Sattler suggests, the *Timaeus* also proposes to understand animal life as a life of rational activity, rather than a life of mere survival and reproduction. The *Timaeus*, then, does not classify the World Soul according to an existing definition; rather, it defines the category of ‘animal’ by this act of classification. The problem that this definition of animal life invites, of the similarities and differences between celestial and terrestrial animals, is a red thread throughout the volume.

André Laks (Chapter 1) argues that the attribution of a theory of cosmic soul to Preplatonic philosophers most likely reflects the influence of later Platonizing interpolation. Following Sattler’s discussion of the World Soul, Dimitri El Murr (Chapter 3) offers a lucid reading of Platonic ‘desmology’: the bonds that hold together different elements of the cosmos (World Body, lesser gods, rational soul). John Dillon (Chapter 4) argues for the importance of the World Soul in late Plato and in the Old Academy. George Boys-Stones’ reconstruction (Chapter 5) of Middle Platonist readings of the World Soul convincingly exhorts modern interpreters to take more seriously the *Timaeus*’ language of God as ‘father’ of the cosmos.

Chapters 6 and 7 bring in Aristotle, though without leaving Plato entirely behind. The late John Cooper offers a stimulating discussion of the motion of terrestrial animals and celestial beings, concluding with a defence of Aristotle’s model of multiple celestial souls against Plato’s model of the singular World Soul. Lennox offers three examples of the interconnections between animal life and the heavens, contextualizing these in Aristotle’s own natural philosophy. James Wilberding (Chapter 8) draws connections between ancient biology and modern ‘recapitulation’ theory (the belief that ontogeny replicates phylogeny). In doing so, he addresses fundamental questions about the Platonic Forms, including whether they encode morphological content and the correspondences between Forms and natural species.

Chapters 9 through 12 address Stoic cosmobiology, exploring the nature of divine thought (Boys-Stones), the originality of Stoic arguments for the intelligence of the cosmos (Salles), hematocentric variants on Stoic cardiocentrism (Emmanuele Vimercati) and the (contemporary) philosophical appeal of the Stoic account of causality (Katja Maria Vogt). R.J. Hankinson (Chapter 13) identifies the programmatic entanglement of biology and

cosmology in Galen's teleological writings (though the category that interests Galen, as Hankinson notes, is theology rather than cosmology). Lloyd Gerson (Chapter 14) compares Plotinus' account of Nature's activity of contemplation to contemporary philosophical panpsychism. Finally, Tommaso Alpina (Chapter 15) explores Avicenna's claim that the heavens are an animal against the backdrop of this tradition. Thanks to the close connections between its contributions, the volume is a pleasure to read cover-to-cover. The chapters form a connected, albeit episodic, historical narrative, devoting close attention to the transformation of key concepts (cardiocentrism, Nature, Form, zoology) across different periods of ancient thought.

*Cosmology and Biology in Ancient Philosophy*, as the title suggests, is pitched primarily to an audience in ancient philosophy, an orientation reflected in its framing, bibliography and choice of contributors. A potential risk of this tailoring could be to circumscribe its likely readership. In fact, the book presents an immensely valuable conversation partner to work on cosmology, biology and theology by philosophers, as well as by classicists, historians of science and intellectual historians of the premodern world. This learned and clear collection deserves readership across these disciplines; classicists' own disciplinary boundaries, after all, are no more absolute than ancient ones.

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SHILO (A.) **Beyond Death in the *Oresteia*: Poetics, Ethics, and Politics**. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. xii + 247. £75. 9781108832748. doi:[10.1017/S0075426923000964](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075426923000964)

In this interesting and well-researched book, Amit Shilo focuses on the presence of multiple conceptions of the afterlife in the *Oresteia*, which are attributed by Aeschylus to different characters or to the same character at different times without any attempt to reduce them to a coherent picture. Shilo's thesis is that the poet creates a 'poetics of the afterlife' and a 'poetics of plurality' that 'affects individual perspectives and outcomes, as well as notions of personal and political justice' (214). By bringing one or the other idea to the forefront, and working on their inherent ambiguities, Aeschylus succeeds in challenging core values in the fields of justice, ethics and politics. Shilo's study is particularly welcome since the topic has lacked a focused review until now.

In the introduction, after reviewing the ideas on the afterlife prior to Aeschylus, Shilo clarifies his use of the terms 'ethics' and 'politics', to which he assigns a more circumscribed value than is common in modern philosophical language. The following chapters discuss all the passages relevant to the theme: for *Agamemnon*, the scenes of the Herald and Cassandra, and the chorus' reflections on death (chapters 1, 2, 3); for *Choephoroi*, the *kommos* (Chapter 4); for *Eumenides*, the scene of Clytemnestra's spectre (Chapter 6) and the references made by the Erinyes about the prosecution of sinners after death (Chapter 7). Chapter 5 investigates references to a possible heroic future for some of the characters.

A first relevant tension is the one between the vision of death as complete annihilation and the idea that the dead can influence the world of the living. The Herald and Cassandra imagine death as liberation from suffering. This approach has ethical consequences, in the sense that they become aware of their inability to change reality; nonetheless, Cassandra (and the chorus in the *exodos* of *Agamemnon*) can draw from it an impulse to withstand their opponents. Conversely, the dead can act on the living, as in the case of the evocation of