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# Empathy and Compassion in the Medicine and Literature of the First and Second Centuries AD

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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Empathy and Compassion in the Medicine and Literature of the First and Second  
Centuries AD

by

Amber J. Porter

A THESIS

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the emotions of empathy and compassion in the first and second centuries AD of the Greco-Roman world. It focuses on the medical texts of the period, but also explores the other genres of the ancient Greek novel and moral philosophy. Despite lacking a specific word for it, the first and second-century Greeks and Romans understood and expressed empathy in their writings. Compassion, on the other hand, does have a vocabulary. The terms which are used to express it often conform to traditional Greek definitions; however, many instances also show that it has widened its application as well. There also appears to be a significant amount of ‘cross-chatter’ between some of the literature in this era. The medical writer Aretaeus demonstrates a high level of empathy and compassion towards his patients and their families. A contextual and philological analysis of each passage exhibiting these emotions serves to highlight and evaluate Aretaeus’ empathy and compassion and the conditions that elicit these manifestations of emotion in his text. Soranus and Rufus, two other contemporary medical writers, show an acknowledgement and awareness of patients’ emotions, beliefs and attitudes as well. They also exhibit compassion within the construct of the patient-physician relationship. Two other physicians, Caelius Aurelianus and Scribonius Largus, take compassion to a new level, using the terms *misericordia* and *humanitas*, which serve to connect with the emotion of compassion and the concept of medical ethics. Plutarch, a moral philosopher, and the novelists, Achilles Tatius and Chariton, exhibit this ‘cross-chatter’ between genres of the period. Plutarch’s *Moralia* shows his compassionate concern with the moral implications of breeding and

slaughtering animals. Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe* contains many references to the concept of φιλάνθρωπία as an expression of mercy, compassion, benevolence and humanity. Achilles Tactius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* explores the power one's suffering has to affect another through empathy and compassion. Finally, Aretaeus' ability to 'feel' his way into organs and diseases through personification demonstrates his empathy. Taken all together, this suggests that a permeability of genres appears to have occurred in this era whereby empathy and compassion became a common concern.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

CMG	<i>Corpus Medicorum Graecorum</i>
CML	<i>Corpus Medicorum Latinarum</i>
K	<i>Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia</i> edited by K. Kühn
LCL	<i>Loeb Classical Library</i>
LSJ	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> by Liddell, Scott and Jones
L&S	<i>A Latin Dictionary</i> by Lewis and Short
OCD	<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i>
OLD	<i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i>

All abbreviations follow the OCD, except where supplemented by the LSJ or OLD when required:

Aret.	Aretaeus of Cappadocia <i>SA = Causes and Symptoms of Acute Diseases</i> <i>SD = Causes and Symptoms in Chronic Diseases</i> <i>CA = Therapeutics in Acute Diseases</i> <i>CD = Therapeutics in Chronic Diseases</i>
Cael. Aur.	Caelius Aurelianus <i>Acut. = On Acute Diseases</i> <i>Tard. = On Chronic Diseases</i>
Scrib.	Scribonius Largus <i>Comp. = Compositiones Medicamentorum</i>
Ruf.	Rufus of Ephesus <i>Quaest. Med. = Quaestiones Medicales</i>
Charit.	Chariton
Ach. Tat.	Achilles Tatius

## TEXTS USED

Achilles Tatius	Vilborg, E., ed. <i>Achilles Tatius. Leucippe and Clitophon</i> . Vol. 15, <i>Studia Graeca Et Latina Gothoburgensia</i> . Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1955.
Aretaeus of Cappadocia	Hude, C., ed. <i>Aretaeus</i> . Vol. 2, CMG. Leipzig: In aedibus Academiae scientiarum, 1958.
Aristotle, <i>Rhetorica</i>	Ross, W.D., ed. <i>Aristotelis ars rhetorica</i> , <i>Scriptorum classicorum bibliotheca Oxoniensis</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959.
<i>Problemata</i>	Bekker, I., ed. <i>Aristotlis opera</i> . Vol. 2. Berlin: Reimer, 1831.
Caelius Aurelianus	Bendz, G., ed. <i>Caelius Aurelianus. Akute Krankheiten Buch I-III. Chronische Krankheiten Buch I-V</i> . Vol. 6, CML. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1990.
Celsus	Marx, F., ed. <i>A. Cornelius Celsus. De Medicina</i> . Vol. 1, CML. Berlin: Teubner, 1915
Chariton	Reardon, B.P., ed. <i>De Callirhoe Narrationes Amatoriae Chariton Aphrodisiensis</i> , <i>Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana</i> . Munich: K.G. Saur, 2004.
Epictetus, <i>Enchiridion</i>	Schenkl, H., ed. <i>Epicteti dissertationes ab Arriano digestae</i> , <i>Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana</i> . Leipzig: Teubner, 1916.
Fronto	van den Hout, M.P.J., ed. <i>M. Cornelii Frontonis Epistulae</i> . Vol. 1. Leiden: Brill, 1954.
Homer	Allen, T.W., ed. <i>Homeri Ilias</i> . Vols. 2-3. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931.
Horace, <i>Ars Poetica</i>	Klingner, F., ed. <i>Q. Horati Flacci Opera</i> , <i>Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et</i>

- Romanorum Teubneriana. Leipzig: Teubner, 1959.
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Mayhoff, C., ed. *C. Plini Secundi Naturalis Historiae Libri XXXVII*. Vol. 1-5. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1892–1909.
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Mynors, R.A.B., ed. *C. Plini Caecili Secundi Epistularum Libri Decem*, Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis Script. Lat. Oxford: E typographeo Clarendoniano, 1966.
- Plutarch,  
*De liberis educandis*  
Babbitt, F.C., ed. *Plutarch's Moralia*. Vol. 1, LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927.
- Consolatio ad Apollonium*  
*Conjugalia praecepta*  
Babbitt, F.C., ed. *Plutarch's Moralia*. Vol. 2, LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928.
- De tranquillitate animi*  
*Animine an corporis*  
*affectiones sint peiores*  
Pohlenz, M., ed. *Plutarchi Moralia*. Vol. 3, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana. Leipzig: Teubner, 1929.
- De exilio*  
*Consolatio ad uxorem*  
Sieveking, W., ed. *Plutarchi Moralia*. Vol. 3, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana. Leipzig: Teubner, 1929.
- Quaestiones convivales*  
Hubert, C., ed. *Plutarchi Moralia*. Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, Vol. 4. Leipzig: Teubner, 1938.
- Praecepta gerendae reipublicae*  
Fowler, H.N., ed. *Plutarch's Moralia*. Vol. 10, LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928.
- De sollertia animalium*  
*De esu carniū*  
Hubert, C., ed. *Plutarchi Moralia*. Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, Vol. 6.1. Leipzig: Teubner, 1954.
- Rufus of Ephesus,  
*Quaestiones medicinales*  
Gärtner, H., ed. *Rufus von Ephesos. Die Fragen des Arztes an den Kranken*. Suppl. 4, CMG. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1962.
- Scribonius Largus  
Sconocchia, S., ed. *Scribonii Largi Compositiones*. Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1983.

- Seneca, *De Ira* Basore, J.W., ed. *Lucius Annaeus Seneca: Moral Essays*. Vol. 1. London: Heinemann, 1928.
- Soranus of Ephesus Ilberg, J., ed. *Soranus Gynecology*. Vol. 4, CMG. Leipzig: Teubner, 1927.
- Terence, *Heauton Timorumenos* Kauer, R., Lindsay, W.M., Skutsch, O., eds. *P. Terenti Afri Comoediae*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958.

## INTRODUCTION

*Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto.*  
I am a person: I consider nothing human alien to me.

- Terence, *Heauton Timorumenos* 1.1.25

As human beings, we recognize and often feel within ourselves the emotions of other human beings. That is, we have empathy. Some have argued that empathy is the emotion which is most likely to lead to compassion, the feeling of care or concern for others who are suffering.<sup>1</sup> Both empathy and compassion are considered important emotions in modern life, especially in the area of healthcare. Did the ancient Greeks and Romans recognize, understand and display these emotions?<sup>2</sup> In particular, did physicians react to the pain and suffering of their patients with empathy and compassion? Most interactions between physicians and patients occur when the patient is feeling pain or distress. The ability of the physician to empathize with the patient's emotional and physical state and feel compassion for their suffering is very important for the success of their interaction. Certain ancient physicians appear to have realised this as well, such as Aretaeus of

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<sup>1</sup> Marco L. Loggia, Jeffrey S. Mogil et al., "Empathy Hurts: Compassion for Another Increases Both Sensory and Affective Components of Pain Perception," *Pain* 136, no. 1-2 (2008): 168-76; Robert B. Cialdini, Stephanie L. Brown et al., "Reinterpreting the Empathy-Altruism Relationship: When One into One Equals Oneness," *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology* 73, no. 3 (1997): 481-94; Nancy Eisenberg and Paul A. Miller, "Empathy, Sympathy and Altruism: Empirical and Conceptual Links," in *Empathy and Its Development*, ed. Nancy and Janet Strayer Eisenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 292-316; C. Daniel Batson, Bruce D. Duncan et al., "Is Empathic Emotion a Source of Altruistic Motivation?," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 40, no. 2 (1981): 290-302; Miho Toi and C. Daniel Batson, "More Evidence That Empathy Is a Source of Altruistic Motivation," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 43, no. 2 (1982): 281-92; C. Daniel Batson, Nadia Ahmad et al., "Empathy and Altruism," in *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*, ed. C.R. Snyder and Shane J. Lopez (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 417-26.

<sup>2</sup> Eric J. Cassell, "Compassion," in *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*, ed. C.R. Snyder and Shane J. Lopez (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 393.

Cappadocia and Soranus of Ephesus, two of the physicians who will be examined in this dissertation for their expressed empathy and compassion towards their patients. These medical writers respond to suffering and distressed patients with their own emotions, and with care and concern. But one may ask whether they were alone in this view and whether there is any evidence in other genres of a similar empathetic and compassionate disposition. If so, this would point to a common way of thinking of the emotions of others, which on some level may indicate shared ideas with regard to empathy and compassion. I have turned to the contemporary novelists, such as Achilles Tatius, who demonstrate empathy and compassion in a fictional setting as well. Characters respond emotionally to each other, feeling empathy and compassion towards those whom they see as suffering. Another contemporary, Plutarch, expressed his empathy and compassion towards animals and their slaughter, advocating for their humane treatment as a reflection of our own humanity in his *Moralia*.

As a form of cultural critique, the study of the history of emotions has become a valuable tool for developing a deeper understanding of various cultures from various time periods. Research into the ancient Greco-Roman world has benefitted from these types of studies which have been led in the last ten to fifteen years by David Konstan, with his work on pity, altruism and forgiveness, finally

culminating in his book, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks*.<sup>3</sup> Others have broached the topics of sadness, anger, love, pity, remorse, shame and emotions generally, but no study yet has dealt with empathy and its related emotion, compassion across more than one genre.<sup>4</sup> As mentioned, studies of pity have been conducted; however, many of these have concentrated on specific locations (such as Athens) or time periods (such as the fifth century) or only examined specific terminology. Few have looked at emotions such as pity and compassion in later periods, such as the first or second centuries, or allowed for the examination of passages in which specific vocabulary is lacking, but in which these emotions may still be present. As far as I have been able to tell, no studies have looked at empathy as an emotion in the ancient world.

Modern studies of empathy and compassion, however, have greatly increased in the past twenty years. Psychologists, biologists, neurologists, and those

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<sup>3</sup> David Konstan, "Pity and Self-Pity," *Electronic Antiquity* 5, no. 2 (1999); ———, "Altruism," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974-) 130(2000): 1-17; ———, *Pity Transformed* (London: Duckworth, 2001); ———, "Translating Ancient Emotions," *Acta Classica* 46(2003): 5-19; ———, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); David Konstan and Stavroula Kiritzi, "From Pity to Sympathy: Tragic Emotions across the Ages," *The Athens Dialogues E-Journal* 1(2010); David Konstan, *Before Forgiveness: The Origins of a Moral Idea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). This is only a brief glimpse of Konstan's extensive work on the history of emotions in antiquity; however, these are the works most relevant to the present study.

<sup>4</sup> Carlin A. Barton, *Sorrows of the Ancient Romans: The Gladiator and the Monster* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era* (London: Routledge, 1995); Susanna Braund and Glenn W. Most, eds., *Ancient Anger: Perspectives from Homer to Galen*, vol. 32, Yale Classical Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Peter Toohey, *Melancholy, Love, and Time: Boundries of the Self in Ancient Literature* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004); Rachel Hall Sternberg, ed. *Pity and Power in Ancient Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Robert A. Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Dana LaCourse Munteanu, *Emotion, Genre and Gender in Classical Antiquity* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011); Laurel Fulkerson, *No Regrets: Remorse in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); John T. Fitzgerald, ed. *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought*, Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies (London: Routledge, 2008); Douglas Cairns, *Aidōs: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

involved in the healthcare system have shown a particular interest in the concept of empathy. Psychologists have struggled to define and differentiate it from sympathy;<sup>5</sup> neurologists have wished to locate the mechanism of empathy in the brains of animals and humans, and may have had some luck with the accidental discovery of mirror neurons;<sup>6</sup> and healthcare providers and patients have advocated for the importance of empathy in medicine and have debated whether

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<sup>5</sup> Karen E. Gerdes, "Empathy, Sympathy, and Pity: 21st-Century Definitions and Implications for Practice and Research," *Journal of Social Service Research* 37, no. 3 (2011): 230-41; Lauren Wispé, "The Distinction between Sympathy and Empathy: To Call Forth a Concept, a Word Is Needed," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 50, no. 2 (1986): 314-21.

<sup>6</sup> For research on locating empathy in the brain, see Janet Beavin Bavelas, Alex Black et al., "Motor Mimicry as Primitive Empathy," in *Empathy and Its Development*, ed. N. Eisenberg and J. Strayer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 317-38; Nicolas Danziger, Isabelle Faillenot et al., "Can We Share a Pain We Never Felt? Neural Correlates of Empathy in Patients with Congenital Insensitivity to Pain," *Neuron* 61, no. 2 (2009): 203-12; Jean Decety and Meghan Meyer, "From Emotion Resonance to Empathic Understanding: A Social Developmental Neuroscience Account," *Development and Psychopathology* 20, no. Special Issue 04 (2008): 1053-80; Vittorio Gallese, "The Roots of Empathy: The Shared Manifold Hypothesis and the Neural Basis of Intersubjectivity," *Psychopathology* 36, no. 4 (2003): 171-80; ———, "Embodied Simulation: From Neurons to Phenomenal Experience," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2005): 23-48; ———, "Embodied Simulation: From Mirror Neuron Systems to Interpersonal Relations," in *Empathy and Fairness*, ed. G. Bock and J. Goode (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2006), 3-19; Alvin I. Goldman, "Two Routes to Empathy: Insights from Cognitive Neuroscience," in *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, ed. Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 31-44; Philip L. Jackson, Andrew N. Meltzoff et al., "How Do We Perceive the Pain of Others? A Window into the Neural Processes Involved in Empathy," *NeuroImage* 24, no. 3 (2005): 771-79; Philip L. Jackson, Eric Brunet et al., "Empathy Examined through the Neural Mechanisms Involved in Imagining How I Feel Versus How You Feel Pain," *Neuropsychologia* 44, no. 5 (2006): 752-61; Tania Singer, Ben Seymour et al., "Empathy for Pain Involves the Affective but Not Sensory Components of Pain," *Science* 303, no. 5661 (2004): 1157-62; Tania Singer, Ben Seymour et al., "Empathic Neural Responses Are Modulated by the Perceived Fairness of Others," *Nature* 439, no. 7075 (2006): 466-69; Inbal Ben-Ami Bartal, David A. Rodgers et al., "Pro-Social Behavior in Rats Is Modulated by Social Experience," *eLife* 3(2014). For information on the discovery of mirror neurons, see Giacomo Rizzolatti and Laila Craighero, "The Mirror-Neuron System," *Annual Review of Neuroscience* 27, no. 1 (2004): 169-92; Giacomo Rizzolatti and Maddalena Fabbri-Destro, "Mirror Neurons: From Discovery to Autism," *Experimental Brain Research* 200, no. 3-4 (2010): 223-37; Gordan Slack, "Found: The Source of Human Empathy," *New Scientist* 2007, 12.



empathy is something that can be taught and learned.<sup>7</sup> Since compassion is a related emotion, and is sometimes assumed to be consequent to empathy, it factors into these discussions as well.<sup>8</sup> Driven by the research conducted in neurology and psychology, literary criticism has weighed in on the concept of empathy as well, particularly with regards to its relation to literature (both readers and writers) and art,<sup>9</sup> and cultural studies have examined the role of empathy and compassion across cultures and societies.<sup>10</sup> This relatively recent flurry of research into empathy and compassion has helped to inform this dissertation in several different ways. First, it

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<sup>7</sup> P. S. Bellet and M. J. Maloney, "The Importance of Empathy as an Interviewing Skill in Medicine," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 266, no. 13 (1991): 1831-32; Carol M. Davis, "What Is Empathy, and Can It Be Taught?," *Physical Therapy* 70, no. 11 (1990): 707-11; Richard Frankel, "Emotion and the Physician-Patient Relationship," *Motivation and Emotion* 19, no. 3 (1995): 163-73; Jodi Halpern, "Empathy and Patient-Physician Conflicts," *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 22, no. 5 (2007): 696-700; Mohammadreza Hojat, Joseph S. Gonnella et al., "Physician Empathy: Definition, Components, Measurement, and Relationship to Gender and Specialty," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 159, no. 9 (2002): 1563-69; Sung Soo Kim, Stan Kaplowitz et al., "The Effects of Physician Empathy on Patient Satisfaction and Compliance," *Evaluation & the Health Professions* 27, no. 3 (2004): 237-51; Stephen Liben, "Empathy, Compassion and the Goals of Medicine," in *Whole Person Care: A New Paradigm for the 21st Century*, ed. Tom A. Hutchinson (New York: Springer, 2011), 59-67; Sonal Singh, "Empathy: Lost or Found in Medical Education?," *Medscape General Medicine* 7, no. 3 (2005): 74; Howard Spiro, "What Is Empathy and Can It Be Taught?," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 116, no. 10 (1992): 843; Howard M. Spiro, ed. *Empathy and the Practice of Medicine: Beyond Pills and the Scalpel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Kristene Diggins, "Compassion or Pity?," *Journal of Christian Nursing* 27, no. 3 (2010): 274; Gregory E. Pence, "Can Compassion Be Taught?," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 9, no. 4 (1983): 189-91; Robin Youngson, "Compassion in Healthcare," *Journal of Holistic Healthcare* 8, no. 3 (2011): 6-9.

<sup>8</sup> For example, see Dennis Krebs, "Empathy and Altruism," *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology* 32, no. 6 (1975): 1134-46.

<sup>9</sup> Suzanne Keen, *Empathy and the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); ———, "Fast Tracks to Narrative Empathy: Anthropomorphism and Dehumanization in Graphic Narratives," *SubStance* 40, no. 1 (2011): 135-55; Robert Michael Brain, "Self-Projection: Hugo Münsterberg on Empathy and Oscillation in Cinema Spectatorship," *Science in Context* 25, no. 03 (2012): 329-53; Shaun Gallagher, "Empathy, Simulation, and Narrative," *Science in Context* 25, no. 03 (2012): 355-81; Graham McFee, "Empathy: Interpersonal Vs. Artistic?," in *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, ed. Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 185-208; Raymond A. Mar, Keith Oatley et al., "Exploring the Link between Reading Fiction and Empathy: Ruling out Individual Differences and Examining Outcomes," *Communications* 34, no. 4 (2009): 407-28. The best known work in psychology on this topic is being carried out by Oatley and his colleagues. I cite only a couple of examples: Keith Oatley, "A Taxonomy of the Emotions of Literary Response and a Theory of Identification in Fictional Narrative," *Poetics* 23, no. 1-2 (1995): 53-74; P. N. Johnson-Laird and Keith Oatley, "The Language of Emotions: An Analysis of a Semantic Field," *Cognition & Emotion* 3, no. 2 (1989): 81-123.

<sup>10</sup> Richard J. Davidson and Anne Harrington, eds., *Visions of Compassion: Western Scientists and Tibetan Buddhists Examine Human Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

has forced a serious consideration what empathy *is*, and how it relates to compassion and other pro-social emotions. Second, work on the neurological basis of empathy (specifically, the mirror neuron system) has suggested that it is part of our basic human biological makeup. If this is true, should not the Greeks and Romans have recognised and understood empathy? Third, empathy and compassion are major concerns for the physician-patient relationship in modern medicine, but emotions like pity are spurned. So, did ancient physicians feel empathy and compassion for their sick and suffering patients? Is compassion different from pity? If so, how is it different? Modern preoccupations with these ideas have led me to consider how the ancients may have conceived of these same notions.

The present study has been limited to the first and second centuries AD for a couple of different reasons. First, this period has a large number of surviving medical treatises, with Aretaeus, Soranus, Scribonius Largus, Galen, and Celsus all producing work. Second, the period is replete with many authors writing in a number of different genres but showing similar preoccupations. Philosophy, fiction, rhetoric, poetry, and medicine all have representative authors in the first few centuries of the Common Era. This offers a time period in which a number of different genres are operating parallel to one another, and this in turn allows for various cross-comparisons. Are the emotions we see in medical literature reflected in the novel? Does philosophy echo rhetoric? The richness of genre in the first and second centuries AD provides fertile ground for studies such as these and has the potential to reveal a common generational way of seeing things when it comes to emotions such as empathy and compassion.

The first and second centuries may have been rife with texts, but I could not address every author in the time and space allotted. Two sets of texts that I chose not to include were those of Galen and the Hippocratics. Galen is often seen as *the* medical author of the second century. He was extraordinarily prolific, highly regarded, and made major contributions to medicine. The Hippocratic texts, ranging in date from the fifth century BC to the second century AD, provide the basis for other medical texts, such as those of Galen and Aretaeus, and it would be amiss not to at least mention their absence in this thesis.

Galen's works vary widely in topic and the simple abundance of his texts make it impossible to conduct a complete study of them in a project of this scope. Limiting oneself to just his best-known medical treatises, such as *On Prognosis*, *On the Natural Faculties*, or *On the Passions and Errors of the Soul*, does not supply one with very many examples of empathy or compassion. Galen's writing is sophisticated and detailed, but often clinical and focused mainly on the medicine, and not so much on emotions, whether they be the patient's or his own. His philosophical treatises, such as *The Best Doctor is also a Philosopher*, provides us with a little more in terms of his views on the philanthropic nature of medicine (for example, how training in philosophy, which includes ethics, is important for a physician) and this is where more might have been gleaned with regards to Galen's views on empathy and compassion – in his philosophy and how he views the nature of the medical profession.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> A small article which outlines Galen's views in this treatise is T. J. Drizis, "Medical Ethics in a Writing of Galen," *Acta Medico-historica Adriatica* 6, no. 2 (2008): 333-36.

The Hippocratic Corpus, with its wide variety of medical topics, provides the foundation for many later medical writers, such as Galen, Aretaeus and Scribonius Largus. Some of the basic tenets of medicine come from Hippocratic texts and later physicians, such as Scribonius Largus, saw Hippocrates as laying down the groundwork for the ethics of medicine. That medicine is meant “to help, or at least do not harm” is stated in *Epidemics I* and outlined in the *The Art* are the three roles of medicine, which includes the famous line: “to refuse to treat those who are overmastered by their diseases.”<sup>12</sup> Neither the *Epidemics* nor *The Art* display much interest in empathy or compassion. The importance of maintaining ones reputation appears paramount in the Hippocratic Corpus, and so physicians are advised against attempting ‘incurable’ cases. By the first century AD, however, there appears to have been more of a push towards attempting to provide treatment to ‘hopeless’ cases, or at least supplying as much relief from pain and suffering as possible, which can be seen in the texts of Aretaeus and Scribonius Largus. In addition to being outside the time period within which I wished to keep this project, the Hippocratics do not expand very much upon the ideas like the ones I have given here as examples. I have thus chosen exclude the Hippocratic Corpus, at least in any major way, from this dissertation.

Chapter One of my dissertation examines whether the ancients understood and expressed empathy and compassion. It provides definitions for both empathy and compassion, as I have demarcated them for this project, and seeks to locate

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<sup>12</sup> Hippoc. *Epid.* 1.2.5: ἀσκέειν, περὶ τὰ νοσήματα, δύο, ὠφελέειν, ἢ μὴ βλάπτειν; Hippoc. *De arte* 3: τὸ δὴ πᾶμπαν ἀπαλλάσσειν τῶν νοσεόντων τοὺς καμάτων, καὶ τῶν νοσημάτων τὰς σφοδρότητας ἀμβλύνειν, καὶ τὸ μὴ ἐγχειρέειν τοῖσι κεκρατημένοισιν ὑπὸ τῶν νοσημάτων, εἰδότες ὅτι ταῦτα οὐ δύναται ἰητρική.

examples of each in various ancient authors. A discussion of some of the vocabulary that might help identify expressions of empathy and compassion is also included. Classicists are more familiar with the concept of pity as it relates to the ancient word; however, I outline in this chapter why I have not limited this study to only the vocabulary of pity and explain its difference from empathy and compassion. Pity will certainly arise in the texts, but it will not be the sole focus of this project. Finally, I address the debate of the universality of emotions and whether empathy and compassion can be considered to have existed for the ancient Greeks and Romans.

The medical author of the first century AD, Aretaeus of Cappadocia, and his extant works are the focus of Chapter Two. In it I address some of the vocabulary he employs in his expression of empathy and compassion towards his patients and their families. Having identified and analysed various passages from Aretaeus' text, I noticed that three themes appear, and I have used these to divide the passages into three categories, which can be viewed as circumstances under which Aretaeus expresses the emotions of empathy and compassion. These are: the desire for death as a release from pain and suffering; the importance of the skill and sensitivity of the physician; deformity, depression and shame. Some passages fall into one of these three categories; however, many contain elements of two or three. A contextual and philological analysis of each passage serves to highlight and evaluate Aretaeus' empathy and compassion and the conditions that elicit these manifestations of emotion in his text.

Chapter Three shifts to medicine and compassion. It reviews the writings of two first-century AD Ephesian medical writers, Soranus and Rufus, and will

illustrate these two writers' acknowledgement and awareness of patients' emotions, beliefs and attitudes, and how they exhibit compassion within the construct of the patient-physician relationship. In his *Gynecology*, Soranus has quite specific terminology to expression compassion (using such words as the adjective συμπαθής and the verb συμπάσχω) which helps greatly in directing our analysis. He also uses opposite concepts in order to censure those who are not compassionate towards others (such as phrases like οὕτως... ἀπαθῶς.) Rufus, on the other hand, in his *Medical Questions* and Arabic fragments on melancholy is not as direct in his expression of compassion, but displays it through extreme sensitivity to the patient's uniqueness as an individual, which modern medicine might describe as 'whole person care.' He values the patient narrative because he believes detailed knowledge of the individual lifestyle of the patient can be quite helpful in diagnosis and treatment. He also demonstrates a concern for the emotional health of patients and the affect a bad diagnosis can have on their mental health.

Caelius Aurelianus, a fifth-century AD Latin writer, translated and adapted Soranus' original *On Acute and Chronic Diseases* and so I present his work in Chapter Four, along with the first-century AD pharmacologist, Scribonius Largus, a contemporary of Aretaeus. Two Latin terms, *misericordia* and *humanitas*, and their connection with the emotion of compassion and the concept of medical ethics will occupy the majority of the discussion in this chapter. Both physicians have a particular interest in how patients were treated by their attending physicians. Caelius is very much concerned with patient comfort when it comes to his treatments. He has the ability to understand the patient's point of view and he is

concerned with their comfort and is not adverse to adjusting therapies to suit the patient. Caelius takes issue with the inhumane and cruel treatment he attributes to certain physicians, and he criticises their use of violent physical therapies, which he sees as both ineffective and brutal, especially with regards to the mentally ill. Scribonius' pharmacological text, *Compositiones Medicamentorum*, echoes Caelius' sentiments, with his use of *humanitas* and criticism of uncompassionate physicians, but with a particular bent towards professional medical ethics. He sees the medical profession as making a promise of being compassionate to those who require its services. He cites Hippocrates as laying down the groundwork for this medical philosophy with his Oath and asserts that only those who attempt all possible cures for a suffering patient are truly practicing medicine as it was meant to be practiced: compassionately and by all means necessary. Both Caelius and Scribonius exhibit, in their concern for the treatment of patients and adherence to the *humanitas* of medicine, an adherence to medical ethics which can be characterized as quite compassionate.

In Chapter Five I expand outward from medicine to the *Moralia* of Plutarch and the novelists, Achilles Tatius and Chariton, in order to explore potential commonalities with regard to empathy and compassion and see whether some of the same ideas present in the medical writers arise in other genres. Plutarch lived from the mid-first to early second century AD, while Achilles Tatius and Chariton wrote their works during the second century and mid-first century AD, respectively. I focus on Plutarch's interest in animals in his *Moralia*. His two treatises on animals, *De esu carniū* and *De sollertia animalium*, both of which were written when he was

a young man, deal with the concept of animal intelligence, emotions, and whether it is morally right to hunt, or slaughter, and consume them. Plutarch's interest in Pythagoreanism fuels these interests and it can be seen in his discussion of these topics. He struggles with the moral implications of hunting animals, but also with the breeding and slaughtering practices that were observed in his day. Although he admires the idea of vegetarianism, he realises that not everyone will be willing to eliminate such an important and valued part of their diet. Therefore, he discusses the importance of the moral consumption of animals and how we should feel about the ways in which they are raised and slaughtered. Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe* contains many references to feelings of sympathy, mercy, benevolence and humanity, but mainly through the use of the noun φιλανθρωπία, which can in particular contexts mean all these things. A discussion of this term and its relation to *humanitas* is included. Achilles Tactius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* is not a novel short on emotion, and in particular, the emotions of pity, sympathy, compassion and empathy. The characters suffer a number of misfortunes and respond accordingly with grief, hopelessness and requests for mercy. A variety of passages have characters telling other characters about their misfortunes, which creates similar emotions in the listener. Overall, the novel explores the effect of one's emotion on another in a number of different ways, but all conform to one basic idea: the suffering of one person has the power to effect similar emotions in another, as well as empathy and compassion.

For Chapter Six, I come full circle to medicine and Aretaeus, but this time with a completely different slant on empathy, one which is almost novelistic in its



approach to medicine. This time, I analyse his penchant for personifying organs and diseases in the human body, and how this expresses his ability to 'feel into' even inanimate objects and abstract ideas, presenting a 'drama of the body' in an almost 'soap opera'-type way. Organs are presented as having human-like relationships, cooperating together or affecting each other; some organs or diseases are characterised as deceitful and must be guarded against; others are 'leaders' in the body or 'rejoice' in things. The connection between empathy and language devices, such as personification and metaphor, is discussed in the context of Aretaeus' vivid personification, whereby he represents the emotional and motivational states of these organs and diseases and this illustrates a level of empathy particularly present in Aretaeus' writing.

Empathy and compassion, as vital to human evolution and social interaction, is a topic worth exploring in the ancient world.<sup>13</sup> By examining both medical writers and other authors from the first and second centuries AD we can obtain a larger picture of how these emotions operated across genres and in an era. We see medical literature concerned with patient care and medical ethics, with physicians expressing empathy in a number of different ways; we see moral philosophy worry over the ethical treatment of animals and extend empathy and compassion past human beings to the animal world; and we see the novel present fictional worlds in which the same concepts are not only expressed by their characters but also meant to affect their readers. Taken as a whole, these texts indicate a first and second-century AD world in which empathy and compassion play a large role in the

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<sup>13</sup> Martha Nussbaum, "Compassion: The Basic Social Emotion," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 13, no. 01 (1996): 28.

emotional life of the Greeks and Romans and their interactions. Can we ever know for certain? Probably not, but we can describe and isolate apparent change and new intellectual enthusiasms for these ideas.

## CHAPTER 1: DID THE ANCIENTS UNDERSTAND AND EXPRESS EMPATHY AND COMPASSION?

τοῖοί τοι Μενέλαε μίανθην αἵματι μηροὶ  
 εὐφυέες κνήμαί τε ἰδὲ σφυρὰ κάλ' ὑπένερθε.  
 ῥίγησεν δ' ἄρ' ἔπειτα ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων  
 ὥς εἶδεν μέλαν αἷμα καταρρέον ἐξ ὠτειλῆς·  
 ῥίγησεν δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἀρηϊφίλος Μενέλαος.

So, Menelaus, your shapely thighs were stained with the colour  
 of blood, and your legs also and the ankles beneath them.  
 Agamemnon the lord of men was taken with shuddering  
 fear as he saw how from the cut the dark blood trickled downward,  
 and Menelaus the warlike himself shuddered in terror...<sup>14</sup>

When Menelaus is wounded on the battlefield by Pandarus in Book Four of the *Iliad* 146-150, his brother, Agamemnon, has an instantaneous and natural response: he shudders (“ῥίγησεν”).<sup>15</sup> Confronted by the blood of the wound, he spontaneously and involuntarily reacts, reflecting the pain of Menelaus, who himself shudders at his own injury. Agamemnon does not feel any actual pain of his own, but echoes

<sup>14</sup> Richmond Lattimore, *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 117.

<sup>15</sup> Kirk states that the reactions of the brothers are “concisely given in alternating and balanced verses” (G. S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 347.) This may help to emphasise both their reactions and their empathetic relationship. For more on shuddering in ancient literature, see Douglas Cairns, “A Short History of Shudders,” in *Unveiling Emotions II: Emotions in Greece and Rome: Text, Images, Material Culture*, ed. Angelos Chaniotis and Pierre Ducrey (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2013), 85-107.

what he imagines Menelaus feels in himself.<sup>16</sup> This is empathy, whereby one spontaneously mirrors or reflects the perceived internal emotional state of another in oneself.<sup>17</sup>

The empathy displayed by Agamemnon is an emotion which is today seen as extremely important to the understanding of how humans communicate interpersonally, since it is connected to several other key concepts such as theory of mind, compassion, altruism, autism spectrum disorders, and psychopathy.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Given the close relationship between Agamemnon and Menelaus as brothers, empathy might be even more natural for them. Plutarch believes so about friendship (*Mor. Quomodo adul. ad amico intern.* 51b): ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸ μάλιστα φιλίας ἀρχὴν συνέχον ὁμοιότης ἐστὶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων καὶ ἡθῶν, καὶ ὅλως τὸ χαίρειν τε τοῖς αὐτοῖς καὶ τὸ ταῦτα φεῦγειν πρῶτον εἰς ταῦτ' ἀνάγει καὶ συνίστησι διὰ τῆς ὁμοιοπαθείας... ("And inasmuch as that which most especially cements a friendship begun is a likeness of pursuits and characters, and since to take delight in the same things and avoid the same things is what generally brings people together in the first place, and gets them acquainted through the bonds of sympathy." (Frank Cole Babbitt, *Plutarch's Moralia*, vol. 1, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 277.)) For modern studies about empathetic reactions to the pain of others, see L. Goubert, K. D. Craig et al., "Facing Others in Pain: The Effects of Empathy," *Pain* 118, no. 3 (2005): 285-88; Jackson, Meltzoff et al., "How Do We Perceive the Pain of Others? A Window into the Neural Processes Involved in Empathy," 771-79; Jackson, Brunet et al., "Empathy Examined through the Neural Mechanisms Involved in Imagining How I Feel Versus How You Feel Pain."; Loggia, Mogil et al., "Empathy Hurts: Compassion for Another Increases Both Sensory and Affective Components of Pain Perception," 168-76; Jody Osborn and Stuart W. G. Derbyshire, "Pain Sensation Evoked by Observing Injury in Others," *Pain* 148, no. 2 (2010): 268-74. Empathy may be extended to other living things and inanimate objects and some animals have been credited with experiencing empathy; this will be discussed further on in this thesis.

<sup>17</sup> As of yet, there is no universal definition for empathy. Some scholars see empathy as more of a cognitive function, likening it to perspective taking; some have created definitions which seem to incorporate elements of compassion or altruism. For the purpose of this thesis, I have defined empathy as the spontaneous emotional reflection of another's emotional state (of any kind) in oneself.

<sup>18</sup> As Agosta puts it, "...no human interconnection would exist at all without the empathic function..." (Louis Agosta, "Empathy and Intersubjectivity," in *Empathy I*, ed. J. Lichtenberg, M. Bornstein, and D. Silver, *Psychoanalytic Inquiry Book Series* (Hillsdale: Analytic Press, 1984), 43.) Empathy is labeled a 'social emotion' by most today, although it is still sometimes referred to as a 'secondary' emotion, which contrasts it with 'primary' emotions (usually considered to be happiness, sadness, fear, anger, surprise and disgust.) Scholars and researchers now prefer to see more complex emotions like empathy as 'social' emotions because of how they tend to aid both humans and animals in their social environments. All emotions, both primary and secondary, are now generally viewed as evolutionarily advantageous. As Antonio Damasio assert, "...all emotions have some kind of regulatory role to play, leading in one way or another to the creation of circumstances advantageous to the organism..." (Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1999), 51.) For more on the link between empathy and autism and empathy and personality disorders, see Simon Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and Theory of Mind* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997); ———, *The Science of Evil: On Empathy and the Origins of Cruelty* (New York: Basic Books, 2011).

Scholars from almost every discipline have found empathy to be an intriguing concept. Neurologists have been interested in how empathy works and where it is located in the brain; psychologists have studied how empathy contributes to social interaction; philosophers have considered its role in ethics and moral behaviour; animal behaviourists and biologists have done studies to see whether animals exhibit empathy-type behaviours (they do!)<sup>19</sup> The list goes on. Empathy is now considered a fundamental concept for how humans (and animals) interact. So did the ancients have a concept of empathy? How did they conceive of the emotions of others affecting themselves? Seneca gives an account of how external triggers affect us emotionally and whether these are true 'passions' or not in his *De Ira*:

Cantus nos nonnumquam et citata modulatio instigat Martiusque ille tubarum sonus; movet mentes et atrox pictura et iustissimorum suppliciorum tristis aspectus; inde est quod adridemus ridentibus et contristat nos turba maerentium et efferuescimus ad aliena certamina. Quae non sunt irae, non magis quam tristitia est, quae ad conspectum mimici naufragii contrahit frontem, non magis quam timor, qui Hannibale post Cannas moenia circumsidente lectorum percurrit animos, sed omnia ista motus sunt animorum moueri nolentium nec adfectus sed principia proludentia adfectibus. Sic enim militaris viri in media pace iam togati aures tuba suscitatur equosque castrenses erigit crepitus armorum. Alexandrum aiunt Xenophanto canente manum ad arma misisse. Nihil ex his, quae animum fortuito inpellunt, adfectus vocari debet; ista, ut ita dicam, patitur magis animus quam facit. Ergo adfectus est non ad oblatas

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<sup>19</sup> Some examples: Jamil Zaki and Kevin Ochsner, "Neural Sources of Empathy: An Evolving Story," in *Understanding Other Minds: Perspectives from Developmental Social Neuroscience*, ed. Simon Baron-Cohen, Helen Tager-Flusberg, and Michael V. Lombardo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 214-32; Ronald E. Riggio, Joan Tucker et al., "Social Skills and Empathy," *Personality and Individual Differences* 10, no. 1 (1989): 93-99; Martin L. Hoffman, "Toward a Comprehensive Empathy-Based Theory of Prosocial Moral Development," in *Constructive and Destructive Behavior: Implications for Family, School, and Society*, ed. Arthur C. Bohart and Deborah J. Stipek (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001), 61-86; Deborah Custance and Jennifer Mayer, "Empathic-Like Responding by Domestic Dogs (*Canis Familiaris*) to Distress in Humans: An Exploratory Study," *Animal Cognition* 15(2012): 851-59.

rerum species moveri, sed permittere se illis et hunc fortuitum motum prosequi.<sup>20</sup>

Singing sometimes stirs us, and quickened rhythm, and the well-known blare of the War-god's trumpets; our minds are perturbed by a shocking picture and by the melancholy sight of punishment even when it is entirely just; in the same way we smile when others smile, we are saddened by a throng of mourners, and are thrown into a ferment by the struggles of others. Such sensations, however, are no more anger than that is sorrow which furrows the brow at sight of a mimic shipwreck, no more anger than that is fear which thrills our minds when we read how Hannibal after Cannae beset the walls of Rome, but they are all emotions of a mind that would prefer not to be so affected; they are not passions, but the beginnings that are preliminary to passions. So, too, the warrior in the midst of peace, wearing now his civilian dress, will prick up his ears at the blast of a trumpet, and army horses are made restive by the clatter of arms. It is said that Alexander, when Xenophantus played the flute, reached for his weapons. None of these things which move the mind through the agency of chance should be called passions; the mind suffers them, so to speak, rather than causes them. Passion, consequently, does not consist in being moved by the impressions that are presented to the mind, but in surrendering to these and following up such a chance prompting.<sup>21</sup>

Seneca acknowledges the natural empathetic reactions of people: we smile at another's smile and we feel sadness at another's sadness. However, Stoics view an emotion as a judgement and therefore under our control since we can decide whether or not to let the emotion affect us.<sup>22</sup> So such a thing as empathy exists, but if it is the immediate, involuntary emotional reaction to another's emotion, then it is not a 'real' emotion (*adfecti*) according to Seneca because it is imposed on one from the outside and entirely left up to chance. He prefers to view empathetic emotions – both those felt at others' 'real' emotional states and those felt at 'mimicked' states –

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<sup>20</sup> Sen. *Ira* 2.2.4-2.3.1

<sup>21</sup> John W. Basore, ed. *Lucius Annaeus Seneca: Moral Essays*, vol. 1 (London: Heinemann, 1928), 171.

<sup>22</sup> Cic. *Tusc.* 3.24-25; Sen. *Ira* 2.4.2

as ‘preliminary’ (*proludentiae*) and thus externally stimulated, not actual *passiones*.<sup>23</sup>

Seneca addresses one of the other ways we can experience the emotions of others: through artistic representations, such as literature or drama (for example, “singing,” “a shocking picture,” “a mimic shipwreck” or “when we read.”) The ancient Latin poet, Horace, also considered the question of how others’ emotional expressions affect us with specific reference to drama, as we can see in this passage from his *Art of Poetry* 101-105:

*ut ridentibus adrident, ita flentibus adflent  
humani vultus. si vis me flere, dolendum est  
primum ipsi tibi: tum tua me infortunia laedent,  
Telephe vel Peleu; male si mandata loqueris,  
aut dormitabo aut ridebo.*

As the human face smiles with those who smile, so does it weep with those who weep. If you wish me to weep, first you must grieve yourself: then your misfortunes hurt me, Telephus or Peleus; if you speak the given lines badly, I will either fall asleep or laugh.<sup>24</sup>

Horace is discussing how actors should express the emotions of their characters in drama in a believable manner and his reaction is much closer to that expressed by Homer and less like the skeptical Seneca’s, despite the fact that he is also dealing with art. When faced with the emotions of another individual, human beings tend to respond naturally to those emotions with similar ones. We ‘resonate,’ as modern psychologists might say; that is, we feel in ourselves an emotion similar to the one we see, hear, and feel expressed – that is, we feel *empathy*, and therefore we feel that

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<sup>23</sup> For more about ‘preliminary’ emotions, see C. Byers Sarah, “Augustine and the Cognitive Cause of Stoic Preliminary Passions (*Propatheiai*),” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 41, no. 4 (2003): 433-48.

<sup>24</sup> Author’s translation.

we understand what emotion the other person is experiencing. The emotional cues we receive from the other person are important for this process: we see someone cry, or use angry body language (like crossing her arms or furrowing her brows), or we hear a worried tone in her voice. Horace is aware of all of this, since he emphasises its importance when one is trying to approximate it in drama.<sup>25</sup> The actors must express the emotion appropriately, so that it is transmitted to the audience in such a way as to elicit their empathy with the emotions being expressed. If not done naturally and convincingly, the corresponding emotions will not be triggered and the drama will not have the same effect.<sup>26</sup>

The relationship between empathy and art was a topic broached by Plutarch as well and his conclusions fall closer to Seneca's. In his *Quaestiones convivales*, the question of artistic representations of emotional distress and pain, and their effect on the human psyche, is discussed. He writes:

εἴθ' οἶον ἐν φιλολόγοις περιέστησεν ἡ τῆς κωμωδίας μνήμη τὸν  
λόγον εἰς ζήτησιν αἰτίας, δι' ἣν ὀργιζομένων ἢ λυπουμένων ἢ  
δεδιότων φωνὰς ἀκούοντες ἀχθόμεθα καὶ δυσκολαίνομεν, οἱ δ'

<sup>25</sup> As Brink notes, Horace uses the strong *laedent* to express the emotional impact of the characters' lines (C. O. Brink, *Horace on Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 186.)

<sup>26</sup> Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* (1408a.16-25) gives a similar account regarding how an audience responds to emotion, but, in this instance, from the point of view of the poet: παθητικὴ δέ, ἐὰν μὲν ἢ ὕβρις, ὀργιζομένου λέξις, ἐὰν δὲ ἀσεβὴ καὶ αἰσχροῦ, δυσχεραίνοντος καὶ εὐλαβουμένου καὶ λέγειν, ἐὰν δὲ ἐπαινετά, ἀγαμένης, ἐὰν δὲ ἐλεεινά, ταπεινῶς, καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων δὲ ὁμοίως. πιθανοὶ δὲ τὸ πρᾶγμα καὶ ἡ οἰκεία λέξις· παραλογίζεται γὰρ ἡ ψυχὴ ὡς ἀληθῶς λέγοντος, ὅτι ἐπὶ τοῖς τοιοῦτοις οὕτως ἔχουσιν, ὥστ' οἶονται, εἰ καὶ μὴ οὕτως ἔχει ὡς <λέγει> ὁ λέγων, τὰ πράγματα οὕτως ἔχειν, καὶ συνομοπαθεῖ ὁ ἀκούων ἀεὶ τῷ παθητικῶς λέγοντι, κἂν μὴ θέν λέγῃ. διὸ πολλοὶ καταπλήττουσι τοὺς ἀκροατὰς θορυβοῦντες. ("Style expresses emotion, when a man speaks with anger of wanton outrage; with indignation and reserve, even in mentioning them, of things foul or impious; with admiration of things praiseworthy; with lowliness of things pitiable; and so in all other cases. Appropriate style also makes the fact appear credible; for the mind of the hearer is imposed upon under the impression that the speaker is speaking the truth, because, in such circumstances, his feelings are the same, so that he thinks (even if it is not the case as the speaker puts it) that things are as he represents them; and the hearer always sympathizes with one who speaks emotionally, even though he really says nothing. This is why speakers often confound their hearers by mere noise." (John Henry Freece, *Aristotle: The Art of Rhetoric*, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926), 379.))



ὑποκρινόμενοι ταῦτα τὰ πάθη καὶ μιμούμενοι τὰς φωνὰς αὐτῶν καὶ τὰς διαθέσεις εὐφραίνουσιν ἡμᾶς... εἶπον ὅτι φύσει λογικοὶ καὶ φιλότεχνοι γεγονότες πρὸς τὸ λογικῶς καὶ τεχνικῶς πραττόμενον οἰκείως διακείμεθα καὶ θαυμάζομεν, ἂν ἐπιτυχάνηται.<sup>27</sup>

As was natural among people of an inquiring mind, the mention of comedy led us into a discussion: why is it that, although we are distressed and annoyed to hear the voices of people in anger, pain or fear, we yet are greatly entertained when mimics reproduce these emotions and copy the tones and attitudes of the sufferers? ...I said that, since we are naturally endowed with reason and love of art, we have an affinity for any performance that exhibits reason or artistry, and admire success therein.<sup>28</sup>

Essentially, what is being asked is: why does reality cause empathy, but art causes appreciation? As we have just seen, according to Horace, art done well *should* affect the viewer, but what I believe Plutarch's dinner guests are getting at is the cognitive side of art and what Plutarch himself describes as λογικός ('intellectual.') Once you can distinguish between reality and 'mimed' reality, you can turn off your empathy and appreciate the skill of the performance, as Plutarch says. This does not deny empathy, for the passage still states that the anger, pain and fear of others distresses us (ἀχθόμεθα) and is difficult to bear (δυσκολαίνομεν), but just shows that once our cognition comes into the picture, empathy and compassion can be overridden. This is explained further along in the passage:

ἐπεὶ τοίνυν ὁ μὲν ἀληθῶς ὀργιζόμενος ἢ λυπούμενος ἔν τισι κοινοῖς πάθεσι καὶ κινήμασιν ὁρᾶται, τῇ δὲ μιμήσει πανουργία τις ἐμφαίνεται καὶ πιθανότης ἅνπερ ἐπιτυχάνηται, | τούτοις μὲν ἡδεσθαι πεφύκαμεν ἐκείνοις δ' ἀχθόμεθα... ἀνθρώπους μὲν γὰρ ἀποθνήσκοντας καὶ νοσοῦντας ἀνιαρῶς ὁρῶμεν· τὸν δὲ γεγραμμένον Φιλοκτήτην καὶ τὴν πεπλασμένην Ἰοκάστην... <ίδόντες> ἡδόμεθα καὶ θαυμάζομεν... καὶ φθισικοὺς μὲν ὁρῶντες δυσχεραίνομεν, ἀνδριάντας δὲ καὶ γραφὰς φθισικῶν ἡδέως

<sup>27</sup> Plut. *Mor. Quaest. conv.* 673d

<sup>28</sup> Paul A. Clement and Herbert B. Hoffleit, *Plutarch's Moralia*, vol. 8, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 377, 79.

θεώμεθα τῷ τὴν διάνοιαν ὑπὸ τῶν μιμημάτων ἄγεσθαι [καὶ] κατὰ τὸ οἰκεῖον.<sup>29</sup>

Under the influence of genuine anger or pain a man always displays certain universal emotions and gestures, whereas a successful imitation manifests a cunning and authority of its own, so that we take a natural delight in the performance, but are distressed by the reality... We feel acute pain at the sight of the sick or the dying; but a painting of Philoctetes or a statue of Jocasta... gives us pleasure and elicits our admiration... We are shocked to see consumptives, but we contemplate statues and paintings of them with pleasure, because the mind, by its own nature, is attracted to imitations.<sup>30</sup>

The argument is made several times over: real pain disturbs us but imitation impresses us. We are able to overcome the natural reaction – being distressed (ἀχθόμεθα) at what is real; viewing the sick and dying grievously (ἀνιαρῶς); having difficulty (δυσχεραίνομεν) when confronted by consumptive patients – once we see the artifice in the image or performance. This explanation comes very close to Theodore Lipps' theory of aesthetic empathy, or *Einfühlung*.<sup>31</sup> Lipps believed that the aesthetic enjoyment of a piece of art presupposes that one feels oneself in it and this he called *Einfühlung*.<sup>32</sup> He distinguished this from transference, saying that empathy is not feeling something on the inside and transferring it to an external object, but exactly the opposite: it comes from the representation of the object into ourselves.<sup>33</sup> Positive and negative empathy then arise. Positive empathy is when there is a harmonising with the stimulus and aesthetic enjoyment results. For example, a painting of a smiling face conveys happiness to me through empathy so

<sup>29</sup> Plut. *Mor. Quaest. conv.* 673F-674a

<sup>30</sup> Clement and Hoffleit, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 8: 381, 83.

<sup>31</sup> Titchener coined the term 'empathy' in English in order to translate Lipps' concept; see Edward B. Titchener, *Lectures on the Experimental Psychology of the Thought-Processes* (New York: Macmillan, 1909).

<sup>32</sup> Theodor Lipps, "Empathy and Aesthetic Pleasure," in *Aesthetic Theories: Studies in the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Karl Aschenbrenner and Arnold Isenberg (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 403.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 404.

that the similar “inner activity” occurs within me and aesthetic enjoyment of the painting results.<sup>34</sup> Negative empathy, on the other hand, is when we find the stimulus “hostile” and do not aesthetically enjoy the object.<sup>35</sup> Thus, even an image of sadness, poverty or pain can result in aesthetic enjoyment if the image creates positive empathy;<sup>36</sup> that is, there is an inner harmony within us. And this is possible according to Lipps because we know that an aesthetic experience is not a real experience.<sup>37</sup> For example, an image that conveys anger and creates the empathetic feeling of anger inside me is *aesthetically* experienced and not the result of an actual attack. We are constantly aware of this because, as Lipps says, when you attend to something aesthetically you remove it to an “ideal realm.”<sup>38</sup> Thus we do not experience undesirable emotions, such as anger or sadness, as we would in the ‘real world’<sup>39</sup> and can enjoy images of Philoctetes’ suffering, as Plutarch states in his treatise. Plutarch attributes this enjoyment, which some must find as rather anxiety-inducing, to enjoy the representation of someone else’s pain, to an appreciation of mimicry, whereas Lipps’ conceives of it as *Einfühlung*.

Adam Smith, in his 1759 work *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, put forth a definition of sympathy very close to what we would call empathy, which he says is “our fellow-feeling with any passion whatsoever” which we can feel by either seeing

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<sup>34</sup> “I cannot grasp the laughing face without the evocation of the same kind of inner activity.” Ibid., 409.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 408.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 410.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 411.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 412.

<sup>39</sup> Lipps acknowledges that we experience empathy with real people but that it is a different experience to what we feel when we empathise with art. This is why can enjoy a sad image – aesthetic experience is not real experience. Ibid., 410-11.

it or having it conveyed to us in a “lively manner.”<sup>40</sup> All emotions fall under sympathy, not only undesirable ones, and Smith believes this is done through the power of imagination, when we become one (to some degree) with another:

By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike them.<sup>41</sup>

Smith also extended his idea of sympathy to works of art and literature, which has been a topic of keen interest in recent scholarship.<sup>42</sup> In the most impressive recent piece of cultural history on empathy, *Empathy and the Novel*, Suzanne Keen takes empathy past first-hand experience and defines it as follows: “Empathy, a vicarious, spontaneous sharing of affect, can be provoked by another’s emotional state, by hearing about another’s condition, or even by reading.”<sup>43</sup> Keen, drawing from the areas of psychology, narrative theory, neuroscience, literary history, and philosophy, explores the idea that reading fiction increases one’s empathy and altruistic behaviour.<sup>44</sup> This relates more with the passages of Horace and Homer and how they view empathy: “vicarious and spontaneous.” Smith’s sympathy, on the other hand, leans more towards Plutarch and Seneca. His sympathy is imaginative and requires consideration of the circumstances under which the emotion being viewed has occurred: “Sympathy, therefore, does not arise so much from the view of

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<sup>40</sup> Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 13,11.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>43</sup> Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*: 4.

<sup>44</sup> Psychologists in particular have explored the connection between empathy and novel-reading. For example: Mar, Oatley et al., “Exploring the Link between Reading Fiction and Empathy: Ruling out Individual Differences and Examining Outcomes,” 407-28.

the passion, as from that of the situation which excites it."<sup>45</sup> It may be spontaneous, but it usually is not.<sup>46</sup> Smith's sense of this emotional state is, then, perhaps more evaluative and cognitive, and rooted in 'perspective-taking' and not the "vicarious, spontaneous sharing of affect" that Keen says it is and what I believe some of the ancients understood it to be.<sup>47</sup>

Compassion is one of the reasons scholars like Keen are interested in the connection between empathy and reading, because it is believed that empathy is a required prerequisite of compassion and altruistic behaviours, as it lays the groundwork, so to speak, for recognising that another is suffering.<sup>48</sup> Compassion is the emotion of feeling care or concern for another's suffering and desiring to relieve that suffering.<sup>49</sup> It focuses its attention specifically on the undesirable emotions, such as pain, grief, anxiety and suffering, of another individual, and despite the fact that it begins in empathy (by reflecting or resonating the other's pain and suffering in us) can be viewed entirely on its own as a separate emotion. The ancients certainly understood the concept of compassion, as the medical writer Celsus, reacting to the practice of vivisection, shows in the proemium of his *De Medicina*:

Atque ea quidem, de quibus est dictum, superuacua esse tantummodo: id uero, quod restat, etiam crudele, uiuorum hominum aluum atque praecordia incidi, et salutis humanae praesidem artem non solum pestem alicui, sed hanc etiam atrocissimam inferre ... ita sedem, positum, ordinem, figuram,

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<sup>45</sup> Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*: 15.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>47</sup> Claus Lamm, C. Daniel Batson et al., "The Neural Substrate of Human Empathy: Effects of Perspective-Taking and Cognitive Appraisal," *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 19, no. 1 (2007): 42-58.

<sup>48</sup> Batson, Ahmad et al., "Empathy and Altruism," 417-26; Batson, Duncan et al., "Is Empathic Emotion a Source of Altruistic Motivation?," 290-302; Toi and Batson, "More Evidence That Empathy Is a Source of Altruistic Motivation," 281-92.

<sup>49</sup> Compassion can also be extended to animals; see Chapter Five.

similiaque alia cognoscere prudentem medicum, non caedem sed sanitatem molientem, idque per misericordiam discere, quod alii dira crudelitate cognorint.<sup>50</sup>

Now the matters just referred to they deem to be superfluous; but what remains, cruel as well, to cut into the belly and chest of men whilst still alive, and to impose upon the Art which presides over human safety someone's death, and that too in the most atrocious way... Thus, they say, an observant practitioner learns to recognize site, position, arrangement, shape and such like, not when slaughtering, but whilst striving for health; and he learns in the course of a work of mercy [*misericiordiam*], what others would come to know by means of dire cruelty.<sup>51</sup>

The practice of vivisection, which is the dissecting of live human subjects (criminals sentenced to death) for the purpose of anatomical and physiological study, is the subject here. Celsus gives his own opinion on this procedure, and by characterizing the perpetrators' actions as *caedes* ('slaughtering') and vivisection as *dira crudelitas* ('awful cruelty') we see where his compassion lies: with those who would have been slowly tortured and killed as anatomy subjects, despite their criminal status. He contrasts vivisection with the observant physician's *sanitas moliens* ("striving for health") and promotes *misericiordia* ('mercy' or 'compassion.')

Plutarch, too, expresses compassion in his *Life of Cato the Elder*. He criticises heavily the uncaring attitude and behaviour of Cato towards slaves and servants:

καὶ τούτους δὲ πρεσβυτέρους γενομένους ὥς τε δεῖν ἀποδίδοσθαι καὶ μὴ βόσκειν ἀχρήστους... πλὴν τὸ τοῖς οἰκέταις ὡς ὑποζυγίοις ἀποχρησάμενον ἐπὶ γήρῳ ἐξελαύνειν καὶ πιπράσκειν ἀτενοῦς ἄγαν ἥθους ἔγωγε τίθεμαι, καὶ μηδὲν ἀνθρώπῳ πρὸς ἄνθρωπον οἰόμενον κοινώνημα τῆς χρείας πλέον ὑπάρχειν. καίτοι τὴν χρηστότητα τῆς δικαιοσύνης πλατύτερον τόπον ὀρώμεν ἐπιλαμβάνουσιν· νόμῳ μὲν γὰρ καὶ τῷ δικαίῳ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους μόνον χρῆσθαι πεφύκαμεν, πρὸς εὐεργεσίας δὲ καὶ χάριτας ἔστιν ὅτε καὶ μέχρι τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων ὥσπερ ἐκ πηγῆς πλουσίας ἀπορρεῖ

<sup>50</sup> Cels. *Med.* 1.pr.40.1 & 43.9

<sup>51</sup> W. G. Spencer, *Celsus: De Medicina*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), 23 & 25.

τῆς ἡμερότητος. καὶ γὰρ ἵππων ἀπειρηκότων ὑπὸ χρόνου τροφαὶ καὶ κυνῶν οὐ σκυλακεῖαι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ γηροκομίαι τῷ χρηστῷ προσήκουσιν... οὐ γὰρ ὡς ὑποδήμασιν ἢ σκεύεσι τοῖς ψυχὴν ἔχουσι χρηστέον, κοπέντα καὶ κατατριβέντα ταῖς ὑπηρεσίαις ἀπορρίπτοντας, ἀλλ' εἰ διὰ μηδὲν ἄλλο μελέτης οὐνεκα τοῦ φιλανθρώπου προεθιστέον ἑαυτὸν ἐν τούτοις πρᾶον εἶναι καὶ μείλιχον. ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὐδὲ βοῦν ἂν ἐργάτην διὰ γῆρας ἀποδοίμην, μή τί γε πρεσβύτερον ἄνθρωπον, ἐκ χώρας συντρόφου καὶ διαίτης συνήθους ὥσπερ ἐκ πατρίδος μεθιστάμενον ἀντὶ κερμάτων μικρῶν, ἄχρηστόν γε τοῖς ὠνουμένοις ὥσπερ τοῖς πιπράσκουσι γενησόμενον.<sup>52</sup>

And these [slaves] he thought it his duty to sell when they got oldish, instead of feeding them when they were useless... However, for my part, I regard his treatment of his slaves like beasts of burden, using them to the uttermost, and then, when they were old, driving them off and selling them, as the mark of a very mean nature, which recognizes no tie between man and man but that of necessity. And yet we know that kindness has a wider scope than justice. Law and justice we naturally apply to men alone; but when it comes to beneficence and charity, these often flow in streams from the gentle heart, like water from a copious spring, even down to dumb beasts. A kindly man will take good care of his horses even when they are worn out with age, and of his dogs, too, not only in their puppyhood, but when their old age needs nursing... We should not treat living creatures like shoes or pots and pans, casting them aside when they are bruised and worn out with service, but, if for no other reason, for the sake of practice in kindness to our fellow men, we should accustom ourselves to mildness and gentleness in our dealings with creatures. I certainly would not sell an ox that had worked for me, just because he was old, much less an elderly man, removing him from his habitual place and customary life, as it were from his native land, for a paltry price...<sup>53</sup>

Those, like Cato, who treat slaves “ὡς ὑποζυγίοις” (“like beasts of burden”) are characterised by Plutarch as “ἀτενοῦς ἄγαν ἥθους” (“of a very mean nature”) and he places his opinion and Cato’s actions firmly in opposition by his use of “ἔγωγε.” He talks of a connection between people that is more than χρεία (‘necessity’ or

<sup>52</sup> Plut. *Vit. Cat. Mai.* 4.5 & 5.1-3, 5-7

<sup>53</sup> Bernadotte Perrin, *Plutarch's Lives*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), 315 & 17 & 19.

‘service’) and of εὐεργεσία (‘beneficence’ or ‘good behaviour’) and χάρις (‘charity’ or ‘gratification’) coming from a person’s ἡμερότης (‘gentleness’). He goes on to say that we should not throw living creatures aside (ἀπορρίπτω) “ὡς ὑποδήμασιν ἢ σκεύεσιν” (“like shoes or implements”) but “μελέτης οὐνεκα τοῦ φιλανθρώπου” (“on account of what is humane”) we should accustom ourselves to be πρᾶος (‘mild’) and μέλιχος (‘gentle’).<sup>54</sup> This is not to say that Plutarch was against slavery. He never, in any of his treatises, says that slavery itself is immoral or should not be practiced. His *a fortiori* argument is that he would not treat an animal this harshly, let alone a human being. He is not questioning the cultural practice of slavery, but the treatment of those slaves. By modern standards, this may be considered a far cry from compassion; however, in the ancient world where enslavement was knitted so thoroughly into Greco-Roman society, this is a view not often expressed and one which we may consider compassionate.

Empathy and compassion are different, but related, phenomena.<sup>55</sup> As Batson has observed, empathy is not one distinct emotion, but includes “a whole constellation of feelings.”<sup>56</sup> Empathy can occur in response to any emotion expressed by another individual, whereas compassion, as I have stated, directs its energy only towards emotions such as pain, suffering, distress or sorrow – that is, emotions which are seen as undesirable. Empathy is also most often excited by intense emotions, that is, in the presence of extreme pain as opposed to mild discomfort. When we observe a person who is suffering, we feel empathy, but we

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<sup>54</sup> The concepts of gentleness, mildness, kindness, and especially φιλόανθρωπια will be discussed again and in more detail in Chapter 5.

<sup>55</sup> Nussbaum, "Compassion: The Basic Social Emotion," 55.

<sup>56</sup> Batson, Ahmad et al., "Empathy and Altruism," 418.



may also feel compassion (care or concern for another person who is suffering and desiring to relieve that suffering; this is sometimes called ‘empathic concern’ by psychologists or ‘compassionate empathy’ by those in the healthcare field.<sup>57</sup>) If felt or articulated deeply enough, this may even lead to compassionate action and altruism (the unselfish desire to help those suffering or in need) and we may attempt to help them, console them, or in some way relieve their suffering. Both empathy and compassion can be mediated or overridden by other factors, such as relationship, familiarity, and other emotions coming into play. For example, empathy has been shown to be stronger when the object of empathy is familiar to us and compassion is lessened when one feels negatively towards the other person; for example, when there is a sense of unfairness.<sup>58</sup> As an example of increased empathy for those to which we are close, we can turn to the letters of Marcus Aurelius and Fronto. Fronto was hired by Antoninus Pius AD 139 to tutor Marcus Aurelius in rhetoric, but as Marcus grew up the two remained close and corresponded.<sup>59</sup> In their letters, the two men relate their everyday activities, talk about their families, and commiserate over their respective ill health. Fronto in particular writes quite

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<sup>57</sup> John L. Cox, "Empathy, Identity and Engagement in Person-Centred Medicine: The Sociocultural Context," *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice* 17, no. 2 (2011): 350-53; Carolyn Zahn-Waxler and Marian Radke-Yarrow, "The Origins of Empathic Concern," *Motivation and Emotion* 14, no. 2 (1990): 107-30.

<sup>58</sup> Linda Stinson and William Ickes, "Empathic Accuracy in the Interactions of Male Friends Versus Male Strangers," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 62, no. 5 (1992): 787-97. For similar ideas in monkeys, see R.E. Miller, J.H. Banks et al., "The Communication of Affects in Monkeys: Cooperative Reward Conditioning," *The Journal of Genetic Psychology* 108(1966): 121-34. Paul Condon and David DeSteno, "Compassion for One Reduces Punishment for Another," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 47, no. 3 (2011): 698-701; Singer, Seymour et al., "Empathic Neural Responses Are Modulated by the Perceived Fairness of Others," 466-69; Tania Singer, "The Neuronal Basis of Empathy and Fairness," in *Empathy and Fairness*, ed. G. Bock and J. Goode (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2006), 20-40.

<sup>59</sup> And perhaps even fell in love, at least according to Richlin (Amy Richlin, *Marcus Aurelius in Love* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).)

often regarding his various illnesses and Marcus always responds in a compassionate and caring manner, empathising with his former tutor:

Ludis tu quidem, at mihi peramplam anxietatem et summam aegritudinem, dolorem et ignem flagrantissimum litteris his tuis misisti, ne cenare, ne dormire, ne denique studere libeat. Verum tu orationis hodiernae tuae habeas aliquod solacium; at ego quid faciam, qui et auditionis omnem iam voluptatem consumpsei et metuo, ne Lorium tardiuscule venias, et doleo quod interim doles? Vale mi magister, cuius salus meam salutem inlibatam et incolumem facit.<sup>60</sup>

You indeed are playful, but by this letter of yours you have sent me immense anxiety and intense distress, [most acute]<sup>61</sup> pain and burning fever, so that I have no heart to sup or sleep or even study. But you would find some comfort in your speech to-day, whereas I, what am I to do? who have already forestalled the pleasure of hearing it and fear that your visit to Lorium may be delayed, and am in pain because you meanwhile are in pain. Farewell, my master, whose health makes my health unimpaired and assured.<sup>62</sup>

Marcus does not simply feel badly for Fronto or pity him; he states that he is indeed experiencing *perampla anxietas* ('a very large amount of anxiety') but also *summa aegritudo* ('the greatest illness') in the form of *dolor* ('pain') and *ignis flagrantissimus* ('the most blazing fever'). We do not have an immediately corresponding letter from Fronto which outlines his specific illness, but it seems as if Marcus is reflecting whatever physical symptoms Fronto has related to him back to Fronto. He states outright: "[I] am in pain because you are in pain." The *doleo... doles* frames the

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<sup>60</sup> Fronto, *Ep.* 5.22

<sup>61</sup> I have bracketed [very acute] here because the Loeb includes <acerbissimum> in the Latin text but the TLG text does not.

<sup>62</sup> C. R. Haines, *The Correspondence for Marcus Cornelius Fronto*, vol. 1, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 195.

sentence so succinctly and simply that the empathy comes through. For Marcus, Fronto's well-being is his well-being.<sup>63</sup>

Some people, especially those working in our healthcare system, struggle with how much empathy and compassion they should allow themselves to experience, and how to express it. The Greeks unsurprisingly experienced the same problem. Epictetus reflects a similar concern regarding these emotions in *Enchiridion* 16:

Ὅταν κλαίοντα ἴδῃς τινὰ ἐν πένθει ἢ ἀποδημοῦντος τέκνου ἢ ἀπολωλεκότα τὰ ἑαυτοῦ, πρόσεχε μὴ σε ἡ φαντασία συναρπάσῃ ὥς ἐν κακοῖς ὄντος αὐτοῦ τοῖς ἐκτός, ἀλλ' εὐθύς ἔστω πρόχειρον ὅτι 'τοῦτον θλίβει οὐ τὸ συμβεβηκός (ἄλλον γὰρ οὐ θλίβει), ἀλλὰ τὸ δόγμα τὸ περὶ τούτου'. μέχρι μέντοι λόγου μὴ ὀκνεῖ συμπεριφέρεσθαι αὐτῷ, κἂν οὕτω τύχῃ, καὶ συνεπιστενάξαι· πρόσεχε μέντοι μὴ καὶ ἔσωθεν στενάξῃς.<sup>64</sup>

When you see a person weeping in sorrow either when a child goes abroad or when he is dead, or when the man has lost his property, take care that the appearance do not hurry you away with it, as if he were suffering in external things. But straightway make a distinction in your own mind, and be in readiness to say, it is not that which has happened that afflicts this man, for it does not afflict another, but it is the opinion about this thing which afflicts the man. So far as words then do not be unwilling to show him sympathy, and even if it happens so, to lament with him. But take care that you do not lament internally also.<sup>65</sup>

Epictetus believed that almost everything in this world is outside of our control, except for our opinions or judgements, and it is only these which make things 'good' or 'bad.'<sup>66</sup> Therefore, we need not be affected by what happens in our lives, but what we think about these happenings, and thus control over our responses (emotional

<sup>63</sup> Marcus has a similar reaction as this to Fronto's ill health in at least five other letters: Fronto, *Ep.* 5.26, 5.28, 5.34, 5.56, and 5.60.

<sup>64</sup> Epict. *Ench.* 16

<sup>65</sup> George Long, *Epictetus: Enchiridion* (Mineola: Dover Publications, Inc., 2004), 6.

<sup>66</sup> A. A. Long, *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 27-28.

and otherwise) to external factors can be obtained in this way. This applies to other people, too, as he shows in this passage about how to deal with a grieving person. He worries that we can get “caught up” (συναρπάση) in another’s emotions and this approximates to our definition of empathy quite closely: you resonate with the emotion the other person is expressing. This is the immediate reaction of empathy, something Stoics like Seneca would call *propatheiai* (as we saw in the previous passage from his *De Ira*) and not ‘true’ emotions.<sup>67</sup> Epictetus also attempts an understanding of *why* the person feels the way he does – cognitive empathy – and in this case, it is done in accordance with his philosophical outlook, not unlike Adam Smith’s description of sympathy. Because of his interest in Stoicism, however, Epictetus’ ultimate goal is the regulation of passions, and so he says that you should not “lament internally” (ἔσωθεν στενάξης) with the distressed person. So, Epictetus would like to remove emotion from the equation, but, because he is not entirely unfeeling, he states that a certain level of caring is acceptable. He says to show the person compassion (συμπεριφέρεσθαι – literally, to “carry around along with”) and lament with him (συνεπιστενάξαι) – but not to feel it too intensely ourselves. Plutarch echoes this sentiment in his treatise *De tranquillitate animi*, from his *Moralia*. The ‘philosophers’ he mentions are most likely the Stoics, and as with Epictetus, the dangers of others’ emotions are warned against:

...ἐπὶ λήσεις πολλὰ λυπηρὰ συνάγων ὥσπερ εἰς χωρίον κοῦλον καὶ  
ταπεινὸν ἐπιρρέοντα τὴν μικροψυχίαν ταύτην καὶ τὴν ἀσθένειαν,  
ἀλλοτρίων ἀναπιμπλάμενος κακῶν. ὅπου γὰρ ἔνιοι τῶν

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<sup>67</sup> Chrysippus also mentions these ‘pre-emotions’ but calls them the ‘first movement’ (Teun Tieleman, *Chrysippus’ on Affections: Reconstruction and Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 128.) Cicero, too (Cicero, *Cicero on the Emotions: Tusculan Disputations 3 and 4*, trans. Margaret Graver (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 36, 125.)

φιλοσόφων καὶ τὸν ἔλεον ψέγουσι πρὸς ἀτυχοῦντας ἀνθρώπους  
γιγνόμενον, ὥς καλοῦ τοῦ βοηθεῖν οὐ τοῦ συναλγεῖν καὶ  
συνενδιδόναι τοῖς πλησίον ὄντος...<sup>68</sup>

...and no longer will you unwittingly gather into this present  
captiousness or infirmity of yours many grievances, like  
offscourings which drain into some hollow and low-lying ground,  
thus letting yourself be infected with the vices of others. For since  
some of the philosophers censure even pity that is expended upon  
unfortunate persons, on the ground that it is good to give help to  
our neighbours, but not to participate in their sorrows nor give in  
to them...<sup>69</sup>

Plutarch sees the emotions of others as potentially contagious. These emotions can become attracted to oneself and damaging, and the simile he uses of bad water draining to a low point and becoming filled with “evils” is a powerful one. Thus, some philosophers say to help (βοηθεῖν) the unfortunate is fine, but to feel their misery as your own (συναλγεῖν) is not. This comes through particularly with the use of συνενδίδωμι, which means ‘to give way’ but which also gives a sense of losing oneself in something with someone else. This lack of control seems to be the point of anxiety around which Stoic philosophers and Plutarch criticise empathy.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Plut. *Mor. De tranq. anim.* 468c-d

<sup>69</sup> W. C. Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia*, vol. 6, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), 189.

<sup>70</sup> This point is picked up again in Plut. *Mor. De exil.* 599b-c as a concern regarding proper consolation: “δεῖ δὲ τὸν παρὰ τῶν φίλων καὶ τῶν βοηθούντων λόγον παρηγορίαν εἶναι μὴ συνηγορίαν τοῦ λυποῦντος· οὐ γὰρ συνδακρύνων καὶ συνεπιθρηνοῦντων ὥσπερ χορῶν τραγικῶν ἐν τοῖς ἀβουλήτοις χρεῖαν ἔχομεν, ἀλλὰ παρρησιαζομένων καὶ διδασκόντων ὅτι τὸ λυπεῖσθαι καὶ τὸ ταπεινοῦν ἑαυτὸν ἐπὶ παντὶ μὲν ἄχρηστόν ἐστι... κομιδῇ γελοῖόν ἐστι μὴ τῆς σαρκὸς πυνθάνεσθαι τί πέπονθε μηδὲ τῆς ψυχῆς εἰ διὰ τὸ σύμπτωμα τοῦτο χείρων γέγονεν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἔξωθεν συναχθόμενοις καὶ συναγανακτοῦσι διδασκάλοις χρῆσθαι τῆς λύπης.” (“The language addressed to us by friends and real helpers should mitigate, not vindicate, what distresses us; it is not partners in tears and lamentation, like tragic choruses, that we need in unwished-for circumstances, but men who speak frankly and instruct us that grief and self-abasement are everywhere futile... it is utterly absurd not to ask the body what it has suffered, or the soul whether it is the worse for this mischance, but instead to seek instruction in grief from those who come from the outside world to join their vexation and resentment to our own.” (Phillip H. De Lacy and Benedict Einarson, *Plutarch's Moralia*, vol. 7, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 519, 21.))

Now let us turn to the problem of vocabulary. Ancient Greek does not have a word for empathy as we have defined it. ἐμπάθεια (the word from which English derived ‘empathy’) means basically ‘passion’ or ‘affection’ and nothing more specific than that. However, simply because there is not a word for an emotion, does not mean it cannot be felt. Children and animals do not have a vocabulary to draw on for expressing an emotion verbally but I do not believe that most people would deny them emotions, and many studies have shown that both still feel it.<sup>71</sup> There are many concepts and emotions which other languages have expressed with single words, but English has not – but we certainly recognize these ideas and feelings (for example, German’s *Schadenfreude*).<sup>72</sup> Therefore, the ancient Greek language may not have had a single word for empathy, but this does not mean they did not recognise and experience this emotion. In fact, judging from the few passages we have just examined, it is as if the Greeks and Romans were moving into an understanding of empathy. They can accurately isolate and describe it, but they have not yet developed a specific word for it. The phenomenon is recognisable, but specific terminology is lacking.

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<sup>71</sup> Darwin certainly believed animals expressed emotions (Charles R. Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (London: John Murray, 1872).) Others, too: Marc Bekoff, *Minding Animals: Awareness, Emotions, and Heart* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Marc Bekoff and Jessica Pierce, *Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009); Marc Bekoff, *The Animal Manifesto: Six Reasons for Expanding Our Compassion Footprint* (Novato: New World Library, 2010). Even the expression of empathy and compassion is now believed to be shared with at least apes, dolphins and elephants: Frans de Waal, *The Age of Empathy: Nature's Lessons for a Kinder Society* (New York: Emblem, 2009).

<sup>72</sup> As Toohey states in relation to the concept of boredom, “...people in any historical era may have the capacity to experience boredom whether or not they have a term for it.” (Peter Toohey, *Boredom: A Lively History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 155.) So I think it must be with any emotion.

The words used most commonly for the type of emotion we call compassion is ἔλεος or οἶκτος in ancient Greek.<sup>73</sup> ἔλεος is the term Plutarch uses in the previous passage and both of these terms are usually translated into English as 'pity' but sometimes also 'compassion.'<sup>74</sup> We sometimes shy away from the word 'pity' today because of the negative connotations now associated with it; it comes with a sense of the inferiority of the pitied and perhaps even condescension.<sup>75</sup> Pity for the ancient Greeks also came with a whole set of social constructs (specific wording, gestures, etc.) and is like a 'service' for which someone asks. This involves the act of supplication, where pity is requested and an unequal relationship is set up where the suppliant is (or makes himself to be) of lower status than the one being supplicated. Some of the best examples of ancient Greek pity come from the *Iliad* and Book 24's poignant scene between Priam and Achilles is the most famous of all.<sup>76</sup> Priam finds Achilles in his tent, grasps his knees and his hands, and begs for the return of his son's body, while calling for Achilles to remember his own aged father.<sup>77</sup> Compassion may very well be involved in this process (the supplicated may feel care or concern for the suppliant) but it is not necessary for mercy or clemency to be shown, although the process of supplication appears designed to elicit feelings

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<sup>73</sup> As Konstan points out, ἔλεος is the most common term for pity in the orators, whereas οἶκτος is often used for the expression of grief or lamentation. (Konstan, *Pity Transformed*: 53-54.) In Latin, the term *misericordia* is most frequently translated as pity. For more on the differences between ἔλεος and οἶκτος, see Lucia Carbone, "Pity and the City" (M.A., Columbia University (USA), 2012).

<sup>74</sup> Compassion is not exactly the same emotion as pity for the ancient Greeks, at least not according to Konstan, nor is empathy (Konstan and Kiritsi, "From Pity to Sympathy: Tragic Emotions across the Ages."; Konstan, "Pity and Self-Pity," 2.)

<sup>75</sup> Aaron Ben-Ze'ev, *The Subtlety of Emotions* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000), 328. Some scholars have asserted that *clementia*, a concept related to pity, was demening. (Konstan, *Pity Transformed*: 99.)

<sup>76</sup> For more on Homeric supplication, see Kevin Crotty, *The Poetics of Supplication: Homer's Iliad and Odyssey* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994). For ancient supplication more generally, see F. S. Naiden, *Ancient Supplication* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>77</sup> Hom. *Il.* 24.477-494

of pity from the supplicated. A high level of judgement is required (does the suppliant deserve to be shown mercy?) and a supplicated individual may base his decision entirely on this rather than any tender feelings he has for the suppliant.

Pity is also an important emotion for fifth century BC Greeks, especially in the courtroom. This is the arena in which David Konstan concentrates much of his research on ancient pity, using Aristotle's definition as his guide. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle defines pity in the following way: "ἔστω δὴ ἔλεος λύπη τις ἐπὶ φαινομένῳ κακῷ φθαρτικῷ ἢ λυπηρῷ τοῦ ἀναξίου τυγχάνειν, ὃ κἂν αὐτὸς προσδοκῇσιν ἂν παθεῖν ἢ τῶν αὐτοῦ τινα, καὶ τοῦτο ὅταν πλησίον φαίνεται."<sup>78</sup> ("Let pity, then, be a kind of pain in the case of an apparent destructive or painful harm of one not deserving to encounter it, which one might expect oneself, or one of one's own, to suffer, and this when it seems near."<sup>79</sup>) Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is a work on the art of persuasion and he devotes a large part of it to considering the nature of human emotions, given their importance in swaying an audience's opinion in your favour or understanding the emotional disposition of a jury. As Konstan points out, the definition has certain limiters: (1) it is a painful emotion; (2) it is elicited in the face of apparent harm; (3) the person experiencing the harm is deemed not deserving; (4) the pitier feels vulnerable to the fact that something similar could possibly happen to himself or his loved ones; (5) the harm is eminent.<sup>80</sup> Aristotle expands on this definition a little further on, stating that we only pity those with whom we are acquainted, but not those with whom we are close in kinship. This is because when

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<sup>78</sup> Arist. *Rh.* 1385b.13-16

<sup>79</sup> Konstan, *Pity Transformed*: 49.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.



kin are suffering, we feel it as if it we ourselves are suffering.<sup>81</sup> Thus, pity requires distance between the pitier and the pitied. Another consequence comes in the third part of Aristotle's definition: the pitied individual must be seen as not deserving of their misfortune or suffering. This is a moral judgement on the part of the pitier and was likely an important part of the defense in a Greek law court for the accused.<sup>82</sup>

Konstan has pointed out that other words in Greek come close to the concept of pity but lack the moral judgement aspect that pity entailed in Aristotle's definition. These words usually begin with σύν- or σύμ- prefixes and relate to suffering and pain.<sup>83</sup> For example, συμπονέω, which means to toil or suffer together. The σύν- prefix signifies a sense of 'togetherness' with the emotion or action. Konstan maintains, however, that these σύν- words were limited to relations between friends and relatives, that is, close kin, and this fits with Aristotle's assertion that we do not pity our family and close friends, but suffer with them.<sup>84</sup> As Konstan remarks, Aristotle is consistent in this notion since he expands further on this idea in his *Nicomachean Ethics* when he says that profound love involves feeling

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<sup>81</sup> Arist. *Rh.* 1386a18-23

<sup>82</sup> One might wonder whether the ancient Greeks located pity in the body, like the emotions of courage or love. In the New Testament, compassion is often expressed with the verb σπλαγχνίζομαι, which relates to σπλάγχνον (innards). σπλαγχνίζομαι, however, did not exist in Attic Greek. (Rachel Hall Sternberg, "The Nature of Pity," in *Pity and Power in Ancient Athens*, ed. Rachel Hall Sternberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 43.)

<sup>83</sup> In Latin, 'con-' or 'com-' prefixes.

<sup>84</sup> There are a few examples where the terminology is not quite so obvious, for example in Isocrates (during a discussion of the Spartan interference in Athens after the Peloponnesian War and the suffering they caused the men of the city) Isoc. *Paneg.* 112: εἰς τοῦτο δ' ὀμότητος ἅπαντας ἡμᾶς κατέστησαν ὥστε πρὸ τοῦ μὲν διὰ τὴν παροῦσαν εὐδαιμονίαν καὶ ταῖς μικραῖς ἀτυχίαις πολλοὺς ἕκαστον ἡμῶν ἔχειν τοὺς συμπενηθήσοντας, ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς τούτων ἀρχῆς διὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν οἰκείων κακῶν ἐπαυσάμεθ' ἀλλήλους ἐλεοῦντες· οὐδενὶ γὰρ τοσαύτην σχολὴν παρέλιπον ὥσθ' ἑτέρῳ συναχθεσθῆναι. ("and to such a stage of brutishness did they bring us all that, whereas in former times, because of the prosperity which prevailed, every one of us found many to sympathize with him even in trifling reverses, yet under the rule of these men, because of the multitude of our own calamities, we ceased feeling pity for each other, since there was no man to whom they allowed enough of respite so that he could share another's burdens.") Both ἐλεέω and two σύν- verbs, συνάχθομαι and συμπενθέω, are used here in the same context.

the pain (συναλγέω) and the joy (συγχαίρω) of another.<sup>85</sup> Konstan cites two tragedies as examples of where this difference between ἔλεος or οἶκτος and σύν- words plays out: Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and Euripides' *Orestes*. To summarize briefly, Philoctetes requests pity for his suffering from Neoptolemus, who is a stranger to him, but a Greek and from a similar class; however, Orestes never requests pity from Menelaus or Pylades, who are both close to him, but uses σύν- words to ask for assistance.<sup>86</sup>

The scheme of pity and other σύν- words works perfectly for the literature of the fifth century AD; however, as Konstan points out, at some point after the classical period the noun συμπάθεια came to be used in the sense of the English 'sympathy' (from which it originated<sup>87</sup>) and I suggest that the once close relationship required for σύν- evolves as well, expanding outward to be used for those who are suffering but not a close relation or friend.<sup>88</sup> I take as an example a passage from the main author addressed in this dissertation, Aretaeus of Cappadocia. In a moving passage in his chapter on tetanus (to be addressed more fully in Chapter Two), he writes about the final stages of the disease when the physician can no longer help the dying patient: τοῖσι ὧν κεκρατημένοισι οὐκέτι ἐγχειρέων ξυνάχθεται μοῦνον.<sup>89</sup> ("With them, then, who are overpowered by the disease, he can merely sympathize."<sup>90</sup>) He uses the verb συνάχθομαι, meaning 'to be

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<sup>85</sup> Konstan, *Pity Transformed*: 58. Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1171a6-7; also 1166a7-8

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 53-54.

<sup>87</sup> Walter Burkert, *Zum Altgriechischen Mitleidsbegriff* (Erlangen: Inaugural-Dissertation, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität, 1955), 63-67.

<sup>88</sup> Konstan, *Pity Transformed*: 58.

<sup>89</sup> Aret. *SA* 1.6.9

<sup>90</sup> Francis Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian* (London: Wertheimer and Co., 1856), 249.

grieved along with,' and, from what we have taken from Aristotle, a word that should be used for intimate friendships and close relations. The relationship between physician and patient may be a physically intimate one considering the access the patient gives to his body for the purposes of examination and diagnosis; however, I do not believe it would be considered the same as a close family member or friend. Although some physicians may have treated their friends and family, or struck up friendships with patients after their initial meetings, I do not believe that most relationships would be characterised this way. We might even expect Aretaeus to behave more like Epictetus (a writer of roughly the same time period), given the professional distance we expect physicians to take – to comfort, but to avoid becoming emotionally affected – but he does not.<sup>91</sup> Certainly, Celsus is explicit with regards to the kind of emotional control he believes a surgeon should have:

Esse autem chirurgus debet adolescens aut certe adulescentiae propior; manu strenua, stabili, nec umquam intremescente, eaque non minus sinistra quam dextra promptus; acie oculorum acri claraque; animo intrepidus; misericors sic, ut sanari uelit eum, quem accepit, non ut clamore eius motus uel magis quam res desiderat properet, uel minus quam necesse est secet; sed perinde faciat omnia, ac si nullus ex uagitibus alterius adfectus oriatur.<sup>92</sup>

Now a surgeon should be youthful or at any rate nearer youth than age; with a strong and steady hand which never trembles, and ready to use the left hand as well as the right; with vision sharp and clear, and spirit undaunted; filled with pity, so that he wishes to cure his patient, yet is not moved by his cries, to go too fast, or cut less than is necessary; but he does everything just as if the cries of pain cause him no emotion.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> This passage will be analysed as a whole in the following chapter, where Aretaeus' emotional involvement will be come more apparent.

<sup>92</sup> Celsus, *Med.* 7.pr.4.1-7

<sup>93</sup> Spencer, *Celsus: De Medicina*, 1: 297.

A surgeon has a very specific job which actually requires harming the patient (cutting, cauterising, breaking and repositioning bones, etc.) in order to cure him. In the ancient world, before extremely effective anesthesia, this must have been a particularly difficult a task, both physically and emotionally. Caring too much could be detrimental for a surgeon, according to Celsus, and he is careful to distinguish between empathy and compassion in this passage in order to make his point. A surgeon must be *misericors* ('compassionate') because this is the emotional quality which will motivate him to help; however, he should not be moved (*moveo*) by his patient's cries because this might interfere with his ability to actually perform his job. This is the empathy part of the equation. Celsus appears to be advocating that the surgeon should lay aside his empathy so that nothing might disturb his state of mind ("*nullus ex uagitibus alterius adfectus oriatur.*") Aretaeus does not purport to be a surgeon, but this 'emotional distance' is something we might suppose for all physicians. Aretaeus, however, does allow the expression of emotion in cases such as these, as his vocabulary shows with words like συνάχθομαι. Also in this passage, Aretaeus is speaking more generally than specifically, which increases the distance even further. This suggests another, broader use for these types of σύν- words than in the fifth century BC and I will present additional examples in the following chapters.

So the vocabulary of pity (ἔλεος and οἶκτος) and σύν- words may be useful for identifying passages in Greek texts where empathy and compassion is present; however, not every passage which uses this terminology will involve these emotions. Passages where pity is requested through supplication, for example, may

or may not involve compassion even if it given by the supplicated and may solely reflect an action, not an emotion; ἔλεος and οἶκτος can also simply express simply and intense misery.<sup>94</sup> Also, as we can see in the passages addressed so far, sometimes these words are not used at all, and instead terms like mildness (e.g., πρᾶότης), gentleness (e.g., τὸ μέλιχος), or kindness (e.g., χρηστότης) may be employed. Another Greek term, φιλάνθρωπία, and its cognates also arise in certain contexts and the Latin *humanitas* is sometimes considered an equivalent term. (These two terms will be addressed in later chapters.) Of course, some passages that do use these words, when read carefully for meaning and context, may not be useful either, or some passages may never use any of the expected vocabulary and merely ‘talk around’ the subject of empathy and compassion, using, as Sternberg says “pathetic images, the recounting of atrocities, or the mention of pleading and tears.”<sup>95</sup> There are many ways to talk about empathy and compassion without a specific vocabulary. Plutarch’s explanation of aesthetic appreciation, above, is an example of this. Affective language is used (for example, “distressed”) but he never mentions pity, σύν- words or any of the other terms I have mentioned. Still, the passage is useful for a discussion of empathy. It must also be kept in mind that emotion is expressed through body language or gesture, tone and other affective vocabulary and must be considered, too.<sup>96</sup> This is a difficult task to apply to texts, but descriptions of behaviours and tone, through literary techniques such as

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<sup>94</sup> Kenneth J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 195-96; Sternberg, "The Nature of Pity," 18.

<sup>95</sup> ———, "The Nature of Pity," 17.

<sup>96</sup> Body language and gesture has proven to be an interesting and valuable areas of research in Classics, with such books as Donald Lateiner, *Sardonic Smile: Nonverbal Behaviour in Homeric Epic* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995); Douglas Cairns, ed. *Body Language in the Greek and Roman World* (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2005).

rhetoric, may help us in this. So simply looking for passages with specific terms are not exact markers and will not find all the examples in which these emotions are expressed, but along with reading for context and description (for example, affective language) will help to locate rich and useful passages in the ancient sources.

Given that these sorts of emotions are expressed in a variety of ways, a simple word search will not necessarily be helpful.<sup>97</sup> Many of the words mentioned above can help, but they do not always correspond between authors, since some authors just seem to prefer a certain vocabulary or mode of expression. As we have seen, the term συμπαθέω and its cognates, as well as other verb forms with σύν- indicating a shared experience, are often useful and can indicate passages where feeling of empathy and compassion may be present. For example, this passage from Plutarch's *Consolatio ad Apollonium* in his *Moralia*:<sup>98</sup>

Καὶ πάλαι σοι συνήλγησα καὶ συνηχθέσθην, Ἀπολλώνιε, ἀκούσας περὶ τῆς τοῦ προσφιλεστάτου πᾶσιν ἡμῖν υἱοῦ σου προώρου μεταλλαγῆς τοῦ βίου... τότε μὲν οὖν ὑπὸ τὸν τῆς τελευτῆς καιρὸν ἐντυγχάνειν σοι καὶ παρακαλεῖν ἀνθρωπίνως φέρειν τὸ συμβεβηκὸς ἀνοίκειον ἦν, παρειμένῳ τό τε σῶμα καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ὑπὸ τῆς παραλόγου συμφορᾶς, καὶ συμπαθεῖν δ' ἦν ἀναγκαῖον...

<sup>97</sup> In a study such as this, the ability to conduct a word search is valuable, and while I have presented here a list of some terms which I believe can help locate instances of empathy and compassion in the texts, no language comes with a complete vocabulary of terms it will need to express every experience of its users, and ancient Greek and Latin are no different. When someone feels an emotion, they do not always state it directly (for example, "I am angry.") They often express it in other, more subtle ways, such as tone, body language, and using other related vocabulary. This is especially true of empathy and compassion I believe. We can say "I empathize with you" or "I feel compassion for you" but we more often express it in other ways, such as providing verbal reassurance to someone who is suffering, using negative vocabulary when describing the person's circumstances (e.g., sad, unfortunately, painful, etc.), using rhetorical language, and promoting compassionate action towards the individual. Nussbaum makes this point as well when discussing the compassion displayed by a judge in his written judicial opinion regarding a child abuse case. She says that she does not need to ask him directly if he felt compassion towards the child because she believes it is evident in his writing. She identifies it in his affective language, his expressed opinion on how he believes the child has suffered, and his refusal to allow her abuser to confront her in the courtroom. (Nussbaum, "Compassion: The Basic Social Emotion," 55.)

<sup>98</sup> The *Consolatio ad Apollonium* is possibly not an authentic work by Plutarch. (Frank Cole Babbitt, *Plutarch's Moralia*, vol. 2, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 105.)

Ἐπειδὴ οὖν καὶ χρόνος ὁ πάντα πεπαίνειν εἰωθὼς ἐγγέγονε τῇ συμφορᾷ καὶ ἡ περὶ σὲ διάθεσις ἀπαιτεῖν ἔοικε τὴν παρὰ τῶν φίλων βοήθειαν, καλῶς ἔχειν ὑπέλαβον τῶν παραμυθητικῶν σοι μεταδοῦναι λόγων...<sup>99</sup>

Even before this time, Apollonius, I felt for you in your sorrow and trouble, when I heard of the untimely passing from life of your son, who was very dear to us all... In those days, close upon the time of his death, to visit you and urge you to bear your present lot as a mortal man should would have been unsuitable, when you were prostrated in both body and soul by the unexpected calamity; and, besides, I could not help sharing your feeling... Now since time, which is wont to assuage all things, has intervened since the calamity, and your present condition seems to demand the aid of your friends, I have conceived it to be proper to communicate to you some words that can give comfort...<sup>100</sup>

First, Plutarch expresses his feelings of empathy with Apollonius, who has just lost his son. He uses the verbs συναλγέω ('to be grieved with') and συνάχθομαι ('to be troubled with') which both contain the 'sharing' preposition σύν- to indicate the shared emotional experience he believes he has with his friend. Further down he states, "συμπαθεῖν δ' ἦν ἀναγκαῖον," where he uses the verb συμπαθέω and which, again, designates shared emotions.<sup>101</sup> In order to communicate his joint emotional state with Apollonius, Plutarch uses these σύν- terms which seem to connect the two together emotionally. Finally, Plutarch talks of παραμυθητικοί λόγοι – consolatory words which show a desire to demonstrate comfort and compassion. Verbs like συμπαθέω, along with σύν- verbs of an emotionally charged nature are helpful for locating passages where empathy and compassion are expressed, but not exclusively. For example, συμπαθέω can have two different contexts – physical and

<sup>99</sup> Plut. *Mor. Consol. ad Apoll.* 101f-102b

<sup>100</sup> Babbitt, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 2: 109.

<sup>101</sup> Or perhaps συμπάσχω, which has a very similar meaning. Plutarch's use of ἀναγκαῖος here seems to indicate more of a sense of involuntary response (something associated with the emotion of empathy) rather than a feeling of necessity.

emotional – which can lead to a large number of false positive results. Reading for context, then, forms a large part of this project's methodology. I do not expect to have found every last example this way; however, I believe I present here the best and most representative examples from Greco-Roman literature of this time period.

Ancient writers like Plutarch recognised these basic aspects of human emotion, but only relatively recently has modern science, especially psychology and neurology, made an investigation into the human brain in order to determine how this works on a neurological level.<sup>102</sup> How do we know what another feels? This ability to attribute internal states is often referred to as 'theory of mind' which examines our understanding of the mental worlds of ourselves and others and has become an important concept in various fields, including philosophy, psychology and education.<sup>103</sup> Many of the concepts began with Piaget and his theory of cognitive development and in the 1970s another surge in research began related to

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<sup>102</sup> Empathy, of the basic biological sort, is connected to such emotional contagion phenomena as yawning (Ivan Norscia and Elisabetta Palagi, "Yawn Contagion and Empathy in *Homo Sapiens*," *PLOS ONE* 6, no. 12 (2011): 1-5; Fiorenza Giganti and Iole Zilli, "The Daily Time Course of Contagious and Spontaneous Yawning among Humans," *Journal of Ethology* 29, no. 2 (2011): 215-19.) Pseudo-Aristotle touches upon this idea in his *Problemata* in the section entitled, *Problems with Sympathetic Action* (886a29-35): "Διὰ τί, ἐὰν μὲν τινα ἴδωμεν τὴν χεῖρα ἐκτείνοντα ἢ τὸν πόδα ἢ ἄλλο τι τῶν τοιούτων, οὐκ ἀντιποιοῦμεν τὸ αὐτό, ἐὰν δὲ χασμώμενον, ἀντιχασμώμεθα;... τότε γὰρ ἡ μνήμη τὴν κίνησιν ποιεῖ, ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸς ἀφροδίσια καὶ ἐδωδὴν· τὸ γὰρ ποιῆσαν μνήμην εἶναι τὸ ἔχον ὁρμὴν πρὸς τὸ φαντασθὲν πάθος." ("Why is it that, although we do not imitate the action if we see a man stretching out his hand or foot or doing anything else of the kind, yet we ourselves yawn if we see someone else doing so?... For then it is recollection which gives the impulse, as also in sexual desire and hunger; for it is that which causes recollection to exist that provides the stimulus towards the condition observed in another person." (E. S. Forster, *The Works of Aristotle*, vol. VII (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927).)) For Pseudo-Aristotle then this contagion is about μνήμη (memory) which is triggered when we observe another yawn. Plutarch's proverb (*Mor. De lib. ed.* 4a) may also apply here: καὶ οἱ παροιμιαζόμενοι δὲ φασιν οὐκ ἀπὸ τρόπου λέγοντες, ὅτι "ἂν χωλῷ παροιικήης, ὑποσκάζειν μαθήσῃ." ("The proverb-makers say, and quite to the point, 'If you dwell with a lame man, you will learn to limp.'" (Babbit, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 1: 17.))

<sup>103</sup> John H. Flavell, "Theory-of-Mind Development: Retrospect and Prospect," *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (2004): 274.



metacognition and theory of mind in chimpanzees.<sup>104</sup> Then in the 1990s research into how autism might relate to theory of mind began.<sup>105</sup> Most recently researchers have discovered mirror neurons which have shown that our brain activates the same way when we do an action as when we see another do the same action.<sup>106</sup> This research was then taken further by a number of scholars to show that the mirror-neuron system is connected to empathy.<sup>107</sup> Titchner coined the term 'empathy' in 1909 (in response to Lipp's *Einfühlung*) for use in the area of aesthetics, but scientific researchers eventually began using it to describe the phenomenon of feeling another's internal emotional state and researching ways to study it in a laboratory setting.<sup>108</sup>

So can we look for the emotions of empathy and compassion, which we consider as so important to our own modern society, in the Greeks and Romans? I believe I have shown that they did express them (even if simply to warn against them); however, it will be worthwhile to consider the question: are all emotions experienced by all people in all time periods? There are two basic theories which address the universality of human emotions. To put it very simply, the proponents

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<sup>104</sup> Jean Piaget, *The Child's Conception of the World*, trans. Joan Tomlinson and Andrew Tomlinson (London: Routledge, 1929); Flavell, "Theory-of-Mind Development: Retrospect and Prospect," 275-76.

<sup>105</sup> See Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and Theory of Mind*.

<sup>106</sup> Rizzolatti and Craighero, "The Mirror-Neuron System," 169-92. Rizzolatti and his team actually discovered the mirror-neuron system in the early 1990s but it took several years for their research to garner real attention. See Rizzolatti and Fabbri-Destro, "Mirror Neurons: From Discovery to Autism," 223-37.

<sup>107</sup> Stephanie D. Preston and Frans B. M. de Waal, "Empathy: Its Ultimate and Proximate Bases," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 25, no. 01 (2002): 1-20; Jean Decety and Philip L. Jackson, "The Functional Architecture of Human Empathy," *Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience Reviews* 3, no. 2 (2004): 71-100; Gallese, "Embodied Simulation: From Mirror Neuron Systems to Interpersonal Relations," 3-19; Christian Keyzers, *The Empathic Brain* (Lexington: Social Brain Press, 2011).

<sup>108</sup> Ezra Stotland, "Exploratory Investigations of Empathy," in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, ed. Berkowitz Leonard (New York: Academic Press, 1969), 271-314.

of the universalist theory of emotions state that all emotions are common to all human beings, and constructivist theory states that emotions are a product of a society and therefore not universal. Neither answer is entirely satisfactory. Certain emotions, especially the so-called 'basic' or 'primary' emotions, certainly seem universal – anger, fear, joy, surprise, sadness and disgust appear to be shared by most people in the world and the research of Paul Ekman supports this.<sup>109</sup> But as Ekman himself says, although every human being has the ability to feel these emotions, not everyone will experience or express it in the same way.<sup>110</sup> So, the 'hard wiring' is there, so to speak, but whether the individual ever gets to use it will depend on his culture and its societal norms and constraints.<sup>111</sup> One particularly good example of this can be seen in the 1960s study of an Inuit community described in the book *Never in Anger*. When anthropologist Jean Briggs lived for seventeen months with a nomadic Utku family in the remote Arctic, she learned that emotional control was valued very highly in their society and certain undesirable emotions, such as anger, were repressed because they were considered childish and not tolerated as an emotional response in anyone past the age of three or four. This shows that if a certain emotion is not allowed expression, either because it has little

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<sup>109</sup> For Ekman's work on facial expression of emotions, see Paul Ekman, *Emotions Revealed: Recognizing Faces and Feelings to Improve Communication and Emotional Life* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003); ———, "Are There Basic Emotions?," *Psychological Review* 99, no. 3 (1992): 550-53; ———, "An Argument for Basic Emotions," *Cognition & Emotion* 6, no. 3-4 (1992): 169-200.

<sup>110</sup> ———, "Paul Ekman Talks About Empathy with Edwin Rutsch," (*Centre for Building a Culture of Empathy* video, 43:14, 28 February 2011, <http://cultureofempathy.com/References/Experts/Paul-Ekman.htm>).

<sup>111</sup> This is also the view of Peter Toohey with regards to boredom: Toohey, *Boredom: A Lively History*: 156.

or no value to the society, or is viewed as damaging and therefore discouraged, then it will rarely, if ever, find expression among those in that society.<sup>112</sup>

Empathy and compassion were described and expressed in ancient literature, even if the writers themselves did not always have a specific term with which to express them. Authors such as Horace, Plutarch and even Homer recognised empathy, that human beings naturally and easily reflect the emotions of those around them in themselves, and they contemplated the ability of ‘mimicked’ emotions to do the same in artistic genres such as tragedy, sculpture and painting. Celsus, Plutarch and Epictetus promote the concept of compassion and the moral treatment of both our fellow human beings and animals, with Epictetus advocating compassion, but warning against too closely empathising with others for fear of losing control of one’s own emotions. Thus, the ancients certainly understood the concepts of empathy and compassion, even if they appear somewhat divided on how they exactly work or whether they are advantageous or not. Some authors have already been touched on here, but how are empathy and compassion registered in the literature of the first and second centuries AD, apart from Plutarch and Aretaeus – such as the Greek novel and the other medical writers? Due to the nature of their profession, physicians are confronted with human emotion quite often. Patients suffer different pains and express them various ways; terminal diagnoses may cause hopelessness or depression in patients; frustration at long and sometimes painful therapies may result. Do physicians from this period respond empathetically or compassionately to the suffering of their patients? How do they react to hopeless

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<sup>112</sup> Jean L. Briggs, *Never in Anger: Portrait of an Eskimo Family* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

cases? Do they view their profession as a caring and compassionate one? Let us start with the medical literature by focusing on Aretaeus, the first century AD Cappadocian physician.

## CHAPTER 2: ARETAEUS OF CAPPADOCIA

Empathy and compassion are not usually associated with the ancient Greeks and Romans. This is why the text of Aretaeus stands out: his moving displays of empathy and compassion towards his patients surprise and intrigue us. The question becomes then, is Aretaeus an anomaly? Or, is his level of empathy and compassion reflected in the other writers, both medical and non-medical, of the first and second centuries AD? If the former is true, is this an indication of a significant change or shift in the expression of these behaviours and secondary social emotions during this time? These are the questions I wish to address over the course of this dissertation. For now, however, I will begin with the text of Aretaeus himself before moving on to other writers of his era, both medical and otherwise.

Little is known about Aretaeus of Cappadocia. His extant writings are comprised of four texts: *Causes and Symptoms of Acute Diseases*, *Causes and Signs of Chronic Diseases*, *Therapeutics of Acute Diseases*, and *Therapeutics of Chronic Diseases*. Each book is divided into two books and composed in the Ionic dialect, with a few large lacunae.<sup>113</sup> Only his name indicates his Cappadocian origin; however, Adams, based on references in the text, believed he traveled.<sup>114</sup> Dating Aretaeus has been difficult as there is very little to go on with respect to references to, and by, other authors. Adams placed him squarely in the middle of the second century AD, considering him to be a contemporary of Galen, despite the fact that

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<sup>113</sup> Sections are missing the first book of *Causes and Symptoms of Acute Diseases*, and the last two books of *Therapeutics of Chronic Diseases*.

<sup>114</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: viii.

Galen does not make mention of Aretaeus, nor Aretaeus of Galen.<sup>115</sup> Aretaeus actually does not reference any other writer outside of Hippocrates of Cos and Homer.<sup>116</sup> Kudlien placed him in the mid-first century AD and Oberhelman agrees.<sup>117</sup> Aretaeus has long been thought to be our only example of a physician who belonged to the Pneumatic school of medicine,<sup>118</sup> which asserted that everything in the human body was affected by πνεῦμα or 'vital air.'<sup>119</sup> Despite these claims, Aretaeus never calls himself such and may be viewed to be more eclectic than adhering to a specific school or sect.<sup>120</sup>

Aretaeus divides his medical writings into descriptions of diseases and the treatment of those same illnesses, subdividing each half into chronic and acute. In the chapters regarding acute diseases, I have determined that there are twelve

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<sup>115</sup> Adams does this based on exactly this fact, with his reasoning being that since they do not mention each other, they must be contemporaries. He asserts that this was a common practice in this period, and he cites Pliny the Elder and Dioscorides as another example of contemporaries ignoring each other. (ibid., vi.) This assumes, however, that Aretaeus was well-known in his own time and this may have not been the case.

<sup>116</sup> John Harold Couch and Herbert Newell Couch, "The Literary Illustrations of Aretaeus of Cappadocia," *The Canadian Medical Association Journal* 33(1935): 556-59.

<sup>117</sup> Fridolf Kudlien, "Untersuchungen Zu Aretaios Von Kappadokien," *Abhandlungen der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse*, no. 11 (1963): 1151-230; Steven M. Oberhelman, "On the Chronology and Pneumatism of Aretaios of Cappadocia," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2, no. 37.2 (1994): 941-66.

<sup>118</sup> Daniel Le Clerc, *Histoire De La Médecine* (La Haye 1696). (Le Clerc was the first to make this assertion.) See also Kudlien, "Untersuchungen Zu Aretaios Von Kappadokien," 32-41; Oberhelman, "On the Chronology and Pneumatism of Aretaios of Cappadocia," 959-66.

<sup>119</sup> Not much detail is known about Pneumatism, but our main source is Galen. For a collection of sources on the Pneumatic sect, see M. Wellmann, *Die Pneumatische Schule Bis Auf Archigenes* (Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1895).

<sup>120</sup> For further background information on Aretaeus, see François Retief and Louise Cilliers, "Aretaeus of Cappadocia: The Forgotten Physician," *Acta Academica* 41, no. 4 (2009): 23-39; Fridolf Kudlien, "Aretaeus of Cappadocia," in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, ed. Charles Coulston Gillispie (Detroit: Scribner, 2008); Victor Robinson, *Pathfinders in Medicine* (New York: Medical Review of Reviews, 1912), 35-43; Sotiris Kotsopoulos, "Aretaeus the Cappadocian on Mental Illness," *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 27, no. 2 (1986): 171-79; Max Neuburger, *History of Medicine*, trans. Ernest Playfair, vol. 1 (London: H. Frowde, 1910), 230-37.

passages which demonstrate Aretaeus' empathy and compassion;<sup>121</sup> in the chapters regarding chronic, fifteen.<sup>122</sup> The reason that there are more examples from the chronic disease chapters is, I believe, the nature of the two types of diseases. Although acute diseases are often quite painful and affect a patient suddenly, they are usually terminated relatively quickly, either by means of recovery or death.<sup>123</sup> Chronic illnesses, on the other hand, are long-lasting and quite difficult to cure, and sufferers may have to learn to live with the pain and discomfort of their conditions. Aretaeus himself tells us that patients also find the required regimes for chronic diseases difficult to keep up,<sup>124</sup> and in a number of the examples I have cited here, there is a focus on the patient's emotional state, which is affected by chronic illness more so than acute, at least in the writings of Aretaeus. In addition, a physician treating a patient with a chronic illness will most likely attend to and interact with that patient over a longer period of time, which may allow for the physician to become more acquainted with the patient and the difficulties of the disease.

There is also a repetition of terminology in the examples of empathy I have collected from Aretaeus' text. When he expresses empathy or compassion for

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<sup>121</sup> Aret. *SA* 1.5.4 & 7; 1.6.7-9; 1.7.6-7; 1.9.5 & 6; 2.2.17; 2.5.2-3; 2.8.8; 2.12.2; Aret. *CA* 2.2.2-3; 2.2.7-8; 2.5.1-2; 2.9.5

<sup>122</sup> Aret. *SD* 1.1.1-2; 1.2.3; 1.4.1; 1.6.11; 1.10.3; 1.12.2; 2.1.1; 2.1.9-10; 2.2.1; 2.12.2; 2.13.17 & 19; Aret. *CD* 1.4.1; 1.5.10-11; 1.13.4-5; 2.13.1-2

<sup>123</sup> There are not always consistent definitions of acute and chronic diseases in ancient medical literature; however, several authors agree that acute diseases are swift and extremely painful: Cels.3.2 ("*Nam ubi sine intermissionibus accessiones et dolores graves urgent, acutus est morbus...*"); the Hippocratic author of *Aphorisms* (2.23) says that an acute disease comes to a crisis in fourteen days; Caelius Aurelianus states that most acute disease involve fever, although not all, and they end swiftly in either death or recovery (Cael. Aur. *Tard.* 1.3-5)

<sup>124</sup> Ancient medical writers sometimes disagree on the severity of pain involved in chronic diseases, but most seem to agree that their length is their defining feature: Aretaeus states that, "Of chronic diseases the pain is great, the period of wasting long, and the recovery uncertain." (*SD* 1.1); Celsus (*Med.* 3.2) says a disease is chronic when there are only mild pains and fever and a long time between attacks; the Hippocratic writer of *On Critical Days* says that when fevers last past a certain number of days they become chronic (11.5).

sufferers, particular words tend to be employed and these often stress the negative connotations of the suffering.<sup>125</sup> The following table shows the terms and their frequency:<sup>126</sup>

Greek term	# of times used in chosen passages of Aretaeus
ξυμφορή	four <sup>127</sup>
πόνος	eleven <sup>128</sup>
ἀπονία	two <sup>129</sup>
ἐπιπόνος	one <sup>130</sup>
ὀδύνη	three <sup>131</sup>
ἄλγος	three <sup>132</sup>
δύσθυμος	one <sup>133</sup>
δυσθυμία	one <sup>134</sup>
ἄθυμος	one <sup>135</sup>
ἐπίλυπος	two <sup>136</sup>
κατηφής	three <sup>137</sup>
αἷσχος	six <sup>138</sup>
ἀτερπής	four <sup>139</sup>
οἰκτιστος	three <sup>140</sup>
ἄχθομαι	four <sup>141</sup>
βίος/ζωή phrases	three <sup>142</sup>
θάνατος phrases	four <sup>143</sup>

<sup>125</sup> The frequency of terms I provide here are only from the passages I have identified. From Aretaeus' text as a whole, these terms are used more frequently, but not necessarily in passages I have identified as good examples of his empathy or compassion.

<sup>126</sup> This is the frequency of the terms used in the passages in this dissertation, not Aretaeus' work as a whole.

<sup>127</sup> Aret. SA 1.6.7-9 (twice); Aret. SD 1.6.11; 2.12.2

<sup>128</sup> Aret. SA 1.6.7-9 (twice); 1.9.5 & 6; Aret. CA 2.5.1-2 (twice); Aret. SD 1.1.1-2 (twice); 2.12.2 (twice); 2.2.1; Aret. CA 2.5.1-2

<sup>129</sup> Aret. SA 1.6.7-9; Aret. CD 1.5.10-11

<sup>130</sup> Aret. SD 1.1.1-2

<sup>131</sup> Aret. SA 1.6.7-9; Aret. CA 2.9.5; Aret. SA 2.5.2-3

<sup>132</sup> Aret. SD 1.4.1; 2.12.2; 2.13.17 & 19

<sup>133</sup> Aret. SA 1.5.7

<sup>134</sup> Aret. SA 2.2.17

<sup>135</sup> Aret. SD 2.1.9-10

<sup>136</sup> Aret. SA 2.12.2; Aret. SD 1.6.11

<sup>137</sup> Aret. SA 1.5.7; 2.12.2; Aret. SD 2.1.9-10

<sup>138</sup> Aret. SA 1.5.7; Aret. SD 1.2.3; 1.4.1; 2.2.1 (twice); 2.13.17 & 19

<sup>139</sup> Aret. SA 1.6.7-9 (twice); Aret. SD 2.1.1; Aret. CD 2.13.1-2

<sup>140</sup> Aret. SA 1.9.5 & 6; SA 2.5.2-3; Aret. CA 2.9.5

<sup>141</sup> Aret. SA 2.12.2; Aret. SD 1.6.11; 1.2.3; Aret. SA 1.6.7-9

<sup>142</sup> "ἀπογνώσει τοῦ βίου": Aret. SA 2.2.17; "ἀπελθέμεναι τοῦ βίου": Aret. SA 1.6.7-9; "ζωὴ δύσφορος": Aret. SD 1.2.3



The term ξυμφορή (commonly translated as ‘misfortune’) is used usually in reference to a patient’s condition; however, in one case he uses the word for the situation of a physician who cannot cure his patient.<sup>144</sup> As one expects, the subject of pain comes up routinely in these passages, and Aretaeus uses all the pain words: the standard, πόνος (or a form thereof, such as ἀπονία or ἐπιπόνος), ὀδύνη and ἄλγος.<sup>145</sup> As I have previously stated, Aretaeus often focuses on the emotional state of the patient and therefore particular terminology appears, such as δύσθυμος, δυσθυμία, ἄθυμος, and ἐπίλυπος. The words κατηφής, αἴσχος, ἀτερπής, οἰκτιστος, and ἄχθομαι are all used. There are also two types of phrases repeated in these passages which, although they use different terminology, basically come to mean the same thing. Aretaeus often describes patients as having a difficult life or wishing to die on account of their illness and so phrases involving βίος/ζωή or θάνατος arise. The idea of giving up on life, or having a desire to die, is usually one attributed by Aretaeus to suffering patients;<sup>146</sup> however, one time it is expressed on behalf of the patient’s family (as reported by Aretaeus) when his suffering cannot be cured.<sup>147</sup> All of these words and phrases serve to help identify passages of empathy and compassion in Aretaeus’ text.

Having analyzed the various passages from Aretaeus’ text, I have noticed that three trends appear, and I have used these to divide the passages into three

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<sup>143</sup> “θανάτου... ὀρεγόμενοι”: Aret. *SD* 1.1.1-2; “θανατῶσι”: Aret. *SD* 1.2.3 (from θανατάω); “ἐράται τοῦ θανάτου”: Aret. *SD* 2.1.9-10; “θανάτου ἔρυνται”: Aret. *CA* 2.5.1-2

<sup>144</sup> See the passage from Περὶ τετάνου below.

<sup>145</sup> For a discussion of pain and the Greek terms used, see Nicole J. Wilson, "Depictions of Pain in the Roman Empire" (Ph.D., University of Calgary (Canada), 2012).

<sup>146</sup> Aret. *SA* 2.2.17; Aret. *CA* 2.5.1-2; Aret. *SD* 1.1.1-2; 1.2.3; 2.1.9-10.

<sup>147</sup> See the passage from Περὶ τετάνου below.

categories, which can be viewed as circumstances under which Aretaeus expresses the emotions of empathy and compassion. These are: the desire for death as a release from pain and suffering; the importance of the skill and sensitivity of the physician; deformity, depression and shame. Some passages fall into one of these three categories; however, many contain elements of two or three. These passages will be repeated in each section so as to examine them fully.

Let us begin with a passage which most comprehensively covers not just Aretaeus' expression of empathy and compassion, but also the three circumstances I have just previously mentioned under which he most often does so. In it, he addresses the desire for death by the patient's family as understandable, since it ends the patient's suffering; he expresses the wish of the physician to be able to apply his skill to relieve the pain (even though not possible in this case); and he talks of the disease as being extremely deforming and difficult to observe, let alone endure. This disease is advanced tetanus and in his chapter, entitled *Περὶ τετάνου* (*On Tetanus*), Aretaeus writes:

ἦν μὲν ὢν τοῦ θώρηκος καὶ τῆς ἀναπνοῆς λάβηται τὸ κακόν, ῥηϊδίως τοῦ ζῆν ἀπήγαγε· ἀγαθὸν μὲν τῷ νοσέοντι ἐς πόνων καὶ διαστροφῆς καὶ αἰσχύνης ἀπαλλαγὴν, ἀλυπότερον δὲ καὶ τοῖσι παρκοῦσι, κῆν υἱὸς ἢ πατήρ ἔη... ἐξάνθρωπος ἢ ξυμφορὴ, καὶ ἀτερπὴς μὲν ἢ ὄψις, ὀδυνηρὴ δὲ καὶ τῷ ὀρέοντι θέη· ἀνήκεστον δὲ τὸ δεινόν· ἀγνωσία δὲ ὑπὸ διαστροφῆς καὶ τοῖς φιλάτοις ἀνθρώποις. εὐχὴ δὲ τοῖσι παρκοῦσι ἢ πρόσθεν οὐχ ὁσίη, νῦν ἀγαθὴ γίγνεται, ἀπελθέμεναι τοῦ βίου τὸν κάμνοντα ἐς ἀπαλλαγὴν ζῆν τῷ ζῆν καὶ τῶν πόνων καὶ τῶν ἀτερπέων κακῶν. ἀτὰρ οὐδὲ ἱητροὺς παρκοῦν ὀρέων οὐτε ἐς ζωὴν οὐτε ἐς ἀπονίην, ἀτὰρ οὐδὲ ἐς μορφὴν ἔτι ἐπαρκέει. εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἐπευθῆναι ἐθέλοι τὰ μέλη, ζῶντα ἂν διατμήξαι καὶ κατὰξαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον. τοῖσι ὢν κεκρατημένοισι οὐκέτι ἐγχειρέων ξυνάχθεται μόνον. ἥδε ἐστὶ τοῦ ἱητροῦ μεγάλῃ ξυμφορῇ.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Aret. SA 1.6.7-9

Should the mischief then seize the chest and the respiratory organs, it readily frees the patient from life; a blessing this, to himself, as being a deliverance from pains, distortion, and deformity; and a contingency less than usual to be lamented by the spectators, were he a son or a father... An inhuman calamity, an [unpleasant] sight and a spectacle painful even to the beholder; an incurable malady. Owing to the distortion, not to be recognised by the dearest friends; and hence the prayer of the spectators, which formally would have been reckoned not pious, now becomes good, that the patient may depart from life, as being a deliverance from the pains and unseemly evils attendant on it. But neither can the physician though present and looking on, furnish any assistance, as regards life, relief from pain or from deformity. For if he should wish to straighten the limbs, he can only do so by cutting and breaking those of a living man. With them, then, who are overpowered by the disease, he can merely sympathize. This is the great misfortune of the physician.<sup>149</sup>

What stands out to the reader immediately is the amount of empathy and compassion Aretaeus displays toward both the patient and the family. He exhibits empathy when he calls the death of a patient ἀγαθὸν (perhaps best translated as “a blessing,” although, literally a “good thing”). This is not something you would expect to hear from a physician,<sup>150</sup> but he understands that death is actually a reprieve for them and an end for their terrible suffering. He empathises with their pain and he also shows an understanding of why family members would not overly lament the death of a loved one in this case because it would be a release and a relief for both the patient and them. Normally, the loss of a son or father, both important and critical members of an ancient Greek household, would be cause for great sadness; however, Aretaeus understands why a family would even go so far as to pray for the death of a loved one afflicted with this disease.

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<sup>149</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 248-49. I have adapted and modernized Adams’ translation throughout.

<sup>150</sup> See Aret. *CD* 1.510-11; see also the Hippocratic Oath.

A compassionate tone is felt in his use of such emotive adjectives as ἐξάνθρωπος ('inhuman'), ἀτερπής<sup>151</sup> ('unpleasant') and ὀδυνηρή ('painful'). Also, to use more than one adjective adds to the emotional quality of his prose and shows how the severe effects of this disease on patients disturb him. This rhetorical effect of *accumulatio*, the amassing of adjectives and nouns, brings out this emotionality and highlights Aretaeus' compassion towards patients afflicted by tetanus. He also states outright that there is nothing left to do but 'grieve with' (ξυνάχθεται) patients in this stage of the disease and the reader is able to feel Aretaeus' sense of sadness at not being able to cure these individuals. This is also one of those σύν- words Konstan mentions as only pertaining to close friends and family in the fifth century BC and which I discussed in Chapter One as potentially extending further outward in the first and second century AD.

We also witness his compassion when he despairs over his inability to help (ἐπαρκέει – see LSJ sv III) those suffering from this deforming disease, even though he wishes he could cure them. Aretaeus does not discuss specific cases of treating patients and curing diseases in his text (he simply instructs on procedure); however, in the above passage it is easy to see how much he wishes the suffering, which tetanus inflicts, could be relieved: “ἀτὰρ οὐδὲ ἰητρὸς παρεὼν ὀρέων οὔτε ἐς ζωὴν οὔτε ἐς ἀπονίην, ἀτὰρ οὐδὲ ἐς μορφὴν ἔτι ἐπαρκέει. εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἐπευθῆναι ἐθέλοι τὰ μέλη, ζῶντα ἂν διατμήξαι καὶ κατάξαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον.” (“But neither can the physician though present and looking on, furnish any assistance, as regards life, relief from pain or from deformity. For if he should wish to straighten the limbs, he

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<sup>151</sup> Adams translates this as “unseemly” but it is perhaps better translated as “unpleasant” (as it can pertain to both the observers and the patient.)

can only do so by cutting and breaking those of a living man.”) When compassion is felt deeply it often leads to the desire to act and provide help, but this is not always feasible. That is, you may want to relieve someone’s suffering but it may not be possible to do so. This is the “τοῦ ἰητροῦ μεγάλη ξυμφορή” to which Aretaeus refers. He wants to give aid, relieve the sufferer’s pain and correct the limbs, but he cannot. He may write in the third person here, but I do not believe this lessens his desire for the alleviation of pain; he expresses his compassion through the desire to help and the sadness of realising that nothing can be done. His compassion goes both ways, as well, since in this last sentence there is a sense of Aretaeus feeling for the physician’s predicament – his own, of course, but that of all physicians generally, too. His μεγάλη ξυμφορή is deserving of mention, and he is the third sufferer in this scenario, along with the patient and the family, who has been rendered helpless in his role. He extends this beyond himself, through empathy, with the use of the third person, to ὁ ἰατρός and shows how his compassion encompasses all participants in such unfortunate circumstances as these.

### **The Desire for Death as a Release from Pain and Suffering**

As we saw in the previous example from *Περὶ τετάνου*, family and friends of a sick patient can sometimes wish for the death of their loved one when it has become obvious that nothing else can be done to treat their illness. Wishing for someone’s death is obviously an extreme thought, but it is brought about by extreme suffering. Aretaeus himself describes the death of some patients as ἀγαθός

and appears almost relieved at others. Sometimes the patients themselves also desire their own death, as we will see in the following examples.<sup>152</sup>

Unlike the beginning of Aretaeus' books on acute diseases, the proemium to *Περὶ χρονίων παθῶν* (*On Chronic Diseases*) is intact. In it, Aretaeus briefly explains why chronic diseases are so difficult for physicians to cure and patients to endure. These illnesses involve prolonged suffering and treatment regimens which must be followed strictly and over the long term. Aretaeus tells us that patients have a difficult time adhering to the treatment, and that oftentimes they are painful, which, coupled with the agony of the disease, causes them to wish for death:

Χρονίων νούσων πόνος μὲν πουλὺς, χρόνος δὲ μακρὸς ξυντήξιος, καὶ ἀβέβαιος ἢ ἄλθεξις... ἦν δὲ καὶ πόνος ἔη ἐπιπόνου ἰήσιος, δίψης, λιμοῦ, φαρμάκων πικρῶν, καὶ ὀδυνέων, ἢ τομῆς, ἢ καύσιος, ὧν περ ἔστι ἐν τῇσι δολιχῇσι νούσοισι χρέος, ὑποδιδρῆσκουσι οἱ κάμνοντες ὥς θανάτου δῆθεν αὐτέου ὀρεγόμενοι. ἔνθα δὲ ἀρετὴ διαείδεται ἀνδρὸς ἰητροῦ, καὶ μακροθυμίας, καὶ ποικιλίης, καὶ χάριτος ἀβλαβοῦς τῶν ἡδέων, καὶ παραιφάσιος.<sup>153</sup>

Of chronic diseases the pain is great, the period of wasting long, and the recovery uncertain... And if there also be the suffering from a painful system of cure, - of thirst, of hunger, of bitter and harsh medicines, of cutting or burning, - of all which there is sometimes need in protracted diseases, the patients [recoil] as truly preferring even death itself. Hence, indeed, is developed the talent of the medical man, his perseverance, his skill in diversifying the treatment, and conceding such pleasant things as will do no harm, and in giving encouragement.<sup>154</sup>

<sup>152</sup> Pliny the Younger (*Ep.* 1.12.4) reports the death of a friend in such a way. Corellius Rufus committed suicide (having starved himself to death) after suffering over thirty years with gout which had spread to his other limbs when he got older: *Sed tamen longa, tam iniqua valetudine conflictabatur, ut haec tanta pretia vivendi mortis rationibus vincerentur.* ("But he suffered so long from such a painful affliction that his reasons for dying outweighed everything life could give him." (Betty Radice, *Pliny: Letters and Panegyricus*, vol. 1, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 37.))

<sup>153</sup> Aret. *SD* 1.1.1-2

<sup>154</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 293.

Aretaeus begins by describing the nature of chronic diseases as πουλύς, μακρὸς and ἀβέβαιος, all of which have a negative connotation in this context when applied to these conditions. He says the remedies are ἐπιπόνος, he calls the medications πικρὸς καὶ ὀδυνέος and says that, when faced with the pain of the disease and the extreme nature of the cures, the patients would rather die than endure it. Aretaeus demonstrates awareness of how the treatment can be worse than the illness in this passage, and his compassion leads him to expound on how the physician must deal with this situation with his skill or excellence (ἀρετὴ), a theme I will explore a little later in this chapter. He urges physicians to match diseases that are μακρὸς and ἀβέβαιος with μακροθυμία (perseverance) and παραίφασις (being encouraging), and to keep patients comfortable with pleasant things which do no harm (“χάριτος ἀβλαβοῦς τῶν ἡδέων”).

Of these fifteen passages dealing with chronic diseases, six refer to death as a release from suffering, with four expressing this as a desire on behalf of the patient and two as a comment by Aretaeus. Aretaeus was not a supporter of physician-assisted suicide; however, he is sympathetic to the patient’s wish that his or her suffering end. In *Θεραπεία εἰλεοῦ* (*The Cure of Ileus*), we see a physician who confronts the serious disease of *ileus* with perseverance and understanding of those who suffer from it:

Ἐν εἰλεῷ πόνος ἐστὶ ὁ κτείνων ἐπὶ φλεγμονῇ ἐντέρων ἢ ἔντασις καὶ πρῆσις· ὤκιστος ἡδὲ κάκιστος ὀλεθρος. μετεξέτεροι μὲν γὰρ ἀνελπίστως νοσέοντες θάνατον προφανέα μοῦνον ὀρρωδέουσι· οἱ δ' ἐν εἰλεῷ πόνου ὑπερβολῇ θανάτου ἔρυνται. χρή ὧν μήτε σμικρότερόν τι γίγνεσθαι τὸν ἱητρὸν τοῦ πάθεος μήτε βραδύτερον... τὸ θνήσκειν τοῖς μὲν ὧδε πονέουσι εὐδαιμονίῃ· τῷ

ἀρχιτρῶ δὲ οὐ θέμις πρήσσειν· θέμις δέ κοτε προγιγνώσκοντα  
σάφα τὰ παρρόντα ὡς οὐ φύξιμα καρηβαρίῃ νωθρῇ εὐνᾶσθαι.<sup>155</sup>

In ileus it is pain that kills, along with inflammation of the bowels, or straining and swelling. A most acute and most [evil] form of death. For others, when in a hopeless state of illness, fear nothing except their impending death; but those in ileus, from excess pain earnestly desire death. The physician, therefore, must neither be inferior to the [disease], nor more dilatory... to persons enduring these pains, to die is happiness, but to impart it is not permitted to the respectable physician; but at times it is permitted, when he foresees that present symptoms cannot be escaped from, to lull the patient asleep with narcotics and anaesthetics.<sup>156</sup>

Aretaeus' use of superlatives here stresses the awfulness of this disease – it is ὤκιστος and κάκιστος. He then says that the excessive pain of *ileus* causes patients to want to die (“θανάτου ἔρανται”), which is the opposite of other patients who usually fear dying. When he states that a physician has to be neither μικρότερον nor βραδύτερον than the disease itself, this seems obvious to us; however, the fact that he is compelled to state it outright illustrates how strongly he feels about these patients' needs. The seriousness of the illness, the extreme pain involved, and the dejected state of mind it causes in patients has motivated him to encourage the talent and timeliness of the physicians who encounter patients affected by this disease. The subject of physician-assisted suicide is broached for the first and only time in this passage, as well. Although Aretaeus, as ὁ ἀρχιτρός, does not condone the euthanizing of patients, he does describe their natural death under these

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<sup>155</sup> Aret. CA 2.5.1-2

<sup>156</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 438.



circumstances as εὐδαιμονίη.<sup>157</sup> Euthanasia may not be an option for him, but he does allow for the use of medications to help them sleep and lessen the pain. The use of εὐνάω gives a sense of soothing and comfort, thus demonstrating his compassion for individuals in such extreme pain.

The diseases which elicit thoughts of death are not always obvious. The chapter Περί κεφαλαίης is often translated as *On Headache* but judging from the symptoms Aretaeus describes, he seems to be discussing severe headaches, or migraines. Without strong pain relievers, one can see how chronic migraine headaches would cause a patient to feel how Aretaeus describes:

ἦν γὰρ ἐμπέση κοτὲ ὀξέως, αἰσχροὶ καὶ δεινὰ πρήσσει... ὄκνος  
 πούλυσ, καρηβαρὴ, ἀπορίη, ζωὴ δύσφορος. καὶ γὰρ κως φεύγουσι  
 τὴν αὐγὴν, σκότος δὲ πρηϋνεί τουτέοισι τὴν νοῦσον· οὐδὲ ἐσιδεῖν τι  
 ἢ ἀκοῦσαι τερπνὸν εὐφοροί... ἄχθονται τῷ βίῳ, θανατῶσι  
 ὄνθρωποι.<sup>158</sup>

For if at any time it set in acutely, it occasions [shame-inducing] and dreadful symptoms... there is much torpor, heaviness of the head, anxiety and [a life, hard to bear]. For they flee the light by any means; the darkness soothes their disease: nor can they bear readily to look upon or hear anything agreeable... The patients, moreover, are weary of life, and wish to die.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Aretaeus' opinion of euthanasia will be returned to and considered further on in the chapter. For discussions of physician-assisted suicide in antiquity, see Danielle Gourevitch, "Suicide among the Sick in Classical Antiquity," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 43, no. 6 (1969): 723-31; Paul J. Harms, "Physician-Assisted Suicide in Antiquity," *Mouseion* 8, no. 1 (2008): 25-38; Rebecca Flemming, "Suicide, Euthanasia and Medicine: Reflections Ancient and Modern," *Economy and Society* 34, no. 2 (2005): 95-321.

<sup>158</sup> Aret. *SD* 1.2.2-3

<sup>159</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 295.

The constant pain of migraines wears on a patient, according to Aretaeus, and after a while the patients would prefer to die rather than live the rest of their life this way.<sup>160</sup> This is supported by a passage from Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*:

qua quidem in reputatione misereri sortis humanae subit, praeter fortuita casusque et quae nova omnis hora excogitat, milia morborum singulis mortalium timenda. qui gravissimi ex his sint, discernere stultitiae prope videri possit, cum suus cuique ac praesens quisque atrocissimus videatur. et de hoc tamen iudicavere aevi experimenta, asperrimi cruciatus esse calculorum a stillicidio vesicae, proximum stomachi, tertium eorum, quae in capite doleant, non ob alios fere morte conscita.<sup>161</sup>

To reflect indeed on this makes one pity the lot of man; besides chances and changes and the strange happenings that every hour brings, there are thousands of diseases that every mortal has to dread. To distinguish which are the most grievous of them might be considered almost an act of folly, since every man considers that the particular disease from which he is suffering at the moment is the most awful. On this point, however, the experience of time has concluded that the disease causing the sharpest agony is strangury from stone in the bladder; next comes disease of the stomach, and after that pains produced by diseases of the head; these being about the only diseases that are responsible for suicides.<sup>162</sup>

The pain of migraine headache usually comes on suddenly and prevents the sufferer from concentrating on anything else. She has to sequester herself away from light (“γάρ κως φεύγουσι τὴν αὐγὴν”) and sound (“οὐδὲ... τι... ἀκοῦσαι τερπνὸν”), and avoid things which are εὔφοροι. This leads to feelings of isolation and depression, to which Aretaeus is sensitive in this passage as he describes the symptoms with such *pathos*: the patient is burdened by life (“ἄχθονται τῷ βίῳ”) and desires death

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<sup>160</sup> One of the connections between migraine headache and suicide may be the onset of depression. This is a debilitating condition with which modern sufferers are familiar today, and although we may find it unexpected, modern studies have done on rates of suicide among severe migraine sufferers. See E. Beck, W. J. Sieber et al., "Management of Cluster Headache," *American Family Physician* 71, no. 4 (2005): 717-24. Naomi Breslau, Lonni Schultz et al., "Migraine Headaches and Suicide Attempt," *Headache: The Journal of Head and Face Pain* 52, no. 5 (2012): 723-31.

<sup>161</sup> Plin. *HN* 25.7.23

<sup>162</sup> W. H. S. Jones, *Pliny: Natural History*, vol. 7, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 153.

(“θανατῶσι” – from θανατάω). The verb ἄχθομαι evokes a sense of a weight or load (ἄχθος) on the patient, presumably represented by the symptoms of the disease. This suggests more than just simple reporting on behalf of Aretaeus and more of a ‘feeling into’ the emotions of the patient, which exemplifies his empathy.

In the next passage, from *Περὶ πνευμωδῶν* (*On Pneumodes*), the patients do not desire death, but actually die, and Aretaeus writes of this as a positive event:

οἱ μὲν ὧν ἀπεπνίγησαν θᾶσσον, πρὶν τι κάκιον ἐς τὸ πᾶν ἀποσκήψαι.<sup>163</sup>

Some, indeed, suffocate speedily, before anything worse is transferred to the [whole body].<sup>164</sup>

It is only a short sentence; however, it communicates the idea that suffocation is not a terrible thing, since it has prevented τι κάκιον from afflicting the patients. The use of this comparative adjective (κάκιος) and the verb, ἀποσκήπτω, which gives the sense of something falling onto or being hurled at the victim, conveys Aretaeus’ empathy and compassion for the patient’s suffering, and death is a better result than worse pain and misery. This is perhaps a contradictory attitude for a physician, who should want all his patients to live; however, I have already shown that Aretaeus, although he does not approve of euthanasia, does not condemn his patients’ and his patients’ families’ wish for death and indeed sees it as a release from pain when the physician can do no more.

Some illnesses make more of an emotional impact than others in terms of their physical symptoms. One such disease from a previous chapter, tetanus, distorts the patient terribly and appears to have made quite an impression on

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<sup>163</sup> Aret. *SD* 1.12.2

<sup>164</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 319.

Areteaus. In addition, there is *elephas*, or *elephantiasis*, a condition in which the skin of the patient thickens and becomes rough, resembling the hide of an elephant.<sup>165</sup> There is also hair loss and the loss of extremities, among other symptoms, which is why scholars believe that this disease is essentially a form of leprosy and should not be confused with the more modern disease of elephantiasis, which is caused by a parasite.<sup>166</sup> In *Περὶ ἐλέφαντος* Areteaus writes:

ἤδη κοτὲ καὶ τῶν μελέων προαποθνήσκει τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἄχρι ἐκπτώσιος, ῥίς, δάκτυλοι, πόδες, αἰδοῖα καὶ ὅλαι χεῖρες. οὐδὲ γὰρ θανατοῖ τὸ κακὸν ἐς ἀπαλλαγὴν βίου αἰσχροῦ καὶ ἀλγέων δεινῶν πρόσθεν ἢ ἐς μέλεα διατμηθῆναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον...<sup>167</sup>

Sometimes, too, certain [limbs] of the patient will die, so as to drop off, such as the nose, the fingers, the feet, the privy parts and the whole hands; for the ailment does not prove fatal, so as to relieve the patient from a [shameful] life and dread sufferings, until he has been divided limb from limb...<sup>168</sup>

Here Areteaus again sees death as a preferred alternative to severe anguish: ἀπαλλαγή is a 'deliverance' or 'release', and the patient suffers a βίος αἰσχρός and ἄλγοι δεινοί.<sup>169</sup> As in the tetanus chapter, if there is pain and suffering which the physician cannot alleviate, Areteaus does not shy away from considering death an acceptable alternative, or at the very least, he understands why patients would prefer it to a life of deformity and agony. This shows an understanding and compassion on his part for their suffering.

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<sup>165</sup> Aret. *SD* 2.13.13

<sup>166</sup> Michael W. Dols, "Leprosy in Medieval Arabic Medicine," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 34, no. 3 (1979): 314-16.

<sup>167</sup> Aret. *SD* 2.13.17-19

<sup>168</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Areteaus, the Cappadocian*: 372.

<sup>169</sup> Also translated as 'relief from'; this word only shows up six times in Areteaus' entire text: twice in the tetanus chapter (Aret. *SA* 1.6.7, 1.6.9), once in the chapter on *cachexia* (Aret. *SD* 1.16.3), once in the chapter on treatings cardiacs (Aret. *CA* 2.3.4) and twice in this chapter regarding *elephas* (Aret. *SD* 2.13.17, 2.13.20.) It shows up in its verb form (ἀπαλλάσσω) three times: in the chapter on affections of the spleen (Aret. *SD* 1.14.5) and in the chapter on *cachexia* (Aret. *SD* 1.16.6) twice.

## The Importance of the Skill and Sensitivity of the Physician

There are several examples which emphasize the skill and sensitivity of the physician when dealing with chronic disease sufferers. For the first example, I shall return to the proemium, *Περὶ χρόνιων παθῶν*, and Aretaeus' explanation of the difficulty of chronic diseases. These illnesses are *πολύς* ('great') and *μακρὸς* ('long'), the recovery is *ἀβέβαιος* ('uncertain') and the harsh treatments do not encourage the patient's cooperation, as well. It is in this conflict of physician and patient that Aretaeus demonstrates his ability to empathize with these sufferers and states that a successful physician is one who can overcome these obstacles:

ἐνθα δὴ ἀρετὴ διαίδεται ἀνδρὸς ἱητροῦ, καὶ μακροθυμίας, καὶ ποικιλίας, καὶ χάριτος ἀβλαβοῦς τῶν ἡδέων, καὶ παραιφάσιος<sup>170</sup>

Hence, indeed, is developed the talent of the medical man, his perseverance, his skill in diversifying the treatment, and [his harmless allowance of] pleasant things, and in giving encouragement.<sup>171</sup>

The challenge of a chronic condition is its persistence, the unpleasantness of its treatment and the resistance the physician receives from the patient with regards to participating in the cure in the first place and then continuing with it over a long period of time thereafter. Aretaeus recognizes this and understands why treating this type of patients is so difficult. Thus, he says, the *ἀρετή* of the physician's *μακροθυμία* (patience), *ποικιλία* (versatility), *χάρις ἀβλαβῆς τῶν ἡδέων* ("his harmless allowance of pleasant things"), and *παράφασις* (encouragement) are extremely important. A particular amount of empathy and compassion is communicated on Aretaeus' part here, since each of these traits is that of a sensitive

<sup>170</sup> Aret. *SD* 1.1.1-2

<sup>171</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 293.

and caring physician: to have patience and understanding with those who are in constant or long-lasting pain and are uncooperative; to be versatile with your treatments and approaches; to give the patient any pleasant things which will not worsen his or her condition; and to give encouragement and hope to the patient. All of this, which would aid patient compliance, but also create a pleasant and positive environment and relationship with the physician, is part of the ἀρετή ἱητροῦ and suggests that Aretaeus sees empathy and compassion as important elements of successful health care.<sup>172</sup>

The next example is quite similar and comes in the chapter Θεραπεία μελαγχολίης (*Cure of Melancholy*). Melancholy, as with all chronic illnesses, is difficult to treat and oftentimes a physician works only to afford the patient an interim of relief from her condition. Aretaeus says that melancholy is ἀπότοκος, which suggests that it is part of the person's nature and therefore challenging to remove.<sup>173</sup> Such challenging diseases leave physicians with a choice: refuse to treat the patient or agree to try, and at least attempt to relieve their pain even if a cure cannot be affected. Aretaeus addresses this, writing:

ὕγιέας μὲν ὧν ἅπαντας ποιέειν ἀδύνατον τοὺς νοσέοντας· ἦν γὰρ ἂν ἱητρὸς κρέσσων θεοῦ. ἀπονίην δὲ καὶ διαλείψας καὶ νούσων ἐπικρύψας, δρῆν θέμις ἱητρον. ἢ ὧν ἀπαυδῆν ἐπὶ τοισίδε καὶ ἀπαρνεῖσθαι προῖσχομένους ἀμφὶ τὸ ἀναλθὲς ἢ καὶ ἐς τέλος τοῖσι ἔργοισι ὁμιλέειν.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> We will see the gratification of the patient re-emerge as a theme in Soranus of Ephesus, Rufus of Ephesus, and Caelius Aurelianus in future chapters. Modern studies have shown that good physician-patient relationships increase patient compliance. For example, see Ngairé Kerse, Stephen Buetow et al., "Physician-Patient Relationship and Medication Compliance: A Primary Care Investigation," *Annals of Family Medicine* 2, no. 5 (2004): 455-61.

<sup>173</sup> Aret. CD 1.5.10: ἀπότοκος

<sup>174</sup> Aret. CD 1.5.10-11

It is impossible, indeed, to make all the sick well, for a physician would thus be superior to a god; but it is right that the physician produce respite from pain, and intervals and latencies from diseases. In such cases, the physician can either decline and deny his assistance, alleging as an excuse the incurable nature of the disease, or continue to the last to render his services.<sup>175</sup>

Areteus is well aware of the limitations of the healer when he states ἦν γὰρ ἂν ἱπτρὸς κρέσσων θεοῦ. Curing every disease would be god-like, along the lines of the abilities of a deity like Asklepios, and a physician is not a god.<sup>176</sup> According to Areteus, relieving a patient's pain, creating intervals in diseases, and rendering them latent is what δρῆν θέμις ἱπτρόν ("it is right that the physician do.") Using the term θέμις even suggests that these actions are lawful or just.<sup>177</sup> He also disapproves of those who do not attempt to do everything within their power to treat the patient, and refuse to help on account of the difficulty in curing the disease. He uses the verb προίσχω which in the middle voice takes on the meaning 'to allege' or 'to put forward as a pretext.' This suggests that the nature of the disease is an invalid excuse and illustrates his distaste for those who use it. His compassion motivates this opinion, namely, that a physician can and should help ἐς τέλος, providing as much relief as possible to the sick and suffering. This sits in stark contrast with what we read in Hippocrates: τὸ μὴ ἐγχειρέειν τοῖσι κεκρατημένοισιν ὑπὸ τῶν νοσημάτων, εἰδότας ὅτι ταῦτα οὐ δύναται ἱητρική.<sup>178</sup> ("[Medicine is] not to attempt to treat those overcome by their illnesses, understanding that medicine is not able

<sup>175</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Areteus, the Cappadocian*: 476.

<sup>176</sup> This contrasts with Galen's comment in which he states that the physician should strive to make the patient admire him like a god (*In Epid. VI comm.* = K, XVIIb, 146): εἰ μὴ γὰρ ὥσπερ θεὸν αὐτὸν ὁ κάμνων θαυμάσειεν, οὐκ ἂν <εὐπειθὴς γένοιτο, εἰ δὲ μὴ> ἐκὼν εὐπειθὴς γένοιτο, βέλτιόν [οὖν] ἐστὶ μῆτε κολακεύειν εἰς τοσοῦτον ὥστε καταφρονεῖσθαι μῆτ' ἄγροικόν τε καὶ τραχὺν ὁμοίως <εἶναι τῷ> <Καλλιάννακι>.

<sup>177</sup> Scribonius Largus uses similar language in Latin, as we will see in Chapter Four.

<sup>178</sup> Hippoc. *Art.* 3

[to cure] these things.”<sup>179</sup>) Celsus agrees.<sup>180</sup> This assertion makes practical sense, especially in a world without accreditation, where physicians built their reputations solely on success. Appearing to have caused your patient’s death simply because you were the one treating him at the time could have been devastating for your career and it makes sense to avoid this sort of situation.<sup>181</sup> Perhaps this is this motivating Aretaeus’ attitude because he has witnessed physicians refusing difficult cases for fear of blame, and he sees this as uncompassionate and against the basic concept of what it means to be a physician (or the best physician, which is a term he does not use here, but does elsewhere.) Regardless, Aretaeus disregards the recommendation of refusal, opting for compassionate treatment of the terminally ill.<sup>182</sup>

This next passage is related to the first, in that it deals with indulging the patient for the sake of his comfort. In the chapter <Θεραπεία ἥπατος> (<*Cure of the Liver*>), Aretaeus writes,

προστίθει δὲ καὶ χάριτας πόματος καὶ σίτου, κῆν σμικρῷ χεῖρω τῶν  
ώφελεύντων ἔωσι, διδόναι... μήπω τι καὶ ἀπόσιτοι ἔσσονται.<sup>183</sup>

Give gratification to the patient in regard to food and drink, even if they may be somewhat inferior to more beneficial articles... lest they lose their appetites.<sup>184</sup>

This example references the proemium of the first book of the symptoms of chronic diseases, where Aretaeus says an excellent doctor should give χάρις ἀβλαβοῦς τῶν

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<sup>179</sup> Author’s translation.

<sup>180</sup> Celsus, *Med.* 5.26.1

<sup>181</sup> Aretaeus himself admits that the physician must be cautious when administering medications (*CA* 2.1.5-6): ἥν δὲ ἐν ἀκμῇ τῆς πνιγὸς καὶ ὑπὸ τῷ ὀλέθρῳ φάρμακον διδῶς, θανάτου ἂν εἴης παρὰ τοῖσι δημότῃσι αἴτιος. (“But if you give medication at the acme of the suffocation, or when death is at hand, you may be blamed for the patient’s death by the [people].”) Interestingly, he does not say *not* to proceed with the treatment, but simply to be careful about *when*.

<sup>182</sup> This attitude will come up again in Chapter Four with Scribonius Largus.

<sup>183</sup> Aret. *CD* 1.13.4-5

<sup>184</sup> Author’s translation.



ἡδέων (“gratification of harmless, pleasant things.”)<sup>185</sup> He goes even farther here, saying that χείρονες (‘inferior things’) are to be given, in case the patients develop an aversion to their food, which would complicate the treatment. Thus, if the physician can prescribe food and drink, which may not be effective as other choices, but which the patient finds agreeable, then this is preferred to noncompliance. The fact that Aretaeus has considered the psychological state of patients when faced with meals they dislike makes evident his empathetic skills and his consideration for not only their physical health, but their emotional health as well.

Sometimes it is the realisation of the limits of a physician’s skill and power in the face of particularly damaging diseases that elicits Aretaeus’ empathy and compassion. In several places in his text, Aretaeus encourages physicians to persevere and confront even the most stubborn of illnesses; however, the reality is that many times perseverance is not enough and there is very little a physician can do for his patient. This sentiment is echoed in the passage from *Περὶ τετάνου* when Aretaeus laments the fact that nothing could be done for a patient with tetanus that advanced, and it is also present in a passage from *Περὶ συνάγχης* (*On Quinsey*). In it, Aretaeus tells us that *synanche* (also referred to as angina or quinsey like in Adams’ title) can become extremely acute and fast-moving, to the point where a physician cannot be called in quickly enough:

οἱ δὲ ὀξύτατοι θνήσκουσι αὐτῆμαρ, ἔσθ' ὅπῃ καὶ πρὶν καλέσασθαι  
τὸν ἰατρόν, οἱ δὲ καὶ ἐσκαλεσάμενοι οὐδὲν ὄναντο· ἀπέθανον γὰρ  
πρὶν ἢ τὸν ἰατρόν ἔτι <τῇ> τέχνῃ χρήσασθαι.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> See Aret. *SA* 2.8.9 and *CA* 2.2.2-3; 7-8 below.

<sup>186</sup> Aret. *SA* 1.7.6-7

In the most acute cases, patients die the same day, in some instances, even before calling in the physician; and in others, although called in, he could afford them no relief, for they died before the physician could apply the resources of his art.<sup>187</sup>

This passage shows succinctly that a physician is sometimes (perhaps oftentimes) defeated by disease. As in the tetanus chapter, it appears to worry him that no help can be given (οὐδὲν ὄναντο) and through the expression of this helplessness Aretaeus exhibits his compassion as a healer. The fact that the physician is not even provided the opportunity to attempt a cure is particularly poignant here.

Also concerned with the skill of the “good” physician, is a passage from *Περὶ τῆς κατὰ τὴν κοίλην φλέβα ὀξείης νόσου* (*On the Acute Affection about the Vena Cava*). The term ἀγαθός for Aretaeus appears to encompass not only the physician’s talent, but also his compassion, especially when faced with the particular symptoms of this sort of disease: fever and excessive thirst. Aretaeus writes:

ἀτὰρ εἴτε πίνουσι ψυχρὸν χανδὸν πουλὺ πλεῖστον, καὶ ἐς μὲν βραχὺ ἀνεκουφίσθησαν, εἴτ' αὐτοῖς ἐξάπτεται τὸ δίψος, αὖθις ἄδην πίνουσι· καὶ ἦδε ἡ διαδοχὴ τοῦ κακοῦ. καὶ ἱητρὸς δὲ ἀγαθὸς ψυχρὸν ἂν δοίη πολλὸν ἀσινέως...<sup>188</sup>

And if they drink a large draught of cold water, they are relieved, indeed, for short time; but then again the thirst is kindled up, and again they drink copiously. And this is the successive course of the malady. And a good physician would give with impunity a copious cold draught...<sup>189</sup>

It is obvious from a reading of the chapter that allowing a patient to drink cold beverages does not cure his illness. Nevertheless, Aretaeus says they experience relief from their symptoms for a short time by doing so (the verb he uses is

<sup>187</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 251.

<sup>188</sup> Aret. SA 2.8.9

<sup>189</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 282.

ἀνακουφίζω which gives a sense of ‘lightness’ to this relief and may even refer to a ‘lightness of mind’ (LSJ sv III) which indicates Aretaeus’ willingness to attribute internal emotional states to his patients) and, since it does not harm them (unless they do not expel the liquid in the form of sweating or urination), this is something an ἀγαθὸς physician would do. That is, it is an act which a compassionate physician would perform for a suffering patient. Despite the futility of giving cold drinks, the temporary relief it provides is entirely aligned with one of the physician’s objectives: to relieve pain. Therefore, Aretaeus’ compassion prompts him to recommend this course of action.

When someone suffers a disease which not only affects him physically, but also psychologically, the physician must also apply his skill effectively, according to Aretaeus. In *Θεραπεία αἵματος ἀναγωγῆς* (*The Cure of the Bringing Up of Blood*) he writes:

καὶ φοβερὸν μὲν ἰδεῖν διὰ στόματος ὀκωσοῦν ῥέον... χρὴ ὧν τὸν ἡτρὸν τοῦ πάθεος ξυνεπείγειν μᾶλλον ἀρήγοντα... αἰρέεσθαι... ψυχῆς ἀταραξίη, εὐθυμίη. πάγχυ δὲ τοῖσι τοιουτέοισι ξυνομαρτέει δυσελπιστίη· τίς γὰρ ἐμέων αἷμα θάνατον οὐκ ὀρρωδέει;... τῶνδε μέντοι γε ἄλλα ἄλλοισι ξυμμίσγειν, ὅπως ἂν ἰσχύος τῆς τῶν φαρμάκων καὶ προσηνεῖς καὶ ὁσμήσιος δέηται· χρὴ γὰρ καὶ τοῖσι κάμνουσι χαρίσασθαι.<sup>190</sup>

It is dreadful to see [blood] flowing from the mouth in any way... It is necessary, therefore, that the physician should make the more haste in bringing assistance to this [disease]... It is to be obtained... tranquility of mind, cheerfulness, since depression of spirits especially accompanies these cases; for who is there that does not dread death when vomiting?... These [therapies] are to be mixed with one another differently, according as the strength of the medicines, mildness, or smell thereof is wanted. For we must also gratify the sick.<sup>191</sup>

<sup>190</sup> Aret. CA 2.2.2-3; 7-8

<sup>191</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 422, 24.

The vomiting of blood is a shockingly vivid act for both the patient and the observing physician. He uses the word φοβερός ('dreadful' or 'terrifying') to describe the fear-inducing nature of the event and the reason why the physician should ξυνεπείγειν μᾶλλον - which includes (among a list of practical concerns, such as the proper bed, not reproduced here in this passages) obtaining for the patient ψυχῆς ἀταραξίη and εὐθυμίη in order to counteract the δυσελπιστίη which overwhelms the patient, as we have seen in other passages regarding this particular disease. Aretaeus also employs the rhetorical question again to stress the fear of the patient's situation. A little further on in the chapter when discussing external remedies, he also comes back to a common theme in his therapeutics: gratifying the sick (χαρίζω.) As he states, you adjust the medicines according to strength and odour for each patient. This is part of a physician's skill and sensitivity to his patient's individual tolerance for medications.

The disease of *ileus* also requires a talented and compassionate physician. As we have seen previously in Θεραπεία εἰλεοῦ, those suffering from this illness desire death above all because of the extreme amount of pain they endure and although the ἀρχιατρός should not bring this about himself, he should do everything he can to help them:

χρὴ ὧν μήτε μικρότερόν τι γίνεσθαι τὸν ἰητρὸν τοῦ πάθους μήτε βραδύτερον... τὸ θνήσκειν τοῖς μὲν ὧδε πονέουσι εὐδαιμονίη· τῷ ἀρχιητρῷ δὲ οὐ θέμις πρήσσειν.<sup>192</sup>

The physician, therefore, must neither be inferior to the [disease], nor more dilatory... to persons enduring these pains, to die is

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<sup>192</sup> Aret. CA 2.5.1-2

happiness, but to impart it is not permitted to the respectable physician...<sup>193</sup>

The physician should not be σμικρότερός (“think rather little of”) nor βραδύτερος (“be rather slow”) when treating this disease; that is, he should take it very seriously and be quick to act. The fact that it is in the discussion of this particular disease that Aretaeus brings up the subject of euthanasia for the first time means that this is a particularly dangerous illness. He mentions how patients wish to die while suffering from other afflictions (as we have seen in the first section); however, only in this chapter does he talk of physician-assisted suicide. The seriousness of *ileus* brings out Aretaeus’ insistence that the physician must employ his talents to the best of his ability, and thus his compassion.<sup>194</sup>

Dropsy, the excessive accumulation of fluid under the skin or in body cavities, appears to be relatively common in ancient medical treatises.<sup>195</sup> In *Περὶ ὕδρωπος* (*On Dropsy*), Aretaeus writes:

Ὑδρωψ ἀτερπὲς μὲν ἐσιδεῖν πάθος, χαλεπὸν δὲ καὶ παθεῖν.  
διαδιδρήσκουσι γὰρ τόδε πάγχυ παῦροι ὑπ’ εὐτυχίης καὶ θεῶν  
μᾶλλον ἢ τέχνης· τὰ γὰρ μέζονα πάντα ἰῶνται μοῦνοι θεοί.<sup>196</sup>

Dropsy is indeed [a disease unpleasant] to behold and difficult to endure; for very few escape from it, and they more by fortune and the gods, than by art; for all the greater ills the gods only can remedy.<sup>197</sup>

Aretaeus describes dropsy as “ἀτερπὲς... ἐσιδεῖν, χαλεπὸν... παθεῖν” and, further along in the chapter, ἀνέλπιστος (‘hopeless’) – somewhat like his description of

<sup>193</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 438.

<sup>194</sup> This chapter is known for Aretaeus’ discussion of euthanasia, which will be addressed further on in this chapter.

<sup>195</sup> Garabed Eknayan, “A History of Edema and Its Management,” *Kidney International Supplement* 59(1997): 118-26.

<sup>196</sup> Aret. *SD* 2.1.1

<sup>197</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 333.

tetanus. Aretaeus admits in this passage that τέχνη – medicine – is not very successful in curing this disease. Unfortunately, the matching therapeutic chapter does not survive, so we do not get a sense of how difficult the treatments for this disease really were. He suggests that it alters the person in a fundamental way and that “τὸν δὲ ἰητρὸν ἐν τῷδε τῷ πάθει ὅλον χρή τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἀλλάξαι· τόδε μέντοι οὐδὲ θεοῖσι ῥηϊτέρον”<sup>198</sup> (“the physician would be required to change the whole person, a thing not easy for the gods themselves to accomplish.”<sup>199</sup>) Aretaeus’ compassionate disposition comes through in his references in this chapter to εὐτυχία and θεοί, which indicates a physician who feels his own limitations when it comes to this disease, and who exhibits a sense of sadness at this fact.<sup>200</sup>

The final example comes from the chapter Θεραπεία τῶν κατὰ τὴν κύστιν ὀξέων παθῶν (*The Cure of the Acute Affections about the Bladder*) and deals with the blockage of a bladder stone which prevents urination and causes patients extreme pain and discomfort. Aretaeus writes that performing an incision to remove the stone and unblock the flow of urine is sometimes necessary, although it is possible that the wound will not heal properly and force the patient to live with the consequences. However, he deems this preferable to no action, which would lead to death eventually:

ἦν δὲ μή, ῥοάδα γενέσθαι τοῦ οὔρου βέλτιον ἐς τὸν αὖθις τοῦ ἀνθρώπου βίον ἢ τῇ ὀδύνη οἰκτίστως θανεῖν.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Aret. *SD* 2.1.12-13

<sup>199</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 337.

<sup>200</sup> The gods are mentioned three times in this chapter and fortune twice.

<sup>201</sup> Aret. *CA* 2.9.5

But if not, it is better that the patient should have a flux of urine for the remainder of his life, than that he should die most miserably of the pain.<sup>202</sup>

The pain of a descended bladder stone is immense, and Aretaeus obviously considers the relief of the patient's suffering to be worth the possible outcome of this procedure. There is an obvious contrast drawn here between life and death (βίον and θανεῖν), and of course the physician prefers that the patient live; however, it is not just as simple as that. There are a number of passages in Aretaeus' text which state that patients often desire to die and that their loved ones sometimes wish for it, too, if only to end the suffering. He does not judge them for this, but rather appears to understand that they see death as a blessing and relief from pain. He does not condone euthanasia on the physician's part, but the reader does not get the sense that he sees the death of a critically ill patient as a bad thing when there is nothing more that can be done for that person. Therefore, in the case of a descended bladder stone, it is not that Aretaeus simply wants the patient to live, but that he knows something can be done to mitigate his pain and save him. Perhaps the patient will live a slightly uncomfortable life, but at least he will not die οἰκτίστως, which demonstrates Aretaeus' feelings of understanding (empathy) and compassion.

### **Deformity, Depression and Shame**

For this final theme, I will be looking at passages in which diseases that cause deformity, depression and shame in patients elicit an empathetic and compassionate response in Aretaeus' writings. As we saw in the passage at the beginning of this chapter, tetanus in its advanced stages is an extremely deforming

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<sup>202</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 448.

disease. The twisting, unnatural bending and consequent pain it causes are difficult to witness and provoked empathy and compassion in Aretaeus, which he expressed by his desire to help the patient, even though there was nothing he could actually do. Other illnesses, such as epilepsy, *mania* and *elephantiasis*, also cause deformity, depression and shame in their victims and Aretaeus responds in much the same way as he does with tetanus. There are six examples within the acute chapters and seven within the chronic ones which demonstrate this theme.

The first example comes from the chapter, Περὶ ἐπιληψίης (*On Epilepsy*). The treatment of this disease has been shown in previous sections to elicit Aretaeus' empathy and compassion, as it causes patients to despair of life and requires the physician to utilize all his skill to treat. This passage, from Aretaeus' description of epilepsy's signs and symptoms, is lengthy, but it demonstrates the many negative symptoms of the illness and how it affects the patients both physically, through its paroxysms, and emotionally, through the shame and depression they experience:

Ποικίλον ἢ δὲ ἀλλόκοτον κακὸν ἢ ἐπιληψίη, θηριῶδες μὲν ἐν παροξυσμοῖσι καὶ κάτοξυ καὶ ὀλέθριον· ἔκτεινε γάρ κοτε παροξυσμὸς εἷς. ἦν δὲ μελέτησι φέρη ὠνθρωπος, ζῆ μὲν αἴσχεα καὶ ὀνείδεα καὶ ἄλγεα φέρων, ῥηϊδίως δὲ οὐκ ἄπεισι ἢ νοῦσος, ἀλλὰ ἐν ἡλικίῃσιν τε τῇσι κρείττοσι ἐνοικέει καὶ ὥρη γε τῇ ὥραϊ, ξυνδιαιτᾶται τε παισὶ καὶ μαιρακίοισι. ἐξηλάθη δὲ κοτε ὑπ' εὐτυχίης, δι' ἄλλης ἡλικίης μέζονος, εὗτε τῷ κάλλει συνέξεισι τῆς ὥρης· ἀλλὰ καὶ κοτε μετεξετέρους αἰσχροὺς ἀποδείξασα ἀπόλλυσι τοὺς παῖδας φθόνῳ τοῦ κάλλεος, ἢ χειρὸς ἀκρασίῃ, ἢ προσώπου διαστροφῇ, ἢ πηρώσει τινὸς αἰσθήσιος. ἦν δὲ φωλεύση τὸ κακὸν ἐς ῥίζαν, οὔτε ἡτρωῶ οὔτε ἡλικίης μεταβολῇ <ἐς> ἔξοδον πείθεται, ἀλλὰ ξυμβιοῖ μέσφι θανάτου. ποτὶ καὶ ἐπίπονος ἢ νοῦσος σπασμοῖσι καὶ διαστροφῇσι μελέων τε καὶ ὄψιος. ἔτρεψε δὲ κοτε καὶ γνώμην ἐς μανίην. ἀτερπὴς μὲν ἢ τοῦ παροξυσμοῦ θέη, αἰσchrή δὲ καὶ ἢ ἀπόλειψις αὐτέου ἐπὶ ἀφόδῳ καὶ οὔροις καὶ αὐτομάτῳ κοιλή... ἦν δὲ ἐν χρόνῳ μίμνη, οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τοῖσι διαλείμμασι ἀσινέες· νωθοί, ἄθυμοι, κατηφές, ἐξάνθρωποι, ἄμεικτοι, οὐδὲ ἡλικίῃσι μιλίχοι, ἄγρυπνοι, δυσόνειροι πολλοῖσι ἀλλοκότοις, ἀπόσιτοι,



πέψαι κακοί· ἄχροι, μολυβδώδεις· δυσμαθέες νωθείη γνώμης τε καὶ αἰσθήσιος· βαρυήκοι, ἥχοι, βόμβοι ἀνὰ τὴν κεφαλὴν· γλῶσσα ἀσαφής καὶ παράφορος, ἢ ὑπὸ τῆς διαθέσιος τῆς νοῦσου, ἢ ὑπὸ τρωμάτων ἐν τῇσι καταλήψεσι· σπασμώδεις· γλῶσσα μὲν στρωφᾶται ἐν τῷ στόματι ποικίλως· ὑποτέμνεται δέ κοτε καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν ἢ νοῦσος, ὡς τὰ πάντα μωραίνειν.<sup>203</sup>

Epilepsy is an illness of various shapes and horrible; in the paroxysms, brutish, very acute, and deadly; for, at times, one paroxysm has proved fatal. Or if from habit the patient can endure it, he lives, indeed, enduring shame, ignominy, and sorrow; and the disease does not readily pass off, but fixes its abode during the better periods and in the [prime] of life. It dwells with boys and young men; and, by good fortune, it is sometimes driven out in another more advanced period of life, when it takes its departure along with the beauty of youth; and then, having rendered them deformed, it destroys certain youths from envy, as it were, of their beauty, either by loss of the faculties of a hand, or by the distortion of the countenance, or by the depravation of some one sense. But if the mischief lurk there until it strike root, it will not yield either to the physician or the changes of age, so as to take its departure, but lives with the patient until death. And sometimes the disease is rendered painful by its convulsions and distortions of the limbs and of the face; and sometimes it turns the mind distracted. The sight of a paroxysm is disagreeable, and its departure disgusting with spontaneous evacuations of the urine and of the bowels... But if it becomes inveterate, the patients are not free from harm even in the intervals, but are languid, spiritless, inhuman, unsociable, and not disposed to hold intercourse, nor to be sociable, at any period of life; sleepless, subject to many horrid dreams, without appetite, and with bad digestion; pale, of a leaden colour; slow to learn, from torpidity of the understanding and of the senses; dull of hearing; have noises and ringing in the head; utterance indistinct and bewildered, either from the nature of the disease, or from the wounds during the attacks; the tongue is rolled about in the mouth convulsively in various ways. The disease also sometimes disturbs the understanding, so that the patient becomes altogether fatuous.<sup>204</sup>

Someone with epilepsy may die during a paroxysm soon after developing the disease, Aretaeus tells us; however, many live with it for a long time. These are the

<sup>203</sup> Aret. *SD* 1.4.1-3

<sup>204</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 296-7.

patients for which Aretaeus has compassion. He spends a lot of time describing the emotions this disease makes them feel – “ζῆ μὲν αἴσχεα καὶ όνείδεα καὶ ἄλγεα φέρων” (“they live enduring shame, disgrace and grief”) – and not just the physical symptoms. It also hits boys and young men “έν ήλικίησί τε τῆσι κρείττοσι” (“in their prime and better times”) which is particularly sad, since this is when they should be their most strong and beautiful. Epilepsy may leave them at the next stage of life, but it takes with it their beauty (“εὔτε τῷ κάλλει συνέξεισι τῆς ὥρης”) through remaining deformities or impaired sense reception. The paroxysms are not only physically painful, but ἀτερπής and αἰσχροή when patients lose control (αὐτομάτος) of their bowels. Between epileptic fits patients should experience some sort of reprieve, but as Aretaeus says, they do not: they are νωθοί, ἄθυμοι, κατηφέες, ἐξάνθρωποι, ἄμεικτοι. Their intellect is also affected (they are δυσμαθέες), as well as their speech (the γλῶσσα is ἀσαφής and παράφορος) and they can also become mad (“τὰ πάντα μωραίνειν”). Aretaeus spends so much time describing these consequences, and the deformity, depression and shame they produce, that we can see that he feels compassion for those suffering from it. His vocabulary accentuates the sadness, isolation, and humiliation of the disease (no wonder sufferers would become unsociable!)

Aretaeus is attuned to the patient’s feelings of shame and embarrassment on account of the type of behaviours that the disease of epilepsy causes. In this passage, from Θεραπεία ἐπιληψίης (*Cure of Epilepsy*), some of the same emotions are brought up again:

Ἀκέων ὅτι περ μέγα καὶ δυνατώτατον ἐς ἐπιληψίην χρέεσθαι· φυγή  
γάρ <ού> μοῦνον ἐπιπόνου πάθεος καὶ κινδυνώδεος ἐφ’ ἐκάστης

ὑπομνήσιος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ιδέης αἴσχεος καὶ ὀνειδέος τῆς συμφορῆς. καὶ μοι δοκέω, εἴπερ ἐς ἀλλήλους ἐν τοῖσι παροξυσμοῖσι ἐνέβλεπον, ὁκόσα πάσχουσι οἱ νοσεῦντες, οὐκ ἂν ἔτι ζῶειν τλαῖεν ἄν. ἀλλὰ γὰρ τὰ δεινὰ ἐκάστω καὶ τὰ αἰσχρὰ ἀναισθησίῃ καὶ ἀθησίῃ κρύπτει.<sup>205</sup>

Of remedies, whatever is great and most powerful is needed for epilepsy, so as to find an escape not only from a painful [disease], and one dangerous at each attack, but from the [shame] and opprobrium of this calamity. For it appears to me, that if the patients who endure such sufferings were to look at one another in the paroxysms, they would no longer submit to live. But the want of sensibility and of seeing conceals from everyone what is dreadful and [shameful] in his own case.<sup>206</sup>

Epilepsy is not only described as ἐπιπόνοος and κινδυνώδεος, but the patients feel αἴσχεος and ὀνειδέος ('shame' and 'opprobrium'.) Aretaeus feels that if patients could see themselves while having an epileptic episode, they would no longer wish to live; luckily, the disease itself makes it so that patients cannot seem themselves while suffering the paroxysms. Aretaeus feels compassion for the psychological discomfort this illness causes patients, and says that each remedy must be μέγα and δυνατώτατον so that it can combat both the physical and emotional symptoms. He really empathises his way into the circumstances of these patients, particularly with the phrase "καὶ μοι δοκέω" – we can see him really attempt to comprehend their mindset and emotional state, and imagine their reaction.

In Περὶ μανίης (*On Mania*), Aretaeus tells us that those affected by *mania* display a number of physiological and psychological symptoms. The disease causes the patient to behave in some very strange ways (running around, shouting, attempting inappropriate acts of intercourse, going off into the wilderness), which they then regret if they ever experience a moment of remission:

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<sup>205</sup> Aret. CD 1.4.1

<sup>206</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 468-69.

ἦν δὲ ἐπ' ἀνεσιν ἤκοιεν τοῦ κακοῦ, νωθροί, ἥσυχοι, ἐπίλυποι· ἐς ἐπιστάσιν γὰρ τῆς νόσου ἀφικνεόμενοι ἄχθονται τῇ συμφορῇ.<sup>207</sup>

If they should attain any relaxation of the evil, they become torpid, dull, sorrowful; for having come to a knowledge of the disease they are saddened with their own calamity.<sup>208</sup>

Recognition (ἐπιστάσις) of a patient's own illness, its serious nature, and the shameful acts it can lead him to perform causes him to become νωθροί, ἥσυχοι, ἐπίλυποι – it has a direct effect upon the patient's psyche. Aretaeus reads these symptoms as such, and he says the person is “saddened” (ἀφικνέομαι) by this fact, demonstrating a sense of cognitive empathy. In a passage from Plutarch's *Moralia*, we see the same ideas highlighted. Plutarch is discussing the ability of some diseases to elicit feelings of compassion more than others. He gives some examples of the types of illnesses which do this:

καὶ γὰρ τῶν περὶ τὸ σῶμα νοσημάτων | τὰ μετ' ἀναισθησίας  
χείρονα, λήθαργοι κεφαλαλγίαι ἐπιληψίαι [πυρετοί] αὐτοί τε  
πυρετοί, <οἱ> συντείναντες εἰς παρακοπὴν τὸ φλεγμαῖνον καὶ τὴν  
αἴσθησιν ὥσπερ ἐν ὀργάνῳ διαταράξαντες  
ῥ' κινουσι χορδὰς τὰς ἀκινήτους φρενῶν' (Tr. ad. 361).<sup>209</sup>

For it is true of the diseases of the body also that those are worse which are attended by inability to perceive the body's condition: lethargies, migraine, epilepsies, apoplexies, and those very fevers which, raising inflammation to the pitch of delirium and confounding consciousness, as on a musical instrument, will touch the heart-strings never touched before.<sup>210</sup>

Here we see epilepsy and migraine mentioned, which are the two diseases which we have seen bring out expressions of empathy and compassion in Aretaeus. Plutarch explains that what makes these illnesses so compassion-inducing is their ability to

<sup>207</sup> Aret. *SD* 1.6.11

<sup>208</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 304.

<sup>209</sup> Plut. *Mor. Anim. corp.* 500f-501a

<sup>210</sup> Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 6: 385.

take away the patient's perception of himself, causing delirium (παρακοπή) and confusion (διαταράσσω) of the senses (αἴσθησις.) They take away the patient's sense of self (ἀναισθησία) and sense of control, which Plutarch says "moves" (κινέω) the "strings" (χορδή; here assumed to be "heart-strings") even on those who have never been moved before. Essentially, these diseases elicit compassion in viewers more than others due to their alienating nature, which is seen as particularly pitiful by Plutarch.

Aretaeus says that diabetes is a θαῦμα in *Περὶ διαβήτεω (On Diabetes)*. The excessive and uncontrollable thirst and urination which accompanies this illness makes a particular impression on Aretaeus. He writes:

ποτὶ καὶ βίος αἰσχροὺς καὶ ἐπίπονους. δίψος ἀκρατές, πολυποσίη ἀνισόμετρος οὖροις πολλοῖσι· πλεῖον γὰρ ἐκρεῖ τὸ οὔρον. καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἐπίσχοι τις αὐτέους οὔτε πίνοντας οὔτε οὔρέοντας ἦν δὲ ἐπ' ἀκαρὲς ἀντίσχωσι, ἦν μὲν τοῦ πιεῖν, ἄνικμοι μὲν τὸ στόμα, ἀυαλέοι δὲ τὸ σκῆνος, τὰ δὲ σπλάγχνα καίεσθαι δοκέουσι· ἀσώδεις, ἄποροι, οὐκ ἐς μακρὸν θνήσκουσι· πυριφλεγέες δίψαι. ἀπουρέειν δὲ τίς ἂν ἐπίσχοι τρόπος, ἢ τίς αἰσχύνῃ πόνου κρέσσων;<sup>211</sup>

Moreover, life is [shameful] and painful; thirst, unquenchable; excessive drinking, which, however, is disproportionate to the large quantity of urine, for more urine is passed; and one cannot stop them either from drinking or making water. Or if for a time they abstain from drinking, their mouth becomes parched and their body dry; the viscera seem as if scorched up; nausea, helplessness; and at no distant term they expire. A burning thirst. But by what method could they be restrained from making water? Or how can shame become more potent than pain?<sup>212</sup>

Living with this disease is, as Aretaeus describes it, αἰσχροὺς and ἐπίπονους. There is a sense of the patient losing control of his body and its functions: no matter how much he drinks, his thirst is never satiated (ἀκρατές); no matter how little he drinks,

<sup>211</sup> Aret. SD 2.2.1

<sup>212</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 338.

urination is excessive (πολύς). This lack of control, or helplessness (ἄποροι), contributes to the patient's shame. Aretaeus stresses the painfulness of the condition through the use of the simile and metaphor of fire and burning, when he says of the internal organs, “καίεσθαι δοκέουσι” (“they seem as if scorched up”) and describes the thirst as πυριφλεγέες (‘burning.’) Finally, as in other examples we have seen, Aretaeus demonstrates his empathy for these patients by use of the final rhetorical questions. He asks: how could they be expected to control their symptoms and put their shame before their pain? The answer is, of course, is they cannot, and therefore they deserve compassion for their suffering. These rhetorical questions also show Aretaeus attempting to understand and empathise with these patients, by almost putting himself in that situation and asking those questions.

We have seen previously how terrible and shocking the disease of *elephas*, or *elephantiasis*, is especially with regards to the loss of limbs. It is an extremely deforming disease, and removes from the patient any sense of comfort. Aretaeus spends some time explaining how unpleasant life can be for these patients in *Περὶ ἐλέφαντος*:

ἀτὰρ καὶ τὸ σῶμα πρὸς ἅπαντα ἄχθεται· οὐ λουτροῖσι τέρπεται, οὐκ ἀλουσίῃ· οὐ τροφῇ, οὐκ ἀσιτίῃ· οὐ κινήσει, οὐκ ἡρεμίῃ... ὥδε γοῦν τινες κατέστρεψαν τὸν βίον, νήγρετον ὕπνον ἐς θάνατον εὐδοντες. τοιοῦσδε ὦν ἐόντας τίς οὐκ ἂν φύγοι ἢ τίς οὐκ ἂν ἐκτραπέιη, κῆν υἱὸς ἢ πατήρ ἔη, κῆν κασίγνητος τύχη;<sup>213</sup>

Moreover, the body is offended with everything, takes delight neither in baths, nor abstinence from them, neither in food nor in abstinence from it, neither in motion or in rest... In this way certain patients have passed from life sleeping the sleep which knows no waking, even until death. When in such a state, who would not flee;

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<sup>213</sup> Aret. *SD* 2.13.18-19

- who would not turn from them, even if a father, a son, or a brother?<sup>214</sup>

Aretaeus' list of typically pleasant activities (bathing, eating, moving or resting) emphasises how all of the basic comforts permitted to a healthy person are removed from these patients and imbues this passage with a feeling of *pathos*. His description of their deaths is particularly poetic, describing how they eventually lapse into comas until they finally pass away: νήγρετον ὕπνον ἐς θάνατον εὐδοντες.<sup>215</sup> Finally, he moves his focus to the family and their reaction. Just as in the tetanus passage, it can be very difficult for loved ones to face a family member who is dying from this disease. A natural human reaction is to turn away (ἐκτρέπω) and leave (φεύγω), one which Aretaeus, in his empathy, understands when he poses these rhetorical questions at the end of the passage, as we have seen previously.

In the chapter, Περὶ αἵματος ἀναγωγῆς (*On the Bringing Up of Blood*), Aretaeus discusses every different way blood is emitted from the body. This is a visually shocking physical phenomenon and its effect on a patient appears to have made quite an impression on Aretaeus. The patient, too, is traumatised by their own symptoms:

ἄθρόον δὲ εἰρήσθω, ἐπὶ πάσῃ αἵματος ἀναγωγῇ... ἔπεται δυσθυμία,  
δυσελπιστίῃ ἀπογνώσει τοῦ βίου. τίς γὰρ οὕτως εὐσταθῆς ὡς ὀρῆν  
μὲν ἑωυτὸν σφαγῇ ἵκελον πεπονθότα, μὴ ὀρρωδέῃ δὲ ἀμφὶ  
θανάτου;<sup>216</sup>

<sup>214</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 372.

<sup>215</sup> This idea of a sleep that is like death is attested in the *Odyssey* where Odysseus and his men leave Scheria and sleep on his ship (Hom. *Od.* 13.78-80): εὖθ' οἱ ἀνακλινθέντες ἀνερρίπτουν ἄλα πηδῶ, | καὶ τῷ νήδυμος ὕπνος ἐπὶ βλεφάροισιν ἔπιπτε, | νήγρετος ἡδιστος, θανάτῳ ἄγχιστα ἐοικώς. ("When they leaned back and tossed the brine with their oars, sweet sleep fell upon their eyelids, unwaking, most pleasant, seeming most like to death." (Author's translation.)) For more on literary illusion in Aretaeus, see Couch and Couch, "The Literary Illustrations of Aretaeus of Cappadocia," 556-59.

<sup>216</sup> Aret. SA 2.2.17

In a word, every discharge of blood upwards... is attended with lowness of spirits, dejection, and despair of life. For who is so firm in mind as to see himself enduring a state resembling that of a slaughtered animal, and yet have no fear of death?<sup>217</sup>

Again, Aretaeus focuses here on the psychological effects of bringing up such a copious amount of blood. The terms δυσθυμία and δυσελπιστία, and the phrase “ἀπογνώσει τοῦ βίου” are conditions he sees arising in patients with particularly painful or terminal illnesses, and also terms he uses when describing psychological illnesses. He exhibits empathy with the patient in this example when he acknowledges that no one could be so εὐσταθής that he could endure such a discharge of blood. Psychologically speaking, such an event is very hard to bear and causes the patient to think the worst of his condition. Aretaeus heightens the emotional aspect of this by using a simile to compare such a loss of blood to that of a slaughtered animal. The sacrificing of an animal was something with which the ancients were very familiar. The copious amount of blood involved, as well as the helplessness of the victim, was something easily brought to mind when reading this passage. In addition, Aretaeus asks the rhetorical question: “τίς γὰρ οὕτως εὐσταθής ὡς ὁρῆν μὲν ἑωυτὸν σφαγῇ ἵκελον πεπονθότα, μὴ ὀρρωδέη δὲ ἀμφὶ θανάτου;” Basically, he questions, who, having lost so much blood, would not think that they were on the brink of death and thus despair? This demonstrates his ability to imagine the patient’s point of view and emotional state and therefore empathize with their situation. The same sentiment is echoed in Θεραπεία αἵματος ἀναγωγῆς (*The Cure of the Bringing Up of Blood*), which has already been discussed previously for its references to the skill and sensitivity of the physician. Aretaeus writes:

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<sup>217</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 269.



...ψυχῆς ἀταραξίη, εὐθυμίη. πάγχυ δὲ τοῖσι τοιουτέοισι ξυνομαρτέει  
 δυσελπιστίη· τίς γὰρ ἐμέων αἷμα θάνατον οὐκ ὀρρωδέει;<sup>218</sup>

...tranquility of mind, cheerfulness, since depression of spirits  
 especially accompanies these cases; for who is there that does not  
 dread death when vomiting?<sup>219</sup>

The same rhetorical technique is used here, which we have witnessed several times previously, in which Aretaeus stresses the frightening aspect of vomiting blood for a patient. He sees their depression as intimately linked to this symptom and demonstrates an understanding of *why* – a manifestation of empathy for certain.

Epilepsy is one disease which spans both the acute and chronic categories into which Aretaeus has divided his text. In and of itself, it is chronic, since there is no cure and the person suffers from the disease for their entire life. But the paroxysms of epileptics are acute, and described in *Περὶ παροξυσμοῦ ἐπιληπτικῶν* (*On [the Paroxysms of] Epilepsy*). Epilepsy was a well-known disease in the ancient world and appears in many ancient medical texts. Just as it is today, not all forms were curable, but physicians did attempt to treat the disease as best they could. The symptoms, however, were certainly shocking, especially the seizures<sup>220</sup> and foaming of the mouth,<sup>221</sup> which led it to be considered by some as a possession by a god or spirit. Ancient physicians appear to disregard this reasoning (starting with Hippocrates);<sup>222</sup> nevertheless, sufferers did endure a certain amount of psychological stress on account of the disease, at least according to Aretaeus:

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<sup>218</sup> Aret. CA 2.2.2-3

<sup>219</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 422.

<sup>220</sup> See Aret. SA 1.5.3 (χεῖρες δέ οἱ σπασμῷ ξυνέρχονται· σκέλεα οὐ διαπεπλεγμένα μόνον, ἀλλὰ τῆδε κάκεῖσε βαλλόμενα αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν τενόντων)

<sup>221</sup> See Aret. SA 1.5.7 (ἀφρὸν δὲ ἀποπτύουσι)

<sup>222</sup> E.g., Hippoc. *Morb. sac.*; Helen King, *Greek and Roman Medicine* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2001), 6-8.

έσφαγμένοισι ταύροισι ἤδε ἰκέλη ἢ ξυμφορή, κεφαλὴ ποικίλως  
διάστροφος... ἐπὶ δὲ τῇ ἀποπαύσει νωθοὶ τὰ μέλεα τὰ πρῶτα,  
καρηβαρικοί, διαλελυμένοι, πάρετοι, ὥχροί, δύσθυμοι, κατηφές  
καμάτῳ καὶ αἰσχύνῃ τοῦ δεινοῦ.<sup>223</sup>

The calamity bears a resemblance to slaughtered bulls; the head  
variously distorted... At the termination, they are torpid in their  
members at first, experience heaviness of the head, and loss of  
strength, and are languid, pale, spiritless, and dejected, from the  
suffering and shame of the dreadful malady.<sup>224</sup>

As we saw in the above passage, comparing the seizure to a slaughtered bull (έσφαγμένοισι ταύροισι) with its head pulled backwards is a visually compelling image. This simile, as before, intensifies the emotional aspect of his description, and paints for the reader a picture of a helpless victim, eliciting *pathos* and compassion for the sufferer. Those faced with the seizures, foaming of the mouth and the general 'bizarre' behaviour of epileptics would avoid them and cause (intentionally or not) the sufferers to feel isolated and shamed because of their disease. This is at least the picture Aretaeus paints for us in this chapter, and he empathizes with their condition, which involves both the physical trauma of the illness (καμάτῳ) and the emotional (αἰσχύνῃ), through his use of such adjectives as δύσθυμοι and κατηφές. This focus on the psychological effects of disease which Aretaeus exhibits is something we have seen repeated in a number of examples, and appears to be related to the sadness in the lack of control these patients have over their condition.

The next example is a brief passage from *Περὶ σατυριάσεως (On Satyriasis)*, but one which reveals much about Aretaeus' capacity to understand a patient's emotional state. Satyriasis is a disease which strictly affects men and is

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<sup>223</sup> Aret. SA 1.5.4 & 7

<sup>224</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 244, 46.

characterized by a permanent erection with inflammation of the genitals and groin, along with a constant desire for intercourse. Aretaeus recognizes the sense of shame this illness brings to its victims when he writes,

περιστελλόμενοι, ἡσυχῇ ἐπίλυποι, κατηφές, ὥσπερ ἀχθόμενοι τῇ  
ξυμφορῇ.<sup>225</sup>

Wrapped in silent sorrow, they are downcast, as if grievously  
afflicted with their calamity.<sup>226</sup>

By describing the patients metaphorically as “περιστελλόμενοι, ἡσυχῇ ἐπίλυποι,”<sup>227</sup> Aretaeus gives this passage an air of *pathos*, and conjures up an image of someone in a deep depression. It does not appear that anyone has expressed their sadness to him (they are ἡσυχῇ and κατηφές) and he does not say he knows what they are thinking (as demonstrated by his use of ὥσπερ) but he makes the assumption that this is why they are quiet, sad and reserved. When faced with their silence and apparent dejection, Aretaeus, through empathy, interprets and communicates these in his description, attributing to them the grief he imagines they feel.

## Conclusion

Aretaeus’ moving displays of empathy and compassion towards his patients have been shown to arise in particular circumstances, which I have categorized into three themes: the desire for death as a release from pain and suffering; the importance of the skill and sensitivity of the physician; deformity, depression and shame. He does not condone euthanasia; however, he expresses understanding of a patient’s, or even a patient’s family’s, wish for death when faced with extreme pain

<sup>225</sup> Aret. SA 2.12.2

<sup>226</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 288.

<sup>227</sup> Literally, the phrase is “being wrapped up, they are sad in silence”; however, Adams’ translation of “wrapped in silent sorrow” is more elegant and captures the sense of the Greek well.

and suffering. He promotes the role of the physician as one who uses all his skills, both physically and emotionally, to help patients, whether than be to cure them or simply relieve their pain, and to apply these skills to anyone who needs them, regardless of how challenging their illness is to cure. And he feels particular compassion for those who suffer due to the deforming nature of their disease, who become especially saddened and hopeless, and who are ashamed of how their condition causes them to behave. Aretaeus spends a significant time considering the mental and emotional states of patients (and sometimes even their families), and how their illnesses affect them in this way. He expresses this through the use of affective language (e.g., emotive adjectives), rhetorical devices, such as *accumulatio* and rhetorical questions, and literary devices, such as simile. Overall, in the text of Aretaeus, we see a physician who embraces with empathy and compassion the human side of medicine: the suffering patient, the grieving family and the physician, who, although he is sometimes helpless in the face of these diseases, must strive to provide care to those who need it.

### CHAPTER 3: EPHESIAN COMPASSION: SORANUS AND RUFUS

Compassion, the emotion of feeling care for another person who is suffering and desiring to relieve his or her suffering, is sometimes synonymous with sympathy, pity or condolence and is the emotion central to this chapter. If empathy allows us to feel the emotions of another (particularly the intense ones, such as grief and pain) then compassion is the next step: actually caring about those emotions. It is a key concern for those currently operating in healthcare fields, and much energy and consideration have been spent on determining the role of this emotion in a nurse's or doctor's repertoire of skills.<sup>228</sup> But did ancient Greco-Roman physicians display and value this emotion? Compassion is not necessarily the first emotion that comes to mind when one thinks of Greek and Roman culture, especially doctors, with many ancient texts stressing the idea of reputation so much that they recommend refusing to take on particularly bad or hopeless cases.<sup>229</sup> So how did

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<sup>228</sup> Relatively recently a scholarly interest in the history of emotions has developed, for example: Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Worrying About Emotions in History," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (2002): 821-45; ———, "Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions," *Passions in Context: Journal of the History and Philosophy of the Emotions* 1(2010): 1-32; Toohey, *Boredom: A Lively History*. For scholarship on emotion in the ancient Greco-Roman world specifically, see Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature*; Fulkerson, *No Regrets: Remorse in Classical Antiquity*; Barton, *Sorrows of the Ancient Romans: The Gladiator and the Monster*; Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome*. For how historians might practice empathy in their research, see William V. Harris, "History, Empathy and Emotions," *Antike und Abendland* 56(2010): 1-23.

<sup>229</sup> Darrel W. Amundsen and Gary B. Ferngren, "Evolution of the Patient-Physician Relationship: Antiquity through the Renaissance," in *The Clinical Encounter: The Moral Fabric of the Patient-Physician Relationship*, ed. Earl E. Shelp, *Philosophy and Medicine* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1983). Hippoc. Art. 3; Celsus, *Med.* 5.26.1.

ancient physicians respond to their sick patients?<sup>230</sup> How did they feel when faced with the pain and suffering of their patients and how did their patients' emotions affect their own? Did they make them objects of compassionate treatment? Did they care about their comfort and emotional states? Or were they simply viewed as diseases in need of cures?

Soranus and Rufus, two first-century AD Ephesian medical writers, will be the focus of this chapter, which will illustrate these two writers' acknowledgement and awareness of patients' emotions, beliefs and attitudes, and how they exhibit compassion within the construct of the patient-physician relationship. Soranus has quite specific terms for compassion, which help greatly in directing our analysis. Soranus uses terms such as συμπαθής and συμπάσχω ('sympathetic' and 'to be sympathetic'); παραμυθία and παραμυθέομαι ('encouragement' and 'to encourage'); and εύαγγελίζομαι ('to speak kindly to'). In addition, Soranus will also use opposite concepts in order to censure those who are not compassionate towards others. For example, he discusses insensitive nurses who act "οὕτως... ἀπαθῶς" ('so unfeelingly'). Rufus, on the other hand, is not as direct in his expression of compassion, but displays it through extreme sensitivity to the patient's uniqueness. He values the patient narrative because he believes detailed knowledge of the individual lifestyle of the patient can be quite helpful in diagnosis and treatment.

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<sup>230</sup> Some scholars have addressed compassion and similar emotions in the ancient world, for example: Konstan, *Pity Transformed*; ———, "Altruism," 1-17; Paul M. Blowers, "Pity, Empathy, and the Tragic Spectacle of Human Suffering: Exploring the Emotional Culture of Compassion in Late Ancient Christianity," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18, no. 1 (2010): 1-27; C. Fred Alford, "Greek Tragedy and Civilization: The Cultivation of Pity," *Political Research Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (1993): 259-80; Jennifer Clarke Kosak, "A Crying Shame: Pitying the Sick in the Hippocratic Corpus and Greek Tragedy," in *Pity and Power in Ancient Athens*, ed. Rachel Hall Sternberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 253-76; R. Ferwerda, "Pity in the Life and Thought of Plotinus," in *Plotinus Amid Gnostics and Christians*, ed. David T. Runia (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1984), 53-72.

## Soranus of Ephesus

Soranus of Ephesus' most well-known surviving treatise, *Gynecology*, which covers gynecological medicine from pregnancy to birth to women's diseases, focuses on the physical as well as emotional comfort of the female patient and presents the image of a compassionate and considerate physician. Soranus was a Greek physician of the Methodist sect who lived, wrote and practiced in the late first and early second centuries AD.<sup>231</sup> There have been many works attributed to Soranus but of the texts, fragments and translations that survive today scholars have identified twenty in total.<sup>232</sup> According to the *Suda*, Soranus traveled from Ephesus to Alexandria<sup>233</sup> and then, at the end of the first century AD, journeyed to Rome to

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<sup>231</sup> The Methodic school of medicine was reportedly founded by Themison of Laodicea who based his theories on those of his teacher, Asclepiades of Bithynia, in the first century BC. (Themison's work is partially preserved by Caelius Aurelianus, while Asclepiades' work only exists now in fragments; see Robert Montraville Green, *Asclepiades: His Life and Writings* (New Haven: Elizabeth Licht, 1955).) Methodist physicians were mainly concerned with exercise, diet, and bathing and viewed disease as the result either stricture or looseness (or a mixed state) with regards how disease flowed through the pores of the body. The only two major Methodist writers whose work has survived are Caelius Aurelianus and Soranus. The *Suda* contains two entries for Soranus, one younger and one elder. It is now commonly believed by scholars, however, that both of these entries pertain to one individual, Soranus of Ephesus, the first-century AD physician (See Anne Ellis Hanson and Monica H. Green, "Soranus of Ephesus: *Methodicorum Princeps*," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.37.2(1994): 981.) Soranus the Elder is described as a physician who wrote "a large number of very fine books" while the *Suda* lists Soranus the Younger's writings as *Gynecology*, *Lives of the Physicians: Sects and Treaties*, and "various other things." (See *Suda*, s.v. ΣΩΠΑΝΟΣ.) It also states that he was born in the city of Ephesus in Asia and his date of birth has been estimated to be in the second half of the first century AD (ibid., 984.)

<sup>232</sup> Of the twenty, four are extant in the original Greek: *Gynecology*, *Signs of Fractures* (from *Surgery*), *Bandages* and *Life of Hippocrates* (from *Lives of the Physicians*, attached to the Hippocratic Corpus.) These treatises are in various states of completeness – *Gynecology* for example, although Soranus' most famous and best preserved work in Greek, suffers from periodic lacunae. This is where the Latin text of Caelius Aurelianus, a fifth century North African Roman who translated and adapted Soranus' texts, becomes extremely valuable in helping to fill in the gaps. (——, "Soranus of Ephesus: *Methodicorum Princeps*," 985.)

<sup>233</sup> In Alexandria, he would have been able to learn much in the way of anatomy and the different medical sects of the day (ibid., 970&1041.), given the city's reputation as the leading urban centre for medical education.

practice medicine.<sup>234</sup> He is considered to stand apart from other ancient Greek medical writers for several reasons. First, he was one of the few physicians who denied that the uterus was an animal.<sup>235</sup> Second, his writing is free from superstition, which cannot be said of all ancient physicians,<sup>236</sup> although he does not fail to see the psychological value in such things.<sup>237</sup> Finally, even though he has been definitively identified as a Methodist, he did not ignore other valuable sources of knowledge outside his sect.<sup>238</sup>

Five passages of Soranus' *Gynecology* will be analysed in this chapter for their attention to compassionate care. Five may not be a substantial number; however, the *Gynecology* is not as large a book as other medical texts, such as those of Aretaeus or Caelius, and throughout it Soranus exhibits a general sense of compassion and a concern for the overall well-being of his female patients. For example, in the citation to follow, Soranus lays out the qualifications an excellent and compassionate midwife should have, and stresses various important aspects not only of her personal comportment (her hands and nails, her physical strength, etc.), but also her personality, including her emotional disposition and intellect:

ἀτάραχον, ἀκατάπληκτον ἐν τοῖς κινδύνοις, δεξιῶς τὸν περὶ τῶν  
βοηθημάτων λόγον ἀποδιδόναι δυναμένην, παραμυθίαν ταῖς  
καμνούσαις πορίζουσαν, συμπάσχουσιν καὶ οὐ πάντως  
προτετοκυῖαν, ὥς <ἐνιοι> λέγουσιν, ἵνα συνειδήσει τῶν ἀλγημάτων  
ταῖς τικτούσαις συμπαθῇ, <οὐ> μᾶλλον γὰρ <τοῦτο> τετοκυίας.<sup>239</sup>

<sup>234</sup> Many doctors from the East did this, including Galen. As Hanson and Green point out, Soranus appears to be familiar with medical practices from both Alexandria and Rome, thus providing evidence for the truth of the *Suda*'s information (ibid., 982.)

<sup>235</sup> Johannes Ilberg, ed. *Soranus: Gynecology*, vol. 4, CMG (Leipzig: Teubner, 1927), 1.3.8.

<sup>236</sup> Owsei Temkin, *Soranus' Gynecology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956), xxxi.

<sup>237</sup> Sor. *Gyn.* 3.10.42

<sup>238</sup> Neuburger, *History of Medicine*, 1: 234.

<sup>239</sup> Sor. *Gyn.* 1.4.3-4



She will be unperturbed, unafraid in danger, able to state clearly the reasons for her measures, she will bring reassurance to her patients, and be sympathetic. And, it is not absolutely essential for her to have borne children, as some people contend, in order that she may sympathize with the mother, because of her experience with pain; for <to have sympathy> is <not> more characteristic of a person who has given birth to a child.<sup>240</sup>

The terms παραμυθίαν, συμπάσχουσιν, and συμπαθῇ highlight the important role of compassion in this passage. Although a midwife's physical abilities and intellect are obviously important in Soranus' opinion, as we can see he does not neglect her ability to be compassionate as well: she brings 'reassurance' (παραμυθίαν) and is 'sympathetic' (συμπάσχουσιν). In addition, Soranus rejects the idea that a sympathetic midwife has to have also given birth herself, which is apparently advocated by others. He appears to consider compassion a personality trait, something innate, as opposed to something gained by experience or learned from others. Regardless, it is a necessary emotion for a midwife of excellent quality and, in the following chapter, a favourable characteristic for a wet nurse as well.

Soranus shows concern for the relationship between mother and infant in his discussion of breast feeding. He is primarily an advocate for the mother nursing her child herself, and he writes:

ἄμεινον γὰρ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπ' ἴσης ἐχόντων τῷ μητρῷ γάλακτι τρέφεσθαι τὸ νήπιον· τοῦτο γὰρ οἰκειότερον αὐτῷ, καὶ πρὸς τὰ γεννηθέντα συμπαθέστεραι μᾶλλον αἱ μητέρες γίνονται...<sup>241</sup>

To be sure, other things being equal, it is better to feed the child with maternal milk; for this is more suited to it, and the mothers become more sympathetic towards the offspring..."<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Temkin, *Soranus' Gynecology*: 6.

<sup>241</sup> Sor. *Gyn.* 2.18.14-15

<sup>242</sup> Temkin, *Soranus' Gynecology*: 90.

His first argument is biological: the milk of the mother is οἰκειότερον ('more suited' or 'more natural') to the child; however, he also says the act of breast feeding makes mothers συμπαθέστεραι, which we can translate as 'more sympathetic', but which comes from συμπαθής, which is an adjective that literally means 'feeling together.' This suggests an alignment of the mother and child's psychological states, whereby the mother becomes more empathetically in tune with her child's emotions. Soranus is not alone in his view, as this is a sentiment echoed by Plutarch in his treatise, *On the Education of Children*, from his *Moralia*. He, too, believes that mothers should nurse their own children for the same reasons as Soranus and writes in a rather moving passage:

δεῖ δέ, ὥς ἐγὼ ἂν φαίην, αὐτὰς τὰς μητέρας τὰ τέκνα τρέφειν καὶ τούτοις τοὺς μαστοὺς ὑπέχειν· συμπαθέστερόν τε γὰρ θρέψουσι καὶ διὰ πλείονος ἐπιμελείας, ὥς ἂν ἔνδοθεν καὶ τὸ δὴ λεγόμενον ἐξ ὀνύχων ἀγαπῶσαι τὰ τέκνα. ...εὐνούστεραι τοῖς τέκνοις γίγνονται ἂν καὶ φιλητικώτεραι. καὶ μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἀπεικότως· ἡ συντροφία γὰρ ὥσπερ ἐπιτόνιον ἐστὶ τῆς εὐνοίας.<sup>243</sup>

Mothers ought, I should say, themselves to feed their infants and nurse them themselves. For they will feed them with a livelier affection and greater care, as loving them inwardly, and, according to the proverb, [from] their finger-tips... mothers would come to be more kindly disposed towards their children, and more inclined to show them affection. Not unnaturally either, I swear; for this [familiarity] is a bond that knits kindness together.<sup>244</sup>

Plutarch uses the same term, συμπαθέστερός, to describe the relationship that develops between a breast-fed child and its mother, this same 'feeling together' which denotes a type of empathy that occurs. This type of affection and attention (ἐπιμέλεια) Plutarch says comes ἐνδοθεν ('from within') which suggests there is an

<sup>243</sup> Plut. *Mor. De lib. ed.* 3c-d

<sup>244</sup> Babbitt, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 1: 13, 15.

opposing type of attention that is externally applied, perhaps by an assigned caretaker who has not developed the same empathic bond with the child. To further emphasise this, he provides an adage which says that the mother will love (ἀγαπάζω) the child from the fingertips (ἐξ ὀνύχων) which highlights the strength of this internal feeling Plutarch is trying to describe. This ‘common nurturing’ (συντροφία) is like a sinew or a binding rope (ἐπιτόνιον) which works in an empathetic way to create kind affection (εὔνοια) between mother to child.<sup>245</sup>

Soranus is not obstinate in his recommendation of breast feeding, and agrees that sometimes it is necessary to employ a wet nurse. Just like a midwife, the choosing of a wet nurse should be done carefully and her emotional aptitude is just as important as her health, as Soranus says she “should be self-controlled, sympathetic (συμπαθής) and not ill-tempered...”.<sup>246</sup> He further explains:

συμπαθῇ δὲ καὶ φιλόστοργον, ἵνα καὶ τὰ τῆς ὑπηρεσίας ἀόκνως παρέχῃ καὶ ἀγογγύστως. ἔνιαι γὰρ οὕτως ἔχουσιν ἀπαθῶς πρὸς τὸ γαλουχούμενον, ὥστε μηδὲ ἐπὶ πολὺ κλαυθυρίζοντος αὐτοῦ ποιήσασθαι πρόνοιαν, ἀλλὰ μηδὲ σχηματίζειν τὸ κείμενον, ἔᾶσαι δ' ἐφ' ἐνὸς σχήματος, ὥστε πολλάκις διὰ τὴν θλίψιν προκακοπαθοῦν ναρκᾶν τε καὶ φαύλως διατίθεσθαι τὸ νευρῶδες.<sup>247</sup>

“Sympathetic” and affectionate, that she will fulfill her duties without hesitation and without murmuring. For some wet nurses are so lacking in sympathy [ἀπαθῶς<sup>248</sup>] towards the nursling that they not only pay no heed when it cries for a long time, but do not

<sup>245</sup> As similar concept is presented by Plutarch in his *Coniugalia praecepta*, but between husband and wife (*Mor. Con. prae.* 142e): κρατεῖν δὲ δεῖ τὸν ἄνδρα τῆς γυναικὸς οὐχ ὡς δεσπότην κτήματος ἀλλ' ὡς ψυχὴν σώματος, συμπαθοῦντα καὶ συμπεφυκότα τῇ εὐνοίᾳ. (“And control ought to be exercised by the man over the woman, not as the owner has control of a piece of property, but, as the souls controls the body, by entering into her feelings and being knit to her through goodwill.” (———, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 2: 323.)) The συμφύω in this passage echoes the συντροφία in Soranus.

<sup>246</sup> Temkin, *Soranus' Gynecology*: 90.

<sup>247</sup> Sor. *Gyn.* 1.19.13-14

<sup>248</sup> Not literally “are so lacking in sympathy” as Temkin translates it here, but more “are so unaffected/ uncaring.” For Soranus, both physical and emotional sympathy is συμπάθεια as seen at the beginning of the passage.

even arrange its position when it lies still; rather, they leave it in one position so that often because of the pressure the sinewy parts suffer and consequently become numb and bad.<sup>249</sup>

Here we have a focus on compassion for the newborn. For Soranus, then, compassion can be a bonding agent: it creates an affectionate (φιλόστοργος) connection between the nurse and the infant which is necessary so that the infant is properly nurtured. Like the midwife from the previous passage, not every nurse is naturally compassionate and some act 'so unaffectedly' (οὐτως... ἀπαθῶς) that they do not have the correct emotional response towards the infant and therefore neglect it. The term ἀπαθής is used here in order to criticize the lack of compassion, which emphasizes the importance Soranus places on this emotion as an essential aspect of the nurse's and midwife's work.

The first example comes from Soranus' chapter on pica (or *kissa*), which is a condition of pregnancy involving upset stomach combined with dizziness, headache, vomiting, and digestive issues. The most notable symptom of pica is the desire to eat "things not customary like earth, charcoal, tendrils of the vine, unripe and acid fruit."<sup>250</sup> The concept of pica today is more general, being applied to women (pregnant and not) and to men, and it is complicated by modern categories of

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<sup>249</sup> Temkin, *Soranus' Gynecology*: 93.

<sup>250</sup> Sor. *Gyn.* 1.48.3: "καὶ τῶν ἀσυνήθων ὄρεξις οἶον γῆς, ἀνθράκων, ἐλίκων ἀμπέλου καὶ ὀπώρας ἁώρου τε καὶ ὀξώδους." For modern examples of pregnant women eating dirt and stones, and the possible nutritional reasons behind it, see Marc Lallanilla, "Eating Dirt: It Might Be Good for You," ABC News, <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/Story?id=1167623&page=1>; Anne Mawathe, "Why Kenyan Women Eat Stones," BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7596067.stm>.

mental illnesses, such as obsessive compulsive disorder.<sup>251</sup> But pica as a symptom of pregnancy is still being studied today in such places as Saudi Arabia, Kenya, Tanzania and Mexico.<sup>252</sup> Soranus suggests a regime which should help remove or at least control the condition; however, it appears to be a psychologically-consuming craving, since for some women the hunger for these strange substances does not abate. He advises attempting to reason with the pregnant woman first, but if this does not work, to eventually allow her to eat what she wants, even if this entails, presumably, substances such as dirt or charcoal:

ταῖς δὲ πρὸς τὰ βλαβερά τῶν κυουσῶν ἐπιθυμίαις τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἐνστατέον διὰ λόγων, ὥς τῆς ἀπ' αὐτῶν βλάβης [καὶ] τῶν τὰς ἐπιθυμίας πληρύντων παραλόγως ἢ καὶ τὸν στόμαχον ακούσης, οὕτως δὲ καὶ τὸ κατὰ γαστρός... εἰ δ' ἀνιαρῶς ἔχοιεν, κατὰ μὲν τὰς πρώτας ἡμέρας οὐδὲν ροσενεκτέον, ὕστερον δὲ καὶ μετὰ τινὰς ἡμέρας, μὴ τυγχάνουσιν <γὰρ> ὧν θέλουσιν τῇ δυσθυμίᾳ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπισχνοῦσιν καὶ τὸ σῶμα.<sup>253</sup>

One must oppose the desires of pregnant women for harmful things [i.e., earth, charcoal, etc.] first by arguing that the damage from the things which satisfy the desires in an unreasonable way harms the fetus just as it harms the stomach... If, however, they feel wretched, though one should offer them none of these things during the first days, some days later one should do so; <for> if they do not obtain

<sup>251</sup> The DSM-IV-TR does not make a gender distinction when defining pica (307.52) and lists it under 'Disorder Usually First Diagnosed in Infancy, Childhood, or Adolescence'; other researchers have suggested it may have more in common with obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorders; cf. Dan J. Stein, Colin Bouwer et al., "Pica and the Obsessive-Compulsive Spectrum Disorders," *South African Medical Journal* 86, no. 12 (1996): 1586-92; Edward A. Rose, John H. Porcerelli et al., "Pica: Common but Commonly Missed," *The Journal of the American Board of Family Practice* 13, no. 5 (2000): 353-58.

<sup>252</sup> For modern examples of pregnant women eating dirt and stones, and the possible nutritional reasons behind it, see Mohammed Ahmed Al-Kanhal and Ibrahim Ahmed Bani, "Food Habits During Pregnancy among Saudi Women," *International Journal of Vitamin and Nutrition Research* 65, no. 3 (1995): 206-10; P. O. Ngozi, "Pica Practices of Pregnant Women in Nairobi, Kenya," *East African Medical Journal* 85, no. 2 (2008): 72-79; C. N. Nyaruhucha, "Food Cravings, Aversions and Pica among Pregnant Women in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania," *Tanzania Journal of Health Research* 11, no. 1 (2009): 29-34; E. Simpson, J. D. Mull et al., "Pica During Pregnancy in Low-Income Women Born in Mexico," *Western Journal of Medicine* 173, no. 1 (2000): 20-24.

<sup>253</sup> Sor. *Gyn.* 1.53.1-2

what they want, even the body, through the despondency of the soul, grows thinner.<sup>254</sup>

After attempting to explain why she should not eat the damaging item and waiting for a few days (I assume to see whether the craving abates), Soranus recommends allowing the τὰ βλαβερὰ – the harmful things, that is, the earth, charcoal, tendrils of the vine, unripe and acid fruit which he mentions at the beginning of the chapter. His reason for this is psychological: not being able to satisfy the craving will cause the woman to feel “wretched” (άνιαρός) and become subject to despondency (δυσθυμία), and this emotional state will affect her health in a correspondingly negative way. According to Soranus, this psychological frame of mind is less favourable than whatever the woman might want to eat and therefore it should be permitted. Thus, rather than single-mindedly forbidding her bizarre cravings, Soranus sees beyond the symptom to the woman’s mental health and values it more highly than the possible damage her craving might cause. His ability to understand her feelings, and his compassion for her frustration, thus becomes apparent.

Sentiments of a similarly compassionate nature are echoed further on, when Soranus discusses the birth of the child. The midwife and her assistants are held to the same standards when attending to the parturient, especially if she experiences difficulty with the birth:

εἰ μὲν ἀσθενὴς εἴη ἡ κυοφοροῦσα καὶ ἄτονος, τὴν μαίωσιν ἐπὶ κατακειμένης αὐτῆς ποιητέον, ὅτι ἀσχυλτότερος οὗτος ὁ τρόπος καὶ ἀφοβώτερος... τρεῖς δὲ γυναῖκες ὑπηρέτιδες ἕστωσαν προσηνῶς δυνάμεναι τὸ δειλὸν παραμυθεῖσθαι τῆς κυοφορούσης, κἂν μὴ πεπειραμέναι τῶν τοκετῶν τυγχάνωσιν... εἴτα καλὸν καὶ τὴν ὄψιν τῆς κυοφορούσης φαίνεσθαι τῇ μαίᾳ, ἥτις παραμυθεῖσθω τὸ δειλὸν αὐτῆς εὐαγγελιζομένη τὸ ἄφοβον καὶ τὴν εὐτοκίαν...

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<sup>254</sup> Temkin, *Soranus' Gynecology*: 53-54.

φυλασσέσθω δὲ ἡ μαῖα τὸ εἰς τοὺς γυναικείους κόλπους τῆς  
 τικτούσης τὸ πρόσωπον ἐνατενίζειν, ὅπως μὴ αἰδουμένης συσταλῇ  
 τὸ σῶμα...<sup>255</sup>

...if the gravida is weak and toneless one must deliver her lying down since this way is less painful and causes less fear... There should be three woman helpers, capable of gently allaying the anxiety of the gravida even if they do not happen to have had experience with birth... Furthermore it is proper that the face of the gravida should be visible to the midwife who shall allay her anxiety, assuring her that there is nothing to fear and that delivery will be easy... The midwife should beware of fixing her gaze steadfastly on the genitals of the laboring woman, lest being ashamed, her body become contracted.<sup>256</sup>

Here again we see the use of παραμυθέομαι, meaning to encourage, speak soothingly, or comfort, and this demonstrates Soranus' level of compassion for the woman in birth and that he expects midwives and attendants to convey this as well. He almost prescribes lines for her to say when he uses the word εὐαγγελιζομένη, which gives a sense of announcing good news, and insisting that they should be face-to-face reinforces this. This positioning allows for more eye contact, which is an important way for individuals to communicate and create intimacy, especially in a medical setting, and a technique used in healthcare today to promote what researchers call 'clinical engagement.'<sup>257</sup> In this case, the midwife can judge the parturient's emotional state and react accordingly, and she can also express compassion to her patient directly through encouragement (παραμυθέομαι), by focusing on a 'good birth' (εὐτοκία) and lessening the woman's fear (ἄφοβος). Inappropriate gazing is addressed in Soranus' text, too, however, when he writes

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<sup>255</sup> Sor. *Gyn.* 2.4.3-2.5.1

<sup>256</sup> Temkin, *Soranus' Gynecology*: 75.

<sup>257</sup> See Kai MacDonald, "Patient-Clinician Eye Contact: Social Neuroscience and Art of Clinical Engagement," *Postgraduate Medicine* 121, no. 4 (2009): 136-44.

that the midwife should avoid looking directly at the genitals of the parturient because she may become αἰδουμένης ('embarrassed' or 'ashamed') and clench reactively.<sup>258</sup> Here again he takes into account how the woman might feel and provides advice on how the midwife should behave in order to avoid an unwanted reaction. All of this reveals a physician who pays a great deal of empathetic attention to the psychological state of the gravida and shows the importance that Soranus placed on the mother's emotional health for the process of childbirth.

Coincidentally, a mid-second-century AD relief on a tomb from Ostia's Isola Sacra contains an image of this sort of scene. The tomb contains two terracotta reliefs and an inscription by the commissioner of the tomb, Scribonia Attice, who, as she tells us, erected this structure for herself, her husband, and other family and freedmen.<sup>259</sup> Both her own and her husband's professions are depicted on the reliefs to each side of the doorway: a physician and a midwife, respectively. The midwife relief illustrates a birthing scene: a parturient sits in a chair (most likely a birthing chair) while being held by an assistant and examined physically by a midwife.<sup>260</sup> Soranus' instructions during labour all involve feeling and touching the woman - not *looking* – and the gesture of the midwife in this relief supports this: she crouches in front of the seated parturient and extends one hand between her legs in what can be

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<sup>258</sup> For gaze and shame in ancient Rome, see Carlin Barton, "Being in the Eyes: Shame and Sight in Ancient Rome," in *The Roman Eyes: Vision, Power, and the Body*, ed. David Fredrick (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 216-35.

<sup>259</sup> IPOstie-A, 00222 = ISIS 00133 = Gummerus-01, 00186.

<sup>260</sup> Soranus describes a birthing chair at *Sor. Gyn.* 2.3. The relief reads: "Scribonia Attice has built <this monument> for herself and for Marcus Ulpius Amerimnus, her husband, for Scribonia Callityche, her mother, for Diocles and for her freedmen with their descendants, with exception of Panaratus and Prosdocia." (Author's translation.) Scribonia Attice's husband appears to have been a physician, judging by the matching relief on the other side of the tomb's entrance, which shows a man performing a venesection on another man's leg with medical tools in the background.



assumed to be a gesture of examination. As we have seen in the above passage, Soranus gives advice on the midwife's gaze, too: she should not look directly at the woman's genitals so as to avoid causing feelings of shame in the patient, and instead she should make direct eye contact so that she can reassure her. The recommended eye contact is not present (she looks outward towards the audience); however, this relief appears both as a 'snap-shot' of a birthing scene and a presentation of Scribonia Attice's profession to the audience.<sup>261</sup> The midwife simultaneously avoids inappropriate staring (as recommended by Soranus) and engages the audience with her outward gaze.<sup>262</sup>

The final passage is from the third chapter, which deals mainly with the diseases of women. In it, Soranus addresses magic and superstition which, as a very scientific physician, he denies as having any physical, medicinal benefit. Their psychosomatic effect, however, is another story:

φασὶ δὲ <ἔνιοι> καὶ κατὰ ἀντιπάθειαν ἔνια ποιεῖν, καθάπερ Μαγνητὶν λίθον καὶ τὸν Ἀσσιον καὶ λαγωῦ πυτίαν καὶ ἄλλα τινὰ τῶν περιάπτων, οἷς <ἡμεῖς> οὐ προσέχομεν. οὐκ ἀποκωλυτέον δὲ τὴν παράληψιν αὐτῶν· καὶ γὰρ εἰ μηδὲν ἐξ εὐθείας παρέχει τὸ περιάπτειν, ἀλλ' οὖν δι' ἐλπίδος εὐθυμοτέραν τὴν κάμνουσαν τάχα παρέξει.<sup>263</sup>

Some people say that some things are effective by antipathy, such as the magnet and the Assian stone and hare's rennet and certain other amulets to which we on our own part pay no attention. Yet one should not forbid their use; for even if the amulet has no direct effect, still through hope it will possibly make the patient more cheerful.<sup>264</sup>

<sup>261</sup> Natalie Kampen, *Image and Status: Roman Working Women in Ostia* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1981), 74. Kampen describes the relief as "heraldic."

<sup>262</sup> This also fits with the fact that Scribonia Attice is the dedicator of the inscription and therefore the 'voice' of both it and the image.

<sup>263</sup> Sor. *Gyn.* 3.42.3

<sup>264</sup> Temkin, *Soranus' Gynecology*: 165.

Superstition holds no somatic value in Soranus' rational view, but as a physician who is cognizant of his patients' emotional well-being, he does not fail to see the psychological value in amulets and magic, which is their ability to impart *ἐλπίς* ('hope.') Hope, according to Soranus, can promote *εὐθυμία* ('cheerfulness'), the assumption being that an optimistic mental outlook affects the physical body in a positive way. This is similar to the previous passage regarding pica, but from the other side. In the pica passage, the woman's feeling of being miserable on account of not being able to satisfy a craving has a negative impact on her physical health. Here, the amulet creates a positive mindset which has a positive impact on the female patient's health. Soranus recognizes this connection between *psyche* and *soma* outright in his section on difficult birth, when he says, καὶ δὴ παρὰ τὴν τίκτουςαν δυστοκία γίνεται, ὅταν <ἢ> ἐν ψυχικῇ δυνάμει ἢ τὸ αἴτιον ἢ ἐν τῇ ζωτικῇ, ἡγουν τοῖς σώμασι<sup>265</sup> ("Now difficult labor is occasioned by the parturient, when the cause is <either> in the psychic faculty or in the vital faculty, that is to say in the body."<sup>266</sup>) This mind-body approach to gynecology is actually present to some degree in all four of the passages I have examined here and appears to be informed by Soranus' consideration of and compassion for his patients.

These five passages from Soranus' *Gynecology*, along with the text as a whole, reveal a physician who expected a high level of care, compassion and emotional support to be provided to women at various stages in their pregnancies, as well as those who were suffering from 'women's diseases.' He continuously gives instructions on how to be sensitive and sympathetic to patients; how to make them

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<sup>265</sup> Sor. *Gyn.* 4.2.1-2

<sup>266</sup> Temkin, *Soranus' Gynecology*: 178.

comfortable and secure; and how to encourage and reassure them during difficult situations. The fact that Soranus puts forth these ideas so clearly and consistently throughout his work must mean he valued them greatly himself. His second most famous medical treatise, *On Acute Diseases and On Chronic Diseases*, only survives in Greek in a few fragments; however, Caelius Aurelianus, of the fifth century AD, preserved this text in a Latin translation and adaptation, and this we will address in Chapter Four.<sup>267</sup> For now, let us turn to our second Ephesian, Rufus.

### **Rufus of Ephesus**

Patient-focused medicine is at the core of Rufus' best-known text, *Medical Questions*. In it, he gives advice regarding how a physician should direct patient interviews and the importance of receiving information about a patient's illness from the patient himself, which includes the patient's lifestyle, likes, dislikes and habits. The value Rufus places on the patient's narrative and individuality speaks to his sensitivity towards the patient and the contribution he can make towards his diagnosis and recovery, and this sensitivity belies a physician with an empathetic and compassionate disposition, who centres his medical methodology on the individual, as opposed to a collection of symptoms.

According to the *Suda*, Rufus of Ephesus lived and worked at the beginning of the second century AD under the reign of the Emperor Trajan, although this date is controversial due to a reference to Rufus in Damocrates, a physician who lived

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<sup>267</sup> A TLG search of Soranus' *Signs of Fractures* and *Bandages* does not produce any significant results. When comparing Soranus' text to Mustio's sixth-century version, we can see that the passages discussed here are either reasonably the same or have been deleted.

during the reigns of Nero and Vespasian.<sup>268</sup> Rufus was the author of many works (approximately ninety-six are known); however, only a few have survived mostly intact to the present day in Greek: *Medical Questions*, *On the Names of the Parts of the Human Body*, *On Diseases of the Bladder and Kidneys*, and *On Satyriasis and Gonorrhea*.<sup>269</sup> *On Gout* survives in Latin, *On Nabidh* and *Case Histories*, in Arabic, and *On Jaundice*, in Latin and Arabic. Various fragments also exist in Greek, Arabic and Latin.<sup>270</sup> Although assumed to be Greek, his name points to a Roman connection but it is unknown whether he ever visited the capital.<sup>271</sup> He studied and practiced medicine in his native city of Ephesus, and also in Alexandria where we may assume he acquired much of his medical training especially with regard to anatomy. From his writings we know that he gained much of his anatomical knowledge from dissecting monkeys and was disappointed that human dissection was no longer permitted.<sup>272</sup>

Akin to the problem of defining the medical tradition followed by Aretaeus of Cappadocia, scholars have difficulty identifying Rufus with a specific medical sect. Ilberg classifies him as a dogmatist; however, all we can identify for certain is his adherence to Hippocratic medicine and he has been considered “eclectic and

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<sup>268</sup> *Suda*, s.v. ΡΟΥΦΟΣ. Fridolf Kudlien, "Rufus of Ephesus," in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, ed. Charles Coulston Gillispie (Detroit: Scribner, 2008), 603.

<sup>269</sup> Johannes Ilberg, "Rufus Von Ephesos, Ein Griechischer Arzt in Trajanischer Zeit," in *Abhandlungen Der Philosophisch-Historischen Klasse Der Sächsischen Akademie Der Wissenschaften* (Leipzig: Von S. Hirzel, 1930), 47-50.

<sup>270</sup> For the fragments pertaining to Rufus' *On Melancholy* specifically, see Peter Pormann, *Rufus of Ephesus: On Melancholy*, Scripta Antiquitatis Posterioris Ad Ethicam Religionemque Pertinentia (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

<sup>271</sup> Ilberg, "Rufus Von Ephesos, Ein Griechischer Arzt in Trajanischer Zeit," 3.

<sup>272</sup> Charles Daremburg and Ch-Em Ruelle, eds., *Oeuvres De Rufus D'éphèse* (Amsterdam: A.M. Hakkert, 1963), 134.

synthetic.”<sup>273</sup> His medical interests were wide and far-reaching and his skill in clinical observation is demonstrated in *Medical Questions*. This text is full of examples of how one should conduct medical interviews: the sort of queries one should make and the observations one needs to be on the lookout for when a patient is not, or cannot be, forthcoming. This patient-centred approach is the main reflection of his compassionate disposition and sensitivity to his patients. He concentrates on them and their individual natures first and foremost. According to Neuburger, Rufus was a pioneer in many fields and advanced the art of medicine on many levels. For instance, he was one of the earliest to write of bubonic plague, leprosy and *condylomata*; he also determined that Guinea-worm was spread by means of impure drinking water and invented many medical compounds.<sup>274</sup>

If increased patient-centred communication by the physician leads to more compassion, as modern researchers have determined, then judging by his *Medical Questions*, which is concerned with how a physician interviews his patients and the importance of communicating directly with them, Rufus was an empathetic and compassionate physician.<sup>275</sup> In his clinical encounters, he was a proponent of direct inquiry when possible and believes this to be the best way to judge the situation and diagnose correctly; then information can be gathered from various family members, friends and servants. He says that simply speaking with the patient reveals a great amount of important information: his rationality, his memory, whether he is acting

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<sup>273</sup> Ilberg, "Rufus Von Ephesos, Ein Griechischer Arzt in Trajanischer Zeit," 3-4. Arthur John Brock, *Greek Medicine: Being Extracts Illustrative of Medical Writings from Hippocrates to Galen* (New York: AMS Press, 1929), 112.

<sup>274</sup> Neuburger, *History of Medicine*, 1: 233-34.

<sup>275</sup> See Moira Stewart, Judith Belle Brown et al., eds., *Patient-Centered Medicine: Transforming the Clinical Method*, 2nd ed. (Abingdon: Radcliffe Medical Press, 2003).

himself, his pain level, and even something as simple as whether he is hard of hearing.<sup>276</sup> Agosta refers to this type of sensitivity as “empathic receptivity” and says it involves a particular kind of awareness in the listener, like a “third ear.”<sup>277</sup> He appears to have felt that this view was at odds with some other physicians, such as Callimachus, whom he cites as an example. According to Rufus, Callimachus believed that physicians did not need to speak with the patient or his family at all and everything could be gleaned from the observance of physical symptoms.<sup>278</sup> This is akin to a modern physician running a battery of tests without ever speaking to the patient about their complaint, an approach which has garnered much criticism in modern society for its lack of compassion.<sup>279</sup> Rufus disagrees with this approach, saying:

ἐγὼ δὲ ἡγοῦμαι μὲν καὶ παρ' <ἐ>αυτοῦ δύνασθαί τινα πολλὰ τῶν ἐν  
ταῖς νόσοις ἐξευρίσκειν, κάλλιον δέ γε καὶ σαφέστερον ἐν τοῖς  
ἐρωτήμασιν... Καὶ τὰ μὲν τοιαῦτα ἔχει [ἔχει] τινὰ καὶ παρὰ τῶν

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<sup>276</sup> Ruf. *Quaest. Med.* 1-3

<sup>277</sup> Agosta, "Empathy and Intersubjectivity," 46.

<sup>278</sup> Hans Gärtner, ed. *Rufus of Ephesus: Quaestiones Medicinales*, CMG (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1962), 21. The Callimachus to which Rufus refers must be the third-century BC physician who studied under Herophilus in Alexandria. Polybius (12.25d) tells us that medicine has three ‘departments,’ the first of which is ‘rhetorical’ and this is the approach of Callimachus and Herophilus of Alexandria. Rufus (*Quaest. Med.* 3.21) says of Callimachus: “He... maintains that that it is unnecessary to make any inquiries either about other diseases or injuries... He holds that physical signs (*semeia*) in each case are enough to indicate both the disease and its cause, and that on these we can base the whole prognosis and a more efficient treatment. He considers it superfluous to ask about even the determining causes of a disease, such as the manner of life and the various occupations... He maintains that the physician has nothing to learn from any of these...” (Brock, *Greek Medicine: Being Extracts Illustrative of Medical Writings from Hippocrates to Galen*: 116.) Polybius essentially supports this view, saying that ‘rhetorical’ doctors receive great reputations but are as capable of curing the sick as someone who has never read a medical book. This, he says, has led to some dangerous situations where people have been persuaded to put their health in the hands of these men to their own detriment. (Polyb. 12.25d)

<sup>279</sup> Youngson, "Compassion in Healthcare," 6-9; Sayantani DasGupta and Rita Charon, "Personal Illness Narratives: Using Reflective Writing to Teach Empathy," *Academic Medicine* 79, no. 4 (2004): 351-56; R. Charon, "Narrative Medicine: A Model for Empathy, Reflection, Profession, and Trust," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 286, no. 15 (2001): 1897-902; Spiro, *Empathy and the Practice of Medicine: Beyond Pills and the Scalpel*; Bellet and Maloney, "The Importance of Empathy as an Interviewing Skill in Medicine," 1831-32.

συμπτωμάτων ἔνδειξιν τοῦ γινώσκεισθαι· χρόνον δὲ τῆς νόσου καὶ ἐθισμόν τὸν πρὸς ἕκαστα καὶ φύσιν τὴν ἐκάστου ἐξαίρετον, ταῦτα οὐ μοι δοκεῖ γινῶναί τις μὴ ἐρωτήσας καὶ εἶναι παντὸς ἄλλου καιριώτερον τῇ τέχνῃ εἰδέναι.<sup>280</sup>

My own view, however, is that, while one may discover a great deal by one's self about disease, yet one does this best and most definitely by means of questions... Certainly in such conditions the signs do also afford some indication for diagnosis, but as regards the duration of the illness, the patient's habits in various respects, and his natural disposition - all these, it seems to me, can only be known by asking, and to know them is, in practice, more important than anything else.<sup>281</sup>

According to Rufus, the best physician determines the correct course of treatment for an illness by observing *and* listening. This concept of evaluating the entire patient is very similar to the modern movement of 'whole patient care' which aims to take into consideration the full picture of a patient's medical history, their cultural background, their mental and physical well-being, and their family life, as well as a complete scientific medical examination and testing.<sup>282</sup> This type of approach is thought by modern proponents to be more compassionate and sensitive to the best interests of the patient, supplying the best treatment possible for that individual. The same can be said of Rufus' approach: by being aware of all the discrete elements of a person's life, the physician can get a more complete picture of the disease and how to cure it. Each person is unique and Rufus writes,

διό μοι δοκῶ καλῶς ἂν τινα καὶ φύσιν τὴν ἐκάστου πρὸς ἕκαστα ἐρωτῆσαι. οὐ γὰρ πάντες πεφύκαμεν τρόπῳ τῷ αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάνυ ἀλλήλων διαφέρομεν εἰς ὀτιοῦν χρῆμα.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> Ruf. *Quaest. Med.* 22-23

<sup>281</sup> Brock, *Greek Medicine: Being Extracts Illustrative of Medical Writings from Hippocrates to Galen*: 116.

<sup>282</sup> Cf. Tom A. Hutchinson, ed. *Whole Person Care: A New Paradigm for the 21st Century* (New York: Springer, 2011).

<sup>283</sup> Ruf. *Quaest. Med.* 16

Accordingly, I believe that it is well to inquire also about each person's nature (*physis*) in various respects: we are not all naturally the same; we differ very greatly from one another in all sorts of ways.<sup>284</sup>

Greek medicine has a tendency to generalize, making a number of assumptions based on climate, locale, gender, diet, lifestyle, and other factors.<sup>285</sup> Although general rules and categories can be helpful, and Rufus does not break with this approach to medicine entirely, his emphasis on individuality and careful inquiry demonstrates an acknowledgement and understanding of the distinct personalities, physical make-up and lifestyles of his patients. Not everyone digests the same food in the same way; not everyone responds to environmental factors, such as climate, in the same way. This medical method shows Rufus to be a compassionate and sensitive physician, and is indicative of a compassionately disposed physician, who considers each patient individually.

In *Medical Questions*, he stresses learning information through direct interaction with the patient as opposed to others (such as family or servants) or solely from observation. Rufus, then, makes the patient the focus and not so much the disease. The sick are now not simply a collection of symptoms but individual people who may express their illnesses in different ways. The physician, then, becomes a better healer by using his compassion to take the time to understand each patient and their habits, lifestyle and what is normal or not normal for them. This relinquishes a certain amount of power to the patient, as well, when the

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<sup>284</sup> Brock, *Greek Medicine: Being Extracts Illustrative of Medical Writings from Hippocrates to Galen*: 115.

<sup>285</sup> Hippocrates' *Airs, Waters and Places* is the best example of this approach to medicine in antiquity.



physician admits that certain things can only be learned by inquiry. This is particularly true when it comes to dreams, as Rufus states,

Πάνυ δὲ ἑμαυτὸν πείθω κατὰ τοὺς χυμοὺς τοὺς ἐν τῷ σώματι δόξας  
ἐνυπνίων ἐγγίγνεσθαι σημαινούσας καὶ ἀγαθὰ καὶ κακὰ τῷ  
ἀνθρώπῳ, ὧν κατάληψις ἄλλη οὐκ ἔστι μὴ ἀκούσαντι.<sup>286</sup>

I am fully persuaded that ideas occurring in dreams, whether of good or bad significance to the individual, depend upon the humours in the body; and, further, that no full understanding of such ideas is possible without hearing what the patient has to say.<sup>287</sup>

Like other ancient Greek physicians, Rufus believed in the diagnostic power of dreams.<sup>288</sup> According to this theory, the balance of humours in the body influences the content of a person's dreams, and this can provide vital clues as to the nature of the imbalance.<sup>289</sup> The cult of Asklepios also engaged in dream therapy by interpreting dreams as signs sent from the god regarding the proper medical treatment for the ailing dreamer, and occasionally the god would even affect a cure within a dream.<sup>290</sup> Rufus believed that the details of dreams needed to be relayed by the dreamer directly in order to get a "full understanding" (κατάληψις) of what it meant. Dreams are extremely personal and if they contain any significance for an

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<sup>286</sup> Ruf. *Quaest. Med.* 33

<sup>287</sup> Brock, *Greek Medicine: Being Extracts Illustrative of Medical Writings from Hippocrates to Galen*: 118.

<sup>288</sup> E.g., Hippoc. *Reg. IV* and *Epid. I*. At least one physician, Soranus of Ephesus, does not view dreams as useful (cf. *Gyn.* 1.2.4). For medicine and dreams, see Steven M. Oberhelman, *Dreams, Healing and Medicine in Greece: From Antiquity to the Present* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013). For more on dreams generally, see William V. Harris, *Dreams and Experience in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

<sup>289</sup> Galen, *On Diagnosis from Dreams*: "[In summation,] we may say that whatever ill people see in their dreams will often indicate for us the lack, excess, or quality of their humors." (Translation from Steven M. Oberhelman, "Galen, *on Diagnosis from Dreams*," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 38(1983): 46.) Also cf. ———, "The Interpretation of Prescriptive Dreams in Ancient Greek Medicine," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 36, no. 4 (1981): 416-24.

<sup>290</sup> For a collection of testimonies regarding dream healing, cf. Emma J. Edelstein and Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius: A Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies*, vol. 1 & 2 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1945), 209-40.

individual, as Rufus believed they did, it can only be extracted by the physician when he discusses it with the patient, about whose habits and lifestyle he has made an effort to learn. By approaching his patients and their dreams this way, he shows a desire for a deep understanding of them and their illnesses, one which is suggestive of an empathetic and compassionate disposition.

As we have seen in previous passages, Aretaeus, Soranus and Caelius Aurelianus show concern over the patient's reaction to his diet. For these authors, it is closely associated with patient compliance and keeping him or her comfortable, but Rufus takes this a step further:

Ἐρωτητέον δὲ καί, τί τὸ ἡδιστον αὐτῷ τῶν σιτίων. τοῦτο γὰρ ἔσθ' ὅπῃ πρὸ τοῦ κρατίστου ὤνησεν, ἐπεὶ καὶ πέττεται ῥᾶον τοῦ ἀηδοῦς. οὐ γὰρ μασωμένῳ μὲν τὸ ἀηδὲς καὶ καταπίνοντι ἀσθενῇ παρέχει τὴν ἐκατέρου ἐνέργειαν, πέττοντι δὲ καὶ ἀναδιδόντι οὐχ ὁμοίαν ἂν παράσχοι.<sup>291</sup>

One must also ask what food pleases the patient best; this benefits him more than even the strongest food, since he digests it better than what he finds unpalatable. For we must not suppose that, while a disagreeably tasting article during chewing and swallowing impairs both of these two functions, it does not have the same effect during its digestion and distribution through the body.<sup>292</sup>

Most of the time, diet is prescribed solely based on the food's medical benefit, and even in Aretaeus, Soranus and Caelius Aurelianus, allowing foods that please the patient is done for the sake of his or her mental well-being; the authors fully admit that these foods are not necessarily the most beneficial, such as in the example above from Soranus regarding the 'unnatural' food cravings during *pica*. This passage, however, is the only one I have found which states that preferred foods

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<sup>291</sup> Ruf. *Quaest. Med.* 39

<sup>292</sup> Brock, *Greek Medicine: Being Extracts Illustrative of Medical Writings from Hippocrates to Galen:* 119.

actually are physically advantageous. Here he states outright that what a patient prefers and is used to is better (ὠνήσεν – “he benefits”) than the most potent (τοῦ κρατίστου – “the strongest”) foods. His consideration of the patient’s point of view, habits and uniqueness is an extension of his overall sensitivity and responsiveness to these things in general, and his interest in their comfort demonstrates his compassion.

A portion of what we know about Rufus’ medical texts comes from surviving fragments in Greek, Latin and Arabic. For the Arabic fragments which follow, I have relied on Peter E. Pormann, who, in *Rufus of Ephesus: On Melancholy*, has compiled and translated into English all the fragments of Rufus on the subject of melancholy.

Melancholy is a complex illness in the ancient medical texts. Based in the physical body as an excess of black bile, it also involves a number of psychological or emotional symptoms, such as sadness, mania, fear and anxiety. In the fragments, Rufus often addresses both the physical and mental aspects of the disease, suggesting therapies in respect of each. Oftentimes, one treatment is meant to attend to both sets of symptoms, as in the following passage:

Long and extended journeys are also beneficial for them, for they change their mixture (mizag, *krasis*), improve digestion, distract them from thinking, and amuse them...<sup>293</sup>

A long journey is said to improve the patient both physically, in terms of his bodily composition and their digestion, and mentally, by diverting them from their own thoughts and entertaining them. The focus on the psychological aspects of the illness demonstrates an awareness of how one’s mental state can affect one’s recovery. For

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<sup>293</sup> Rufus, F 40.19.

Rufus, emotions are not just symptoms, but also a part of the treatment, along with the physical cure. This is similar to Caelius Aurelianus' approach; he recommends the same treatment for melancholy as for mania, which includes appropriate readings and stage performances, chosen according to the type of symptoms the patient is exhibiting, excited or depressed.<sup>294</sup> Caelius says these treatments are meant to work by means of opposites: dejected patients should see a mime, while sad or tragic dramas should be seen by those demonstrating "childish play" (*puerili lusu*.<sup>295</sup>) The opposite emotional therapy should rebalance the patient's state of health. This fits with Caelius' Methodism, which balances stricture with looseness and vice versa, and is more than provided by Aretaeus, however, who only treats the physical symptoms of melancholy in his text.<sup>296</sup> Rufus' approach, albeit much more brief, is less theoretical and appears to simply aim at distracting the patient from his or her illness and having them enjoy themselves. This then is more of an attempt to make the patient feel better emotionally, as opposed to a real effort to cure him, which shows Rufus to be compassionately minded when it comes to his patients' comfort and psychological well-being.

Do not make the patient suspect that he has melancholy. Rather just treat him for indigestion; help him against his excessive belief, terror and joy; and keep him from [too much] thinking.<sup>297</sup>

Rufus employs a similar approach in this passage as previously. He displays an understanding of how negative emotional states affect the patient's health and he

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<sup>294</sup> See Chapter Four.

<sup>295</sup> Cael. Aur. *Tard.* 1.5.163

<sup>296</sup> Admittedly, we are missing the last section of Aretaeus' treatment of melancholy; however, nothing in the bulk of what is extant suggests a change in approach in the last section.

<sup>297</sup> Rufus, F 40.37-38

advocates keeping a melancholic patient's condition secret from him if possible. Digestive issues are common to melancholy, so it makes sense that it could be disguised as 'indigestion.' It seems that Rufus recommends this course of action because if a patient knew he had melancholy (a more serious affliction than indigestion), he might become upset or depressed, and this would compound his already damaged mental state.<sup>298</sup> Considering it best not to aggravate his condition, Rufus recommends assisting him with his psychological problems and, similarly to the previous passage, limit how much 'thinking' he does. By this, I assume Rufus means how much time the patient spends contemplating either his condition or his irrational thoughts, or perhaps both. This sounds rather similar to Caelius Aurelianus' advice in the previous section on how one should treat mania patients, through a careful balance of agreement and disagreement with the patient's ideas and beliefs.<sup>299</sup> There is a careful management of the patient present in this text which is obviously needed when dealing with mental illnesses and which also demonstrates Rufus' attention to his patients' emotions and how they affect their overall physical and mental health – an empathetic and compassionate approach indeed.

Rufus of Ephesus shows himself to have been a compassionate and sensitive physician who was extremely patient-focused. His attention to detail in patient interviews, keen observational skills, and insistence on hearing these details from the patient himself tells us that he saw the treatment of illness not only as

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<sup>298</sup> Although in reference to mania, not melancholy, Aretaeus expresses a similar sentiment in *SD* 1.6.11, where he states that those who realise their condition become saddened by it.

<sup>299</sup> *Cael. Aur. Tard.* 1.5.156-157. See Chapter Four for a full discussion of Caelius' opinion on the treatment of the mentally ill.

observation and interpretation of a collection of symptoms, but of the patient as a whole, according to his own particular lifestyle, habits, likes, dislikes and nature. This practice reveals a physician concerned and in tune with his patients' well-being and individuality, and who saw patients as being able to contribute to their own healing by way of the information they provide their physicians. He shows the same concern for patient compliance and how their emotional state can affect their health as we have seen with other physicians, such as Aretaeus. Overall, Rufus was an empathetic and compassionate physician, and this is evident by means of his patient-focused medicine which places patients squarely at the centre of his attention and which is acutely concerned with their emotional and physical wellbeing.

## **Conclusion**

Both Soranus and Rufus take a great interest in the emotional lives of their patients. Each show concern for how their patients feel especially with regard to their anxiety, whether it is regarding their diagnosis, their diet, or their belief in supernatural aids. Soranus' compassion is relatively direct, with the use of such terms (and their cognates) as *συμπάσχω*, *παραμυθέομαι*, and *εὐαγγελίζομαι*. He also censures uncompassionate attitudes, such as the nurses whom he describes as acting "so unfeelingly." Rufus is less direct in his manifestation of compassion, but displays it through great sensitivity to the patient's individuality. He values the patient narrative because he believes detailed knowledge of the individual lifestyle of the patient can quite helpful in diagnosis and treatment, similar to our modern concept of whole-patient care.

## CHAPTER 4: MEDICAL ETHICS IN CAELIUS AURELIANUS AND SCRIBONIUS LARGUS

Caelius Aurelianus and Scribonius Largus, like Rufus on whom we have concentrated in the last chapter, both had a particular interest in medical ethics. Caelius is very much concerned with patient comfort when it comes to his treatments. He has the ability to understand the patient's point of view, is concerned with their comfort and is not averse to adjusting therapies to suit the patient, such as prescribed diets, which we have seen with previous authors as well.<sup>300</sup> Caelius takes issue with the inhumane and cruel treatment he attributes to certain physicians, and he criticises their use of violent physical therapies, which he sees as both ineffective and brutal, especially with regards to the mentally ill. Scribonius Largus echoes Caelius' sentiments on *humanitas* and criticism of uncompassionate physicians, but frames his discussion more formally within medical ethics by referencing the Hippocratic Oath and speaking of medicine as a profession which makes certain promises of compassionate treatment to those who require its services. He states that only those who attempt all possible cures for a suffering patient are truly practicing medicine as it was meant to be practiced: compassionately and by all means necessary. Both Caelius and Scribonius promote, in their compassionate treatment of patients and adherence to the *humanitas* of medicine, medical ethics as a central part of their duties as physicians.

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<sup>300</sup> See Chapter Two (Aretaeus) and Chapter Three (Rufus).

## Caelius Aurelianus

Of Soranus' corpus, only a small amount is extant today; however, he was a respected physician within his own lifetime and even after his death, and so there was an effort made by later ancient medical writers and physicians to preserve his work and translate it into Latin for a wider audience.<sup>301</sup> In Roman North Africa in particular, a "Latin medical culture" developed which included Caelius Aurelianus, a fifth-century AD Methodist physician who lived and worked in this area.<sup>302</sup> Caelius preserved in Latin the Greek texts of Soranus, creating what scholars used to treat as 'translations' of his *Gynecology*, *On Acute Diseases* and *On Chronic Diseases*, but are now considered to be rather 'adaptations' or "redactions", as Nutton calls them.<sup>303</sup>

From Caelius' *On Chronic Diseases*, the following passages are the most representative of what I see as instances of empathy, sympathy or compassion. Just

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<sup>301</sup> Caelius is mentioned in: Tert. *Anim* 6; August. *Cont. Jul.* 51; Paul. *Aeg.* 6.59.

<sup>302</sup> Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (London: Routledge, 2004), 4. For more on North African medicine in the fourth and fifth centuries AD, see Louise Cilliers, "Roman North Africa in the 4th Century AD: Its Role in the Preservation and Transmission of Medical Knowledge," *Acta Classica Supplementum* 2(2007): 49-63. The fifth century is the most commonly accepted time period for Caelius, based on a comparison of his Latin with that of Cassius Felix, a mid-fifth century medical writer. Gerhard Bendz, *Studien Zu Caelius Aurelianus Und Cassius Felix*, vol. 55, Skrifter Utgivna Av Vetenskapssocieteten I Lund (Lund: Gleerup, 1964); I. E. Drabkin, *Caelius Aurelianus: On Acute Diseases and on Chronic Diseases* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), xiv. The title of Caelius' work also provides his name: Caelii Aureliani, Methodici Siccensis. Sicca, Numidia is now El Kef, Tunisia.

<sup>303</sup> How much of Caelius' text is an exact translation of Soranus' original is unknown; however, some scholars believe it to be very much Soranus' text with some omissions and additions by Caelius (Hanson and Green, "Soranus of Ephesus: *Methodicorum Princeps*," 1034; Neuburger, *History of Medicine*, 1: 309; Philip van der Eijk, "The Methodism of Caelius Aurelianus: Some Epistemological Issues," in *Le Traité Des Maladies Aiguës Et Des Maladies Chroniques De Caelius Aurelianus: Nouvelles Approches*, ed. Philippe Mudry (Nantes: Institut universitaire de France, 1999), 47-83.) while others defend it more as basically Caelius' work (Jackie Pigeaud, "Pro Caelio Aureliano," in *Memoires III: Medecins et Medecine dans l'Antiquite*, ed. G. Sabbah (Saint-Etienne: Publications de L'Universite de Saint-Etienne, 1982), 105-17.) Little else is known about Caelius apart from these works and a fragmentary dietetic question-and-answer text. For Caelius' *Medicinales Responsiones*, see Valentin Rose, ed. *Aus Den Medicinales Responsiones Des Caelius Aurelianus*, vol. 2, *Anecdota Graeca Et Graecolatina* (Amsterdam: Verlag Adolf M. Hakkert, 1870), 163-280. For Nutton's opinion, see Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*: 195.



as in the case of Soranus' *Gynecology*, Caelius' texts demonstrate an overall concern for patient welfare and compassion for pain and suffering. In particular, there is a promotion of humane treatment, especially when it comes to therapy for the mentally ill.<sup>304</sup> These points will become evident in the following passages.

Chronic headache, which modern physicians might describe as migraine, is addressed by Caelius in the chapter *De Capitis Passione, Quam Graeci Cephalaeon Nominant* (*The Disease of the Head, which the Greeks Call Headache*.<sup>305</sup>) Both of the following two passages originate from this chapter, in which Caelius discusses how the pain travels and what compassionate therapeutic approaches the physician should take:

si autem dolor ad dentes tetenderit, mulsum calidum vel oleum damus quod in ore sine ullo motu contineat, nisi quis hoc horrescens in nauseam fuerit provocatus. at si vehementius dolor convaluerit et maiora exegerit adiutoria, permittentibus viribus in ipsa diatrilo vel ante ipsam sanguis erit detrahendus phlebotomia scilicet. sed totum caput dolentibus, ex eo brachio quod facilius fuerit detractio facienda; ac si altera pars capitis doluerit, ex eius contraria detractio faciemus, quo longius adiutorii commotio a parte patienti remota videatur.<sup>306</sup>

But if the pain reaches to the teeth, give the patient warm mead or olive oil to keep in his mouth without any motion. But do not use this treatment if the patient is upset and nauseated by it. Now if the pain becomes even worse and requires more powerful remedies, withdraw blood by venesection, if the patient's strength permits, at the end of the three-day period or even before that time. In cases where the whole head is in pain, withdraw the blood from the arm where it is easier. But if only one part of the head is in pain,

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<sup>304</sup> Some of these same passages are addressed in Abraham Goldstein, "The Moral Psychiatry of Imperial Rome as Practiced by Soranus of Ephesus," *Psychiatric Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (1969): 535-54. Goldstein agrees that these passages demonstrate an interest in 'moral' treatment, but sees Caelius' work as firmly Soranus' and treats it as such.

<sup>305</sup> Aretaeus, too, addresses migraine headache at Aret. *SD* 1.2.2-3 (see Chapter Two.)

<sup>306</sup> Cael. Aur. *Tard.* 1.1.10-11

withdraw the blood from the opposite arm, so that the disturbing effect of the remedy may be far removed from the part affected.<sup>307</sup>

Here, Caelius suggests warm mead or olive oil because the pain is in an awkward area, the mouth; however, holding a liquid in the mouth might distress (*horrescens*) and cause the patient to suffer nausea (*in nauseam... provocatus*) which is not acceptable, according to Caelius, as he suggests forgoing the treatment if this happens. By understanding that not all patients may be able to cope with this treatment and being willing to veto it if it causes discomfort, Caelius exhibits the ability to take on another's point of view and understand how that person feels, and therefore be compassionate. This is not a treatment that will cure the patient; it is simply meant to ease the pain in the teeth. Therefore, if it simply trades one discomfort for another, Caelius chooses to refrain from it entirely. The same approach is applied to venesection: if the pain is localized to one side, Caelius recommends applying the treatment to the opposite side to avoid *commotio* ('agitation.') Regardless of whether this actually has any effect on the patient, the point is that Caelius *believes* that it does and this means he intends to always choose the least painful and distressing version of his recommended therapy; in other words, he consistently makes the compassionate choice.

The other example regarding chronic headache comes further on in the chapter where the concept of diet is discussed. By restricting the patient's diet, Caelius believed that he could cure the disease. He says,

potum dabimus uinum. et, si perferre ualuerit aeger, in iisdem duobus uel tribus perseuerabimus diebus, sin minus, secunda die salsamentis admiscemus cerebrum uel piscem. tunc sequenti die

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<sup>307</sup> Drabkin, *Caelius Aurelianus: On Acute Diseases and on Chronic Diseases*: 447.

panis detracti partem tertiam addemus, pulmentum damus olus, cerebrum, piscem tenerum... Sed ne quid odiosum e qualitate multorum dierum fiat aegrotanti, hoc est pulmentorum similis oblatio, erit in communi qualitate specierum diuersitas uarianda...<sup>308</sup>

Give the patient wine to drink and keep him on the same restricted diet for two or three days, if he can hold out; otherwise, on the second day add brain or fish to the pickled fare. And on the next day restore a third part of the bread of which the patient has been deprived, giving him soft food, consisting of vegetables, brain, and tender fish... But to avoid causing the patient displeasure on the score of the kind of food given him over a period of many days, i.e., the repeated serving of the same type, introduce various particular foods within the general type.<sup>309</sup>

Caelius, much like Aretaeus and Rufus, is concerned with his patient's ability to cope with the diet and whether he or she may become dissatisfied or displeased by it, which would possibly lead to less patient compliance. He says, *si perferre valuerit aeger* ("if [the patient] can hold out"), which means if he can bear being on a restricted diet for that long. If he cannot, then adding brain or fish a day early is permitted. Caelius also suggests a strict regime where certain types of food are given only on certain days. But this can become boring and unpleasant for the patient, so in order to avoid this (*sed ne quid odiosum e qualitate multorum dierum fiat aegrotanti*) he suggests varying the foods of that type, that is, different versions of foods from that category. The fact that this sort of instruction is included here shows how sensitive Caelius is to the feelings of his patients and how prescribed diets can create problems of their own outside of the illness. By varying the patient's food, he makes the treatment less unpleasant and decreases the possibility of his patient not complying with his therapy. This is a physician who is very much aware

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<sup>308</sup> Cael. Aur. *Tard.* 1.1.25-27

<sup>309</sup> Drabkin, *Caelius Aurelianus: On Acute Diseases and on Chronic Diseases*: 455, 57.

of his patients' reactions to therapies and treatments and adjusts accordingly for the compassionate choice.

Likewise, in his chapter *De Furore Sive Insania, Quam Graeci Manian Vocant* (*Madness or Insanity (Greek Mania)*), Caelius describes a treatment which can be characterized, by and large, as gentle, patient, and soothing, which focused very much on the mental and physical comfort of the patient. In a word, it is compassionate. He gives instructions on how to handle a manic individual and his aberrations, and who should and should not be in contact with him. Generally, anyone who would upset the patient is not permitted, such as strangers or people whom the patient especially fears or respects. He writes:

erunt praeterea multorum ingressus prohibendi et maxime ignotorum. mandandum quoque ministris ut eorum errores quodam consensu accipientes corrigant, ne aut omnibus consentiendo augeant furorem, eorum uisa confirmantes, / aut rursum repugnando asperent passionis augmentum, sed inductiue nunc indulgeant consentientes, nunc insinuando corrigant uana, recta demonstrantes. ac si exsilire coeperint, ut difficile teneantur, uel solitudine potius exasperantur, oportebit plurimis uti ministris et praecipere aegros latenter retineri ad articulorum fricationem, quo minime prouocentur. si etiam uisu hominum fuerint commoti, erit adhibenda ligatio sine ulla quassatione...<sup>310</sup>

Do not permit many people, especially strangers, to enter the room. And instruct the servants to correct the patient's aberrations [while accepting (them) with a certain fellow-feeling]. That is, have the servants, on the one hand, avoid the mistake of agreeing with everything the patient says, corroborating all his fantasies, and thus increasing his mania; and, on the other hand, have them avoid the mistake of objecting to everything he says and thus aggravating the severity of the attack. Let them rather at times lead the patient on by yielding to him and agreeing with him, and at other times indirectly correct his illusions by pointing out the truth. And if the patient begins to get out of bed and cannot easily be restrained, or is distressed especially because of [solitude], use a large number of

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<sup>310</sup> Cael. Aur. *Tard.* 1.5.156-157

servants and have them covertly restrain him by massaging his limbs; in this way they will avoid upsetting him. If the patient is excited when he sees these people, bind him without [any] injury.<sup>311</sup>

His advice for how the servants should behave when in the presence of the patient is interesting in its rationality and gentleness, that is, its compassion. He directs that they should avoid upsetting him either by agreeing with his delusions and thereby affirming his erroneous thoughts (*ne...augeant furorem* - “in order not to increase his mania”), or by disagreeing with him which would upset the patient (*asperent passionis augmentum* - “aggravating the severity of the attack.”<sup>312</sup>) He also says that corrections should be made *quodam consensu accipientes* - what I have rendered here as “while accepting (them) with a certain fellow-feeling”, which Drabkin translates as “while giving them a sympathetic hearing”. The aim appears to be that of avoiding distressing the patient in any way, while guiding him gently towards reality. Even restraining him is meant to be done in a non-confrontational way, by massage. Caelius’ prescribed treatment in this chapter would have been a fine line for servants and family members to walk; they would have needed to be closely instructed on how to respond to the patient’s delusions. This kind of therapy is indicative of Caelius’ focus on the mind of the patient and how best to calm and persuade it toward reason. This is not the only therapy – half of the chapter focuses on physical treatment and half on mental – but the fact that Caelius mentions this demonstrates his awareness of how easily aggravated a manic person’s mind can be and the sort of behaviour required on the caregiver’s part to avoid this. The

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<sup>311</sup> Drabkin, *Caelius Aurelianus: On Acute Diseases and on Chronic Diseases*: 543.

<sup>312</sup> In Latin, *mania* and *furor* are equivalent concepts.

gentleness, sensitivity and non-confrontational method of this therapy illustrate that it is compassionate.

Caelius continues to endorse the humane treatment of patients who suffer from *mania* further on in the same chapter. Throughout his work, he discusses (and usually refutes) the prescribed therapies of other physicians; in this chapter he condemns what he sees as harsh and unnecessary treatment of the patients at the hands of some physicians. He writes:

non enim uere admittenda aut credenda sunt ea, quae suspicantur, quibus ipsi insanire potius quam curare uideantur... iubent praeterae uinculis aegrotantes coerceri sine ulla discretione, cum necessario deuinctae partes quatiantur et <sit> facilius aegros ministrantium manibus quam inertibus uinculis retinere. cupiunt etiam certis medicaminibus somnos altos efficere, papauere fouentes et pressuram potius atque grauationem capitis, non somnum ingerentes... alii flagellis aiunt coercendos, ut quasi iudicio mentis pulso resipiant, cum magis tumentia caede lacescendo faciant asperiora et adueniente lenimento passionis, cum sensum recipiunt, plagarum dolore uexentur. uel certe, sicut ratio poscit, uicinis magis ac patientibus locis adiutoria sunt adhibenda; coguntur ergo, ut ori uel capiti plagas imponant... His igitur omnibus experimentis inanibus conferta est furiosorum curatio.<sup>313</sup>

Indeed, we cannot agree to, or accept, the conjectures of these writers [who seem themselves to be insane rather than able to cure]... These physicians also prescribe indiscriminately that the patients be kept in bonds. But, in fact, the parts that are bound must suffer injury; moreover, it is easier to restrain patients by having servants use their hands than by applying bonds improperly. And these same physicians try to produce a deep sleep with certain drugs, fomenting the patient with poppy and causing stupor and drowsiness rather than natural sleep... Some say he should be flogged, apparently so that he may regain his sanity by a kind of whipping of his reason. But the raining of blows upon the inflamed parts will only aggravate these parts; and, when the attack is over and the patient recovers his senses, he will still be assailed by the pain from these blows. Indeed, reason would require that such remedies be applied in particular to the affected parts and those

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<sup>313</sup> Cael. Aur. *Tard.* 1.5.172, 175, 178

near them; and so these physicians would have to strike their blows at the face and head... And so the treatment of insanity is marked by all these futile and haphazard procedures.<sup>314</sup>

Caelius judges these medical writers quite harshly with the line *ipsi insanire potius quam curare videantur* (“these writers [who seem themselves to be insane rather than able to cure].”<sup>315</sup>) While understanding of the patients, he exhibits no compassion for those of his colleges who advocate what he sees as inhumane treatment. Bonds are to be avoided since they cause injury, and we have seen this already in the previous passage: *praecipere aegros latenter retineri ad articulorum fricationem* and *erit adhibenda ligatio sine ulla quassatione*. Hurting the patient is what Caelius tries to avoid and so tying the patient down, or beating the patient, goes against the type of treatment he promotes. Drugging the patient into sleep is viewed negatively, and he disapproves especially of flogging since he sees it not only as hurtful to the patient, but also ineffective and illogical as a therapy. In general, he describes the majority of the treatments of other medical writers as *experimenti* (‘experiments’) and *inanes* (‘futile’) – two terms which would certainly not be consistent with compassionate behaviour.

Similarly, Caelius’ discussion of the disease of *elephantiasis* also affirms the importance of compassionate treatment and is a defense of the humanitarian nature of medicine. *Elephantiasis* was a chronic disease and difficult to cure for ancient physicians, which apparently caused some to resort to seclusion:

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<sup>314</sup> Drabkin, *Caelius Aurelianus: On Acute Diseases and on Chronic Diseases*: 555, 57, 59.

<sup>315</sup> Drabkin translates this, slightly more dramatically, as “they seem to be the madmen themselves rather than the physicians of madmen.”

Item alii aegrotum in ea ciuitate, quae numquam fuerit isto morbo uexata, si fuerit peregrinus, caedendum<sup>316</sup> probant, ciuem uero longius exulare aut locis mediterraneis et frigidis consistere ad hominibus separatum, et inde revocari, si meliorem receperit ualetudinem, quo possint ceteri cives nulla istius passionis contagione sauciari. sed hi aegrotantem destituendum magis imperant quam curandum, quod a se alienum humanitas approbat medicinae.<sup>317</sup>

Some assert that if a case of elephantiasis occurs in a city in which the disease has never occurred before, if the patient is a foreigner he should be [beaten];<sup>318</sup> if a citizen, he should be sent into distant exile or made to stay in cold, inland places away from other people, and should be brought back only if he regains his health. Their purpose is to protect the rest of the citizens from injury through contact with the disease. But their prescription for the patient amounts to abandonment rather than treatment, and such a view is foreign to the humanitarian principles of medicine.<sup>319</sup>

Judging by other descriptions of *elephantiasis* from authors such as Aretaeus, this disease was horrific in nature and would have frightened many people, especially in its final stages.<sup>320</sup> This is emphasised in Caelius' description since he suggests that people believed it to be contagious,<sup>321</sup> and imprisonment and exile were employed in order to limit the citizenry's exposure to the disease (*quo possint ceteri cives nulla istius passionis contagione sauciari*.<sup>322</sup>) As a physician, Caelius objects to this reasoning because it is *destituendum* ('abandonment') rather than *curandum*

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<sup>316</sup> Bendz takes this word as *caedendum* while Drabkin takes it as *cludendum*, which he translates as 'imprisoned.' *Caedo* can mean to cut, to strike or even to kill.

<sup>317</sup> Cael. Aur. *Tard.* 4.1.13

<sup>318</sup> Altered to reflect Bendz's word choice (see note above.)

<sup>319</sup> Drabkin, *Caelius Aurelianus: On Acute Diseases and on Chronic Diseases*: 823.

<sup>320</sup> Aret. *SD* 2.13; Cael. Aur. *Tard.* 2.13

<sup>321</sup> Whether Caelius actually means 'contagion' here is addressed in Vivian Nutton, "To Kill or Not to Kill? Caelius Aurelianus on Contagion," in *Text and Tradition: Studies in Ancient Medicine and Its Transmission*, ed. K. Fischer, D. Nickel, and P. Potter, *Studies in Ancient Medicine* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 236-37.

<sup>322</sup> See note above. If *cludendum* is meant, it may be considered an unsympathetic approach, unless it is meant as quarantine, which is more understandable; however, if *caedendum* is meant, whereby the foreigner is beaten or killed, then this is a particularly uncompassionate and cruel method with which to deal with an ill individual.



('treatment') and he calls upon the *humanitas... medicinae* ("humanitarian principles of medicine") as the reason for why this is wrong, thereby opposing the true goal of the physician, which is to cure the patient, with the concept of abandonment. Doing nothing is not acceptable, even with regards to extremely difficult and severe diseases such as *elephantiasis*. Caelius' compassion for patients is brought out in this passage by the uncompassionate actions of others. He does however demonstrate more understanding of the point of view of the perpetrators than in the previous passage. Perhaps this is because those criticised are not physicians or medical writers (or at least he does not tell us; I believe he would tell us since he makes this obvious in his other chapters when discussing treatment). Caelius believes, to repeat, that physicians should follow this *humanitas... medicinae* which he states here, and inherent in it is the compassionate treatment of patients.

Caelius Aurelianus endorsed the compassionate treatment of the sick and suffering, and terms such as *humanitas* and *consensus* reveal to us a physician concerned with treating their patients with compassion, patience, and attention. Caelius was worried for his patients' comfort, advocated humane therapies, and was himself persistent in doing whatever he could, even when confronted by difficult diseases. This is particularly evident in his therapy for *mania*. His commitment to this approach is underscored by his deep criticism of those who adopt an opposite view; these physicians are censured for their lack of compassion and humanity. Moreover, there are indications that Caelius was not alone. Scribonius Largus had a similar outlook and approach. He was, for example, concerned with how

compassion fits into a physician's professional ethics and makes him a more devoted doctor.<sup>323</sup> This is where we will turn next.

### **Scribonius Largus**

*Humanitas* is a concept discussed in the text of Scribonius Largus as well and he sees it as an important aspect of what it means to be a healer. *Humanitas* can be difficult to conceptualize. It can be translated as 'humanity,' 'humaneness' or 'gentleness'; it is, however, basically grounded in the idea that we are all human beings, we all suffer, and we all deserve to have this suffering relieved, if possible.<sup>324</sup> This internal feeling appears to drive Scribonius' sense of professionalism and what it means to be a physician, someone who has the potential to relieve suffering. This feeling motivates the physician to focus on the goals of preserving the life of the patient and relieving his or her suffering; he must use everything available to him to do so.

Scribonius Largus, who lived and wrote in the first half of the first century AD, was a Roman physician whose only surviving text, *Compositiones*, is a

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<sup>323</sup> Many scholars have written on the medical ethics of Scribonius Largus, as he outlines it in his *Professio Medici*, the short essay which precedes his *Compositiones*. See Karl Deichgraber, *Professio Medici: Zum Vorwort Des Scribonius Largus*, Abhandlungen Der Akademie Der Wissenschaften Und Der Literatur. (Mainz: Steiner, 1950); Edmund D. Pellegrino and Alice A. Pellegrino, "Humanism and Ethics in Roman Medicine: Translation and Commentary on a Text of Scribonius Largus," *Literature and Medicine* 7, no. 1 (1988): 22-38; J. S. Hamilton, "Texts and Documents: Scribonius Largus on the Medical Profession," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 60, no. 2 (1986): 209-16; Barry Baldwin, "The Career and Work of Scribonius Largus," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 135(1992): 74-82; Vivian Nutton, "Scribonius Largus, the Unknown Pharmacologist," *Pharmaceutical Historian* 25, no. 1 (1995): 5-8. Although my focus is the emotion of compassion itself, as displayed by ancient medical writers, the concept of medical ethics naturally comes into play as well. For a good general introduction to medical ethics in ancient Greece and Rome, see Darrel W. Amundsen, "Medical Ethics, History Of: Ancient Greece and Rome," in *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, ed. W. T. Reich (New York: Free Press, 1978), 930-38.

<sup>324</sup> As an example of the permeability of technical terms between genres of this time period, a surprising comparison can be found in Chariton's *Callirhoe*, where φιλανθρωπία, as a Greek equivalent of *humanitas*, can be taken to mean 'compassion' or 'humanity.' E.g., Charit. 1.12.1; 1.13.10; 2.5.3; 3.4.9; 6.5.10. See the following chapter for a fuller discussion.

pharmacological text covering a large number of diseases and their drug-related cures.<sup>325</sup> The preface to his text is a letter addressed to the freedman of the emperor Claudius, Gaius Julius Callistus, who appears to have commissioned Scribonius' text. Scribonius also thanks him for showing his medications to the emperor.<sup>326</sup> Although valuable purely for its pharmacological information, the treatise also contains a very interesting preface in which Scribonius defends the use of medications and drugs against those who would condemn them. One of his main arguments is that a physician is sworn to relieve pain and suffering in any way he is able, and medications can be effective in this pursuit, provided they are safely used. What results is an essay regarding medical ethics and the responsibility of the physician. Scribonius addresses the oath laid down by Hippocrates and twice each he references the *miser cordia* and *humanitas* of the physician, qualities intrinsically linked to the professional's medical ethics.

Scribonius states that physicians who denounce the use of medications must be suffering from one of two things: either they are not familiar with their usefulness and thus condemn them out of ignorance, or, they are actually aware of their efficacy and are therefore subject to *invidentia*:

sive enim nullum experimentum eius generis remediorum habent,  
merito accusandi sunt, quod tam neglegentes in tam necessaria  
parte artis fuerint, sive experti quidem sunt eorum utilitatem,  
denegant autem usum, magis culpandi sunt, quia crimine  
invidentiae flagrant, quod malum cum omnibus animantibus

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<sup>325</sup> Scholars have determined that Scribonius wrote his *Compositiones* in 47 or 48 because of his references to Callistus, who became legal secretary in 47, and to Messalina, wife of Claudius, who was executed for adultery in 48. See Nutton, "Scribonius Largus, the Unknown Pharmacologist," 5; Baldwin, "The Career and Work of Scribonius Largus," 74-75; Hamilton, "Texts and Documents: Scribonius Largus on the Medical Profession," 209; Pellegrino and Pellegrino, "Humanism and Ethics in Roman Medicine: Translation and Commentary on a Text of Scribonius Largus," 24.

<sup>326</sup> Scrib. *Comp.* ep(1).3-4

invisum esse debeat, tum praecipue medicis, in quibus nisi plenus misericordiae et humanitatis animus est secundum ipsius professionis voluntatem, omnibus diis et hominibus invisi esse debent.<sup>327</sup>

Yet if they have no experience of this type of remedy they must stand accused for having been grossly negligent in a most necessary part of the art. And if in fact they have mastered the use of drugs but nevertheless deny their use they are even more blameworthy. Clearly, such men are inflamed by the sin of envy, an evil that should inspire hatred in every heart. Moreover, envy is especially sinful among physicians, for unless theirs is a heart full of mercy and humanity, in accordance with the will of the medical profession itself, they are rightly hated by all the gods and men.<sup>328</sup>

Negligence is one thing; however, *invidentia* is another. *Invidentia* here appears to be meant as a kind of envy (perhaps of other successful physicians) and Scribonius sees this as a particularly negative attribute of a physician, who should not be motivated by this base emotion.<sup>329</sup> He is basically saying that it interferes with his ability to perform his professional duty, presumably because a prejudiced physician will not make use of every available therapy if he holds a preconception about certain ones, such as medications. This is viewed by Scribonius as not just irresponsible but hateful – he describes it as an “evil” (*malum*) that “ought to be

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<sup>327</sup> Scrib. *Comp.* ep(3).2-ep(4).1

<sup>328</sup> Hamilton, "Texts and Documents: Scribonius Largus on the Medical Profession," 213.

<sup>329</sup> As another example of *invidentia* in a medical context, Caelius Aurelianus (*Acut.* 1.1.1) writes, "Aiunt Ippallum Pythagoricum philosophum interrogatum, quid ageret, respondisse: 'Nondum nihil, nondum quidem mihi invidetur.' si igitur proficientium testis est invidia, quae nobis olim comes est, magna gerimus in his, quae gerimus." ("It is said that the Pythagorean philosopher Hippasus, when asked what he had accomplished, replied: 'Nothing as yet; at any rate, I am not yet an object of envy.' If, then, envy is evidence of accomplishment, my achievements in my own field may be considered noteworthy, since they have long been an object of envy." (Drabkin, *Caelius Aurelianus: On Acute Diseases and on Chronic Diseases*: 3.)) Caelius also mentions *invidentia* in *Tard.* 4.9.132 in the context of lesbians (*tribades*) in which he characterizes their envy or jealousy as 'masculine.' Whether *invidentia* should be translated as 'envy' or 'jealousy' is up for debate. As in English, the Romans appear to use envy/jealousy words interchangeably. For more on Roman envy, see Robert A. Kaster, "Invidia, Νέμεσις, Φθόνος and the Roman Emotional Economy," in *Envy, Spite, and Jealousy: The Rivalrous Emotions in Ancient Greece*, ed. David Konstan and Keith Rutter (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003). For jealousy and envy in the Greek world, see Ed Sanders, *Envy and Jealousy in Classical Athens: A Socio-Psychological Approach* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

hated within every living thing" (*cum omnibus animantibus invisum esse debeat*) and the physicians harbouring it "ought to be hated" (*invisi esse debent*) "by all gods and men" (*omnibus diis et hominibus*). These are extremely strong words by which to condemn his opponents and it is all predicated on the physician's oath and responsibility to relieve pain and suffering. If a physician fails to do so on account of *invidentia*, then this is a grave fault indeed. A good physician also has a heart "full of compassion and humanity" (*plenus misericordiae et humanitatis animus*.) *Misericordia*, which one can translate as 'compassion,' 'pity' or 'tender-heartedness,' is often paired in Scribonius' text with or near *humanitas*.<sup>330</sup> Originally, *humanitas* simply referred to the qualities of being human (such things as education, manners, language or refinement) and only through its connection with the Greek φιλανθρωπία did it acquire the additional meanings of 'humane conduct' or 'kindness.'<sup>331</sup> This is certainly the meaning intended by Scribonius; the connection with *misericordia* confirms this.

For the sake of comparison, let us look to another Latin author of around the same period who uses the term *humanitas*. Pliny the Younger uses the term *humanitas* several times in his letters, usually laying claim to the emotion as a characteristic of his own personality, much like the virtues of clemency or φιλανθρωπία. He mentions it in a letter to Paterculus where he recounts the recent deaths of some of his freedmen. As a master who is quick to manumit and

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<sup>330</sup> A similar use of *misericordia* is seen in Celsus' *De Medicina*, which was discussed in Chapter 1: *ita sedem, positum, ordinem, figuram, similiaque alia cognoscere prudentem medicum, non caedem sed sanitatem molientem, idque per misericordiam discere, quod alii dira crudelitate cognorint*. (Celsus, *Med.* 1.pr.43.9)

<sup>331</sup> Anastasios G. Nikolaidis, "A Note on the Relationship between *Philanthropia* and *Humanitas*," *Platon* 32/33(1980/1): 352. The evolution of meaning for both *humanitas* and φιλανθρωπία will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

permissive of personal wills, Pliny takes some consolation in their passing because it means the freedmen died with their liberty and able to pass on their property to others (with some restrictions.) This he considers all part of his *humanitas*:

Sed quamquam his solaciis adquiescam, debilitor et frangor eadem illa humanitate, quae me ut hoc ipsum permitterem induxit. Non ideo tamen uelim durior fieri. Nec ignoro alios eius modi casus nihil amplius uocare quam damnum, eoque sibi magnos homines et sapientes uideri. Qui an magni sapientesque sint, nescio; homines non sunt. Hominis est enim adfici dolore sentire, resistere tamen et solacia admittere, non solaciis non egere.<sup>332</sup>

But although I gain some peace in these consolations, I am weakened and softened by that same humanity, which has led me to allow myself to do this. However I would not wish to become harder on that account. I am not ignorant that others of this world call misfortunes of this kind nothing more than a loss, and therefore see themselves as great and wise men. I do not know whether they are great and wise; men they are not. For it is characteristic of a man to feel affected by pain, yet to resist, and to permit consolations, not to lack consolations.<sup>333</sup>

According to Pliny, *humanitas* weakens and softens him, which causes him to permit certain indulgences (as he calls them elsewhere) to his slaves and freedmen.<sup>334</sup> He says he is emotionally affected by the deaths of these former servants, and although others might simply see it as a monetary loss (a *damnum* – essentially a legal term for damage done to one's property) he calls it a *casus*, perhaps simply an event but he may mean it in the more forceful sense of 'misfortune' to contrast it with *damnum*. *Humanitas* operates the same way in this passage as in Scribonius' text, as a feeling of shared humanity which calls for decent, kind behaviour. Every human,

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<sup>332</sup> Plin. Ep. 8.16.3-4

<sup>333</sup> Author's translation.

<sup>334</sup> Plin. Ep. 5.19 (*indulgentia*). It is in this same letter that Pliny speaks of a slave he owns called Zosimus who is ill. Pliny wishes to send Zosimus to the estate of Valerius Paulinus (the addressee) to recover and again references his own *humanitas*. He chooses Paulinus not only for his country estate, but also because he believes they share a common attitude to their servants: Pliny says Paulinus treats his slaves *molliter*.

free or slave, runs the risk of becoming ill and dying. Whether we really believe that Pliny is as compassionate as he makes himself out to be is moot; what is important is that he considers himself to be and presents himself as such, using all the appropriate vocabulary to do so.

Scribonius mentions the oath of Hippocrates several times in his preface and he takes from it an example which is still today likely the most often-quoted part: the prohibition of abortive drugs. This is an interesting choice, considering that this section of the oath is forbidding a drug, not recommending one; however, Scribonius' argument is focused on the tenets of medicine, and a drug which causes miscarriage not does heal disease, but ends life:

Hippocrates, conditor nostrae professionis, initia disciplinae ab iureiurando tradidit, in quo sanctum est, ut ne praegnantem quidem medicamentum, quo conceptum excutitur, aut detur aut demonstretur a quoquam medico, longe praeformans animos discentium ad humanitatem. qui enim nefas existimaverint spem dubiam hominis laedere, quanto scelestius perfecto iam nocere iudicabunt?<sup>335</sup>

Hippocrates, the founder of our profession, handed on to our discipline an oath by which it is sworn that no physician will either give or demonstrate to pregnant women any drug aborting a conceived child. Thus he greatly prepared the minds of his disciples for humanity. For how much more abominable will those men judge it to do harm to a fully formed human being who consider it wicked to injure the uncertain hope of an unborn child?<sup>336</sup>

My interest in this passage is not so much the question of abortion, but Scribonius' promotion of the principles of the medical profession, particularly the line, *longe praeformans animos discentium ad humanitatem* – "long ago was he preparing the minds of his students for humanity." Scribonius appears to believe that by

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<sup>335</sup> Scrib. *Comp.* ep(5).1-6

<sup>336</sup> Hamilton, "Texts and Documents: Scribonius Largus on the Medical Profession," 214.

prohibiting abortion, Hippocrates was instilling a respect for life in his students and followers; if they believed an unborn child's life, which was not even certain (he calls it a *spes dubia*,) was valuable, then they would certainly value an 'actual' human being. Again the concept of *humanitas* arises, and Scribonius argues that it is a vital component in the profession of medicine. This internal feeling of *humanitas* appears to drive his sense of professionalism and what it means to be a physician, as opposed to just a nice person. It motivates the preservation of life and relief of suffering by the physician in a very focused way – he uses everything available to him to do so.<sup>337</sup>

The benevolence of medicine does not judge and does not harm, according to Scribonius:

...quia medicina non fortuna neque personis homines aestimat, verum aequaliter omnibus implorantibus auxilia sua succursuram se pollicetur nullique umquam nocituram profitetur.<sup>338</sup>

This is because Medicine truly promises her assistance in equal measure to all who seek her aid, and she swears never to injure anyone deliberately, for she judges men neither by their fortune nor by their character.<sup>339</sup>

scientia enim sanandi, non nocendi est medicina. quae nisi omni parte sua plene excubat in auxilia laborantium, non praestat quam pollicetur hominibus misericordiam.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> Scribonius interprets Hippocrates in this way, laying the groundwork for *humanitas* in medicine; however, according to Amundsen, "There is no evidence in the Hippocratic Corpus that physicians are expected to make humanitarian concern a part of their approach to medical treatment." (Amundsen and Ferngren, "Evolution of the Patient-Physician Relationship: Antiquity through the Renaissance," 26.) Not all physicians appear to have been as adamant about medicine's need for *humanitas*. Galen, for instance, appears to consider medicine philanthropic, but not essentially so. Scribonius would disagree, I believe. (ibid., 28.)

<sup>338</sup> Scrib. *Comp.* ep(4).4-7

<sup>339</sup> Hamilton, "Texts and Documents: Scribonius Largus on the Medical Profession," 213-14.

<sup>340</sup> Scrib. *Comp.* ep(5)8-ep(6).1



“For medicine is the science of healing, not of harming.” Unless Medicine fully devotes herself with all her resources to the aid of the suffering, she does not provide the mercy promised to mankind.<sup>341</sup>

The precise contrast between helping and harming is made in both of these passages, drawing it out further and more clearly from earlier statements. He quotes the Hippocratic Oath directly, and outlines what he sees to be the basis of medical ethics, of which *misericordia* is a tenet, or as he says, a promise (*pollicitatio*, *polliceor*). This sense of promising, along with the oath (*iureiurandus*, *iureiuro* – something sworn) is the language with which Scribonius describes his profession, something he takes as serious, almost sacred. Compassion plays a role in his professional medical ethics, as two emotions which lead the physician to the correct course of action. Elsewhere Scribonius differentiates between the role of the physician and the role of the citizen-soldier, stating that a physician would not give a poison to an enemy of the state, but in his role as citizen and soldier would attack him.<sup>342</sup> This marks the physician as separate from ordinary citizens and assigns him particular duties and responsibilities when it comes to human life, which must be preserved with all his effort.

A proper physician, according to Scribonius, is well-versed in all methods of healing, and this includes medications and drugs; however, medications alone cannot be all a ‘real’ physician can offer. He writes,

quamobrem spernendi quidem sunt, qui medicinam spoliare  
temptant usu medicamentorum, non a medendo, sed a potentia

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<sup>341</sup> Hamilton, "Texts and Documents: Scribonius Largus on the Medical Profession," 214.

<sup>342</sup> Scrib. *Comp.* ep(4).1-4

effectuque medicamentorum ita appellatam, probandi autem, qui omni modo succurrere periclitantibus student.<sup>343</sup>

Wherefore, those who attempt to despoil medicine through the use of drugs, a medicine that is so-called not by healing, but by the power and effect of the drugs upon, must be condemned. However, those who are eager to help the suffering by every way possible must be applauded.<sup>344</sup>

One who simply dispenses drugs is not a true physician, according to Scribonius. He writes elsewhere in his preface that there should be a series of steps in the treatment of a patient: first diet, then drugs, then surgery or perhaps even cauterization.<sup>345</sup> Those who offer only medications presumably incur his criticism because they do not have the skills to employ the other steps. Those who can and will use all the methods and resources available to them for the sake of curing a patient, however, are worthy of praise. This is the physician Scribonius sees fulfilling the tenet of medicine, as we have seen in the previous passage. This physician has not just the ability but the determination to heal, underscored by his *humanitas* and *misericordia*.

Finally, near the end of the preface, Scribonius returns to the concept of the well-rounded physician, knowledgeable in all areas of medicine and able to use this knowledge to the patient's benefit:

Nos vero ab initio rectam viam secuti nihil prius in totius artis perceptione, qua homini permittitur, iudicavimus, quia ex hac omnia commoda nos consecuturos existimabamus, non medius fidius tam ducti pecuniae aut gloriae cupiditate quam ipsius artis scientia. magnum enim et supra hominis naturam duximus posse

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<sup>343</sup> Scrib. *Comp.* ep(2).1-4

<sup>344</sup> Hamilton, "Texts and Documents: Scribonius Largus on the Medical Profession," 213. (Adapted translation.)

<sup>345</sup> Scrib. *Comp.* ep(6).5

aliquem tueri et recuperare suam et unius cuiusque bonam valetudinem.<sup>346</sup>

Truly, we who would be physicians follow the correct course if from the outset we place nothing before the art as a whole, insofar as it is possible for a man to do so, because we who would pursue all proper things are led, god knows, not so much by the desire for money or glory as by the desire for a knowledge of the art itself. And indeed, we consider the ability to care for someone and restore him or anyone whomsoever to good health to be a great thing and beyond the nature of man.<sup>347</sup>

Here, Scribonius contrasts desire for money and glory with desire for knowledge of how to heal – something we might imagine not every ancient physician had an easy time choosing between. Elsewhere in the preface he talks about how many different people practice medicine, not all with noble intentions.<sup>348</sup> This is a reference to the lack of certification in the ancient world; anyone could practice and you gained a clientele through your reputation. In this passage, he names what might motivate the non-scrupulous among them – money and glory (*pecunia aut gloria.*) However, these are not ‘doctors’ in his estimation because they lack the medical ethics he has so fervently promoted. As he says, those who practice the art as a whole are on the *recta via*, and they see being able to care for someone (*posse aliquem tueri*) and restore his good health (*recuperare suam... bonam valetudinem*) as “a great thing and beyond the nature of man.” (*magnum... et supra hominis naturam.*<sup>349</sup>)

In the preface of the *Compositiones* by Scribonius Largus, we have a treatise of medical ethics in which compassion (made evident through the use of such terms

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<sup>346</sup> Scrib. *Comp.* ep(11).1-6

<sup>347</sup> Hamilton, "Texts and Documents: Scribonius Largus on the Medical Profession," 215.

<sup>348</sup> Scrib. *Comp.* ep(10).7-8

<sup>349</sup> Cf. Aret. *CD* 1.5.10-11 (Chapter Two) where he says that to cure all diseases is impossible and would make you equal to a god.

as *misericordia* and *humanitas*) factors highly. The professionalism of the ancient physician is addressed here as a promise and an oath which is made by the practitioner. In the face of charlatans, quacks, and generally ignorant doctors, and without a way to tell easily the 'good' from the 'bad,' Scribonius promotes his medical ethics as the path of the true physician. This physician is equipped with knowledge and skill, but also emotional assets – compassion – which motivate his actions. Thus, in Scribonius' text we see the compassionate and humane healer concretely outlined as the ideal physician.

## **Conclusion**

The importance of compassion in professional medical ethics permeates the texts of Caelius Aurelianus and Scribonius Largus. Caelius expresses his disapprobation with the inhumane and cruel treatment he see other physicians recommend, believing them to be both ineffective and brutal, especially when applied to the mentally ill. Scribonius Largus frames his views on medical ethics a little more obviously by using language which suggests that medicine was for him a real 'profession' and it made certain promises of compassionate treatment to patients. The emotion of compassion is the driving motivation behind the formulation of both Caelius' and Scribonius' sense of medical ethics.

## CHAPTER 5: ANIMALS, ΦΙΛΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΑ, AND EMPATHY: PLUTARCH, CHARITON AND ACHILLES TATIUS

At first glance, Plutarch, Chariton and Achilles Tatius might seem an odd combination to include together in a chapter; however, there are certain points of overlap between all three. The material taken from Plutarch's *Moralia* pertains to his treatises on animals and their ethical treatment. He is concerned with how we hunt and slaughter them for our consumption and where these behaviours might lead us emotionally and morally. In doing so, he prefigures our modern concept of empathy erosion in his work. He shows disgust and abhorrence towards the excessively violent and torturous methods of slaughter employed in his day and calls for a more ethically responsible use of animals which, he believes, reflects on our own humanity. Turning then to the novelists of the period, Chariton and Achilles Tatius concern themselves more with humans, but take on some of the same ideas. In Chariton's work, he is very much interested in the ideas of φιλανθρωπία and ἔλεος, φιλανθρωπία was an important concept for a cultured ancient Greek and was wrapped up in notions of humanity (Latin, *humanitas*), culture and civilization, while ἔλεος is the common Greek word for 'pity'; however, the expression of pity in Chariton appears to entail more than the socially constructed emotion of supplication and pity of the fifth century BC. Achilles Tatius, on the other hand, concentrates on how narrative and image can elicit empathy and compassion from an audience. He employs, nonetheless, the same ideas of ἔλεος as more than simple pity. Together these authors provide a larger picture of the concepts of empathy and compassion in the first and second centuries AD.

## Plutarch and the Ethical Treatment of Animals

Two of Plutarch's treatises on animals, *De esu carnum* and *De sollertia animalium*, both of which were written when he was a young man, deal with the concept of animal intelligence, emotions, and whether it is moral to hunt and consume them.<sup>350</sup> Plutarch's interest in Pythagoreanism fuels these concerns and it can be seen in his discussion of these topics. He struggles with the moral implications of hunting animals, but also with the breeding and slaughtering practices that were practiced in his day. But although he admires the idea of vegetarianism, he realises that not everyone will be willing to eliminate such an important and valued part of their diet. Therefore, he discusses the importance of the moral consumption of animals and how we should feel about the ways in which they are raised and slaughtered.

In Plutarch's *De sollertia animalium*, there is a lengthy passage in which Plutarch discusses the cruelty of hunting animals and defends the position of Pythagoreans. He argues that hunting is where ἀπάθεια ('apathy', 'insensitivity') originated:

Καὶ μὴν ἐκεῖθεν, ὧ φίλε Σώκλαρε, φασὶν ἦκειν ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους τὴν ἀπάθειαν καὶ τὴν ἀγριότητα γευσάμενην φόνου καὶ προεθισθεῖσαν

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<sup>350</sup> Stephen T. Newmyer has written extensively on Plutarch's vegetarianism and his concern for the moral treatment of animals: Stephen T. Newmyer, "Plutarch on Justice toward Animals: Ancient Insights on a Modern Debate," *Scholia* 1(1992): 38-54; ———, "Plutarch on the Moral Grounds for Vegetarianism," *The Classical Outlook* 72, no. 2 (1995): 41-43; ———, "Plutarch on the Treatment of Animals: The Argument from Marginal Cases," *Between the Species* 12, no. 1-2 (1996): 40-46; ———, "Speaking of Beasts: The Stoics and Plutarch on Animal Reason and the Modern Case against Animals," *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 63, no. 3 (1999): 99-110; ———, *Animals, Rights and Reason in Plutarch and Modern Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 2005). See also: Hubert Martin, Jr., "Plutarch's *De Sollertia Animalium* 959 B-C: The Discussion of the Encomium of Hunting," *The American Journal of Philology* 100, no. 1 (1979): 99-106.

έν ταῖς ἄγραις καὶ τοῖς κυνηγεσίοις αἷμα καὶ τραύματα ζώων μὴ δυσχεραίνειν ἀλλὰ χαίρειν σφαττομένοις καὶ ἀποθνήσκουσιν.<sup>351</sup>

Yet that is the very source, my dear Soclarus, from which they say insensibility spread among men and the sort of savagery that learned the taste of slaughter on its hunting trips and has grown accustomed to feel no repugnancy for the wounds and gore of beasts, but to take pleasure in their violent death.<sup>352</sup>

This passage concerns itself greatly with how humans come to do the things they do, especially unpleasant things like hunting, killing and slaughtering animals. This section uses the verbs γεύω ('to give a taste') and προεθίζω ('to train beforehand') which both give the sense of something acquired little by little through exposure. He says men feel no disgust (δυσχεραίνω) at blood and wounds but actually enjoy (χαίρω) watching animals being slaughtered (σφάζω) and dying (ἀποθνήσκω). Plutarch then draws an interesting parallel with the story of those put to death by the Thirty Tyrants in Athens in 404 BC:

εἴθ' ὥσπερ ἐν Ἀθήναις πρῶτός τις ὑπὸ τῶν τριάκοντα συκοφάντης ἀποθανὼν ἐπιτήδειος ἐλέχθη, καὶ δεύτερος ὁμοίως καὶ τρίτος, ἐκ τούτου δὲ κατὰ μικρὸν ἤδη προϊόντες ἤπτοντο τῶν ἐπιεικῶν καὶ τέλος οὐδὲ τῶν ἀρίστων ἀπέσχοντο πολιτῶν, οὕτως ὁ πρῶτος ἄρκτον ἀνελὼν ἢ λύκον εὐδοκίμησε, καὶ βοῦς τις ἢ σὺς αἰτίαν ἔσχε προκειμένων ἱερῶν γευσάμενος [ἐπιτήδειος ἀποθανεῖν]... οὐχ... τροφῆς ἔνεκα διὰ λιμόν, ἀλλ' ἐφ' ἡδονῇ καὶ ὄψῳ...<sup>353</sup>

The next step is like that happened in Athens: the first man put to death by the Thirty was a certain informer who was said to deserve it, and so was the second and the third; but after that they went on, step by step, until they were laying hands on honest men and eventually did not spare even the best of the citizens. Just so the first man to kill a bear or a wolf won praise; and perhaps some cow or pig

<sup>351</sup> Plut. *Mor. De soll. an.* 959d

<sup>352</sup> Harold Cherniss and William C. Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia*, vol. 12, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 321, 23.

<sup>353</sup> Plut. *Mor. De soll. an.* 959d-e

was condemned as suitable to slay... – not that hunger compelled men... but for pleasure and as an appetizer...<sup>354</sup>

Here Plutarch outlines this idea of gradual exposure and how human beings can be easily acclimatized to behaviour which they would normally abhor. The Thirty evidently knew this aspect of human psychology and put it to use in Athens in the fifth century BC when they chose the first execution to be of a man whom everyone believed to deserve (ἐπιτήδειος) his punishment. Once everyone was committed to these executions, it became more difficult to object when 'less deserving' men were condemned. This is very similar to the theory of 'empathy erosion' put forth by the psychologist Simon Baron-Cohen whereby human 'evil' is attributed to low empathy, which can happen through a process of erosion.<sup>355</sup> Plutarch is saying hunting worked the same way: the first animal to be hunted and killed was probably a threat to humans, a predator like a bear or wolf, and considered 'deserving.' But then the action gets extended outward to less threatening animals, and not because these men were hungry but because they find the activity pleasurable (ἡδονή) and as a delicacy (ὄψον). Plutarch then links this up with the Pythagorean practice of vegetarianism and what it means:

...ὅσον <ἐν>εστι τῇ φύσει φονικὸν καὶ θηριῶδες ἔρρωσαν καὶ πρὸς οἶκτον ἀκαμπὲς ἀπειργάσαντο, τοῦ δ' ἡμέρου τὸ πλεῖστον ἀπήμβλυναν· ὥσπερ αὖ πάλιν οἱ Πυθαγορικοὶ τὴν πρὸς τὰ θηρία πραότητα μελέτην ἐποιήσαντο πρὸς τὸ φιλάνθρωπον καὶ φιλοίκτηρμον· ἢ γὰρ συνήθεια δεινὴ τοῖς κατὰ μικρὸν ἐνοικειουμένοις πάθει πόρρω προαγαγεῖν τὸν ἄνθρωπον.<sup>356</sup>

<sup>354</sup> Cherniss and Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 12: 323.

<sup>355</sup> Simon Baron-Cohen, "The Erosion of Empathy: Simon Baron Cohen at Tedxhousesofparliament," [http://youtu.be/nXcU8x\\_xK18](http://youtu.be/nXcU8x_xK18). See also: ———, *The Science of Evil: On Empathy and the Origins of Cruelty*.

<sup>356</sup> Plut. *Mor De soll. an.* 959e-960a



Thus the brute and the natural lust to kill in man were fortified and rendered inflexible to pity, while gentleness was, for the most part, deadened. It was in this way, on the contrary, that the Pythagoreans, to inculcate humanity and compassion, made a practice of kindness to animals; for habituation has a strange power to lead men onward by gradual familiarization of the feelings.<sup>357</sup>

These behaviours thus strengthened (ῥώννυμι) man's natural instinct to kill and made him unyielding (ἀκαμπής= ἄκαμπτος) to pity (οἶκτος.) Plutarch uses an interesting term, ἥμερος, a word which means tame, gentle or civilized and which recalls ideas opposite to wild animals and uncivilized behaviours, and this ἥμερος is said to be blunted or deadened (ἀπαμβλύνω) by this habituation to cruelty. He goes on to explain that Pythagoreans were gentle (πραότης) to animals for this very reason – for φιλόανθρωπος and φιλοίκτιμος, love of humanity and love of compassion – in what can be assumed to be a reference to Pythagorean vegetarianism. He then sums up the subject of the passage, that habituation (συνήθεια) is dangerous (δεινός) because it leads a man forward (πύρρῳ προαγαγεῖν) through introducing (ἐνοικειόω) feelings (πάθοι) little by little (μικρὸν), which erodes his philanthropy or humanity along the way.<sup>358</sup>

Plutarch certainly believes that animals have emotions. He makes this plainly clear in his *De sollertia animalium* when he says:

οἱ δὲ περὶ τούτων ἀβελτέρως λέγοντες μήθ' ἡδεσθαι μήτε θυμοῦσθαι μήτε φοβεῖσθαι μήτε παρασκευάζεσθαι μήτε μνημονεύειν, ἀλλ' ὥσανεὶ μνημονεύειν τὴν μέλιτταν καὶ ὥσανεὶ παρασκευάζεσθαι τὴν χελιδόνα καὶ ὥσανεὶ θυμοῦσθαι τὸνλέοντα καὶ ὥσανεὶ φοβεῖσθαι τὴν ἔλαφον, οὐκ οἶδα τί χρήσονται τοῖς λέγουσι μηδὲ βλέπειν μηδ' ἀκούειν ἀλλ' ὥσανεὶ βλέπειν αὐτὰ καὶ ὥσανεὶ ἀκούειν, μηδὲ φωνεῖν ἀλλ' ὥσανεὶ φωνεῖν, μηδ' ὅλως ζῆν ἀλλ'

<sup>357</sup> Cherniss and Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 12: 323, 25.

<sup>358</sup> For Baron-Cohen's concept of empathy erosion, see Baron-Cohen, *The Science of Evil: On Empathy and the Origins of Cruelty*: 15-16.

‘ὥσανεὶ ζῆν’ ταῦτα γὰρ ἐκείνων οὐ μᾶλλον ἐστὶ λεγόμενα παρὰ τὴν ἐνάργειαν, ὥς ἐγὼ πείθομαι.<sup>359</sup>

As for those who foolishly affirm that animals do not feel pleasure or anger or fear or make preparations or remember, but that the bee “as it were” remembers and the swallow “as it were” prepares her nest and the lion “as it were” grows angry and the deer “as it were” is frightened – I don’t know what they will do about those who say that beasts do not see or hear, but “as it were” hear and see; that they have no cry but “as it were”; nor do they live at all but “as it were.” For these last statements (or so I believe) are no more contrary to plain evidence than those that they have made.<sup>360</sup>

Those who don’t believe that animals have emotions do so “foolishly” (ἀβελτέρως) according to Plutarch. The fact that they feel emotion is clear (ἐνάργεια) to him, as clear as the fact that they have perception, voices and exist at all. He uses the same observational evidence for these abilities as he does for their abilities to feel and remember. Modern research conducted by psychologists and evolutionary biologists in the area of animal emotions and cognition have made great strides in confirming what Plutarch took as truth: animals feel and think. They might not always feel and think in the same ways as humans, but it is surprising in how many ways they *do*. One of the foremost scholars in the field of animal emotions and cognition, and a major voice for animal advocacy is Mark Bekoff. In a recent book, *The Animal Manifesto*, Bekoff makes a case for treating animals with compassion based on that demonstrable fact that they themselves have and deserve compassion.<sup>361</sup>

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<sup>359</sup> Plut. *Mor. De soll. an.* 961e-f

<sup>360</sup> Cherniss and Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 12: 335.

<sup>361</sup> Bekoff, *The Animal Manifesto: Six Reasons for Expanding Our Compassion Footprint*: 79-101.

At several places in his text, Plutarch acknowledges that simply eating animals is not necessarily wrong, but that the cruelty with which it is done is. He makes this point in the following passage:

ὁ Βίων ἔλεγε τὰ παιδάρια παίζοντα τῶν βατράχων τοῖς λίθοις ἐφίεσθαι, τοὺς δὲ βατράχους μηκέτι παίζοντας ἀλλ' ἀληθῶς ἀποθνήσκειν, οὕτω κυνηγεῖν καὶ ἀλιεύειν, ὁδυνωμένοις τερπομένους καὶ ἀποθνήσκουσι, τοῖς δ' ἀπὸ σκύμνων καὶ νεοσσῶν ἐλεεινῶς ἀγομένοις. οὐ γὰρ οἱ χρώμενοι ζῴοις ἀδικοῦσιν, ἀλλ' οἱ χρώμενοι βλαβερῶς καὶ ὀλιγώρως καὶ μετ' ὠμότητος.<sup>362</sup>

[Bion] remarked that boys throw stones at frogs for fun, but the frogs don't die for "fun" but in sober earnest. Just so, in hunting and fishing, men amuse themselves with the suffering and death of animals, even tearing some of them piteously from their cubs and nestlings. The fact is that it is not those who make use of animals who do them wrong, but those who use them harmfully and heedlessly and in cruel ways.<sup>363</sup>

The argument is that the killing of animals is not essentially wrong, but any enjoyment or amusement in it is. Like the "fun" had by boys killing frogs with stones, finding enjoyment in (τέρπω) the kill when hunting is what Plutarch finds objectionable. Those who make use of (χράω) animals do not do them wrong (ἀδικέω); however, those who do so harmfully (βλαβερῶς), carelessly (ὀλιγώρως) and with cruelty (μετ' ὠμότητος) do.

When contemplating vegetarianism in his treatise, *De esu carniū*, Plutarch launches into a rhetorical passage, asking how the first person to consume the flesh of animals was able to do so:

Ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν ἐρωτᾷς τίни λόγῳ Πυθαγόρας ἀπείχετο σαρκοφαγίας, ἐγὼ δὲ θαυμάζω καὶ τίни πάθει καὶ ποίᾳ ψυχῇ [ἢ λόγῳ] ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ἤψατο φόνου στόματι καὶ τεθνηκότος ζώου χεῖλεσι προσήψατο σαρκὸς καὶ νεκρῶν σωμάτων καὶ ἐώλων προθέμενος

<sup>362</sup> Plut. *Mor. De soll. an.* 965a-b

<sup>363</sup> Cherniss and Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 12: 355.

τραπέζας ὄψα καὶ τρυφὰς [καὶ] προσέτι εἶπεν τὰ μικρὸν ἔμπροσθεν  
βρυχώμενα μέρη καὶ φθεγγόμενα καὶ κινούμενα καὶ βλέποντα· πῶς  
ἢ ὄψις ὑπέμεινε τὸν φόνον σφαζομένων δερομένων  
διαμελιζομένων...<sup>364</sup>

Can you really ask what reason Pythagoras had for abstaining from flesh? For my part I rather wonder both by what accident and in what state of soul or mind the first man who did so, touched his mouth to gore and brought his lips to the flesh of a dead creature, he who set forth tables of dead, stale bodies and ventured to call food and nourishment the parts that had a little before bellowed and cried, moved and lived. How could his eyes endure the slaughter when throats were slit and hides were flayed and limbs torn from limbs?<sup>365</sup>

Death and dead bodies should be naturally repulsive to us, and so Plutarch wonders how the first person was able to consume the meat of animals. His passion on this topic comes through in the rhetorical nature of his writing and the vividness with which he describes the scene and the words he uses: the hypothetical man touches gore (φόνος) to his mouth, and the flesh (σάρξ) of a dead animal (τεθνηκων ζῶον) to his lips; he describes tables (τράπεζαι) of dead (νεκρά) and stale (ἔωλα) bodies (σώματα); he talks of parts that had just previously (μικρὸν ἔμπροσθεν) bellowed (βρυχάομαι), cried (φθεγγόμαι), moved (κινέω), and perceived (βλέπω); he portrays slaughtering (σφάζω), skinning (δέρω), and dismembering (διαμελίζω.) This is a dramatic and violent description, meant to touch the reader and convey the viciousness of the act of slaughtering and eating an animal.

This rhetorical approach is taken one step further in the next passage where Plutarch goes so far as to put words into the mouth of an animal through the technique of *prosopopeia*. This is the rhetorical technique whereby the writer

<sup>364</sup> Plut. *Mor. De esu carn.* 993a-b

<sup>365</sup> Cherniss and Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 12: 541.

speaks in the voice of another which, it could be argued, could be considered a form of empathy since it involves the acquiring of another's perspective and attributing another's emotional state. Plutarch uses it here to condemn the slaughtering of animals excessively and beyond necessity. He writes,

‘οὐ παραιτοῦμαί σου τὴν ἀνάγκην ἀλλὰ τὴν ὕβριν· ἵνα φάγῃς ἀπόκτεινον, ἵνα δ' ἡδίων φάγῃς μὴ μ' ἀναίρει.’ ὦ τῆς ὀμότητος· δεινὸν μὲν ἔστι καὶ τιθεμένην ἰδεῖν τράπεζαν ἀνθρώπων πλουσίων νεκροκόσμοις χρωμένων μαγείροις καὶ ὀψοποιοῖς, δεινότερον δ' ἀποκομιζομένην· πλείονα γὰρ τὰ λειπόμενα τῶν βεβρωμένων ἐστίν· οὐκοῦν ταῦτα μάτην ἀπέθανεν.<sup>366</sup>

“I do not ask to be spared in case of necessity; only spare me your arrogance! Kill me to eat me, but not to please your palate!” Oh, the cruelty of it! What a terrible thing it is to look on when the tables of the rich are spread, men who employ cooks and spicers to groom the dead! And it is even more terrible to look on when they are taken away, for more is left than has been eaten. So the beasts died for nothing!<sup>367</sup>

Again, Plutarch allows the killing and consuming of animals out of necessity, but not beyond that. He puts the words directly into the mouth of the animal this time: ἵνα φάγῃς ἀπόκτεινον, ἵνα δ' ἡδίων φάγῃς μὴ μ' ἀναίρει (“so that you may eat, kill me; but so that you can eat more pleasurably, do not destroy me.”<sup>368</sup>) This technique of *prosopopeia* is used to great dramatic effect. Plutarch draws a distinction between eating and eating for pleasure (ἡδίων φάγῃς) and even changes his verb use in the second half of the sentence. ἀποκτείνω simply means to kill; however, ἀναίρω has a more complicated meaning of taking away and destroying – perhaps attempting

<sup>366</sup> Plut. *Mor. De esu carn.* 994e-f

<sup>367</sup> Cherniss and Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 12: 551.

<sup>368</sup> This is not dissimilar to what Bekoff does, by writing a ‘manifesto’ for animals. He precees the outline of this manifesto with: “More to the point, if animals can think and feel, what do they think and feel about the ways humans treat them? What would they say to us, and what would they *ask* of us, if they could speak a human language?” (Bekoff, *The Animal Manifesto: Six Reasons for Expanding Our Compassion Footprint*: 8.)

here to suggest something done wrongly or inappropriately. By placing his argument into the mouths of animals, Plutarch is here creating empathy more vividly for his reader. He has previously made the argument that animals think and feel in his other treatise, *De sollertia animalium*, and here extends it imaginatively to the animal's own voice. The rhetorical nature of Plutarch's passage is furthered with the emphatic ὦ in the next sentence ὦ τῆς ὠμότητος, with ὠμότης (cruelty) being a word we have seen him use before in similar contexts. This is a cruelty which is raw and somehow uncivilized, which is interesting when you realise that the slaughtering and cooking of animals is something we usually consider very much representative of civilization. Nevertheless, Plutarch considers the excess of animals consumed by the rich to be δεινός (terrible) as they lay out the bodies (νεκροκόσμος). But what is more terrible (δεινότερος) is when the meal is over πλείονα γὰρ τὰ λειπόμενα τῶν βεβρωμένων ἐστίν' ("For more is left behind than has been eaten up.") The animals then were slain for nothing (μάτην.) This vivid and passionate passage is effective in its ability to elicit empathy and compassion from its audience.

The argument that human beings are omnivores and therefore naturally and biologically meant to consume the flesh of animals must have been as prominent in antiquity as it is today, since Plutarch brings it up as a counterpoint several times. It is important to note that nowhere in his texts does he state that all people should abstain from eating meat, and neither does he outright state that he himself is a vegetarian. What he does do, however, is question the moral and ethical implications of slaughtering animals and especially how that slaughtering is done.

He realises that people are quite unlikely to give up meat, such a valued and important part of their diet, but he is concerned with the terms on which it is consumed:

οὐ μὴν ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ ἀδύνατον ἤδη διὰ τὴν συνήθειαν τὸ ἀναμάρτητον, αἰσχυνόμενοι τῷ ἁμαρτάνοντι χρῆσόμεθα διὰ τὸν λόγον, ἐδόμεθα σάρκα, ἀλλὰ πεινῶντες οὐ τρυφῶντες.<sup>369</sup>

Yet if, for heaven's sake, it is really impossible for us to be free from error because we are on such terms of familiarity with it, let us at least be ashamed of our ill doing and resort to it only in reason. We shall eat flesh, but from hunger, not as a luxury.<sup>370</sup>

Plutarch believes people should feel shame (αἰσχυνόμενοι) by eating of animals and that it should be done because we are hungry (πεινάω) and not because we are living luxuriously or extravagantly (τρυφάω). How these animals are butchered is another point with which Plutarch is very much concerned:

ἀναιρήσομεν ζῶον, ἀλλ' οἰκτείροντες καὶ ἀλγοῦντες, οὐχ ὑβρίζοντες οὐδὲ βασανίζοντες· οἷα νῦν πολλὰ δρῶσιν οἱ μὲν εἰς σφαγὴν ὑῶν ὠθοῦντες ὀβελοὺς διαπύρους, | ἵνα τῇ βαφῇ τοῦ σιδήρου περισβεννύμενον τὸ αἷμα καὶ διαχεόμενον τὴν σάρκα θρύψῃ καὶ μαλάξῃ· οἱ δ' οὐθασὶ συῶν ἐπιτόκων ἐναλλόμενοι καὶ λακτίζοντες, ἵν' αἷμα καὶ γάλα καὶ λύθρον ἐμβρύων ὁμοῦ συμφθαρέντων ἐν ὠδῖσιν ἀναδόντος, ὧ Ζεῦ καθάρσιε, φάγωσι τοῦ ζώου τὸ μάλιστα φλεγμαῖνον· ἄλλοι γεράνων ὄμματα καὶ κύκνων ἀπορράψαντες καὶ ἀποκλείσαντες ἐν σκότει πιαίνουσιν \*\*\* ἀλλοκότοις μίγμασι καὶ καρυκείαις τισὶν αὐτῶν τὴν σάρκα ὀψοποιοῦντες. ἐξ ὧν καὶ μάλιστα δῆλόν ἐστιν, ὥς οὐ διὰ τροφὴν οὐδὲ χρεῖαν οὐδ' ἀναγκαιῶς ἀλλ' ὑπὸ κόρου καὶ ὕβρεως καὶ πολυτελείας ἡδονὴν πεποιήνται τὴν ἀνομίαν.<sup>371</sup>

We shall kill an animal, but in pity and sorrow, not degrading or torturing it – which is the current practice in many cases, some thrusting red-hot spits into the throats of swine so that by the plunging in of the iron the blood may be emulsified and, as it circulates through the body, may make the flesh tender and delicate.

<sup>369</sup> Plut. *Mor. De esu carn.* 996e-f

<sup>370</sup> Cherniss and Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 12: 565.

<sup>371</sup> Plut. *Mor. De esu carn.* 996f-997b

Others jump on the udders of sows about to give birth and kick them so that, when they have blended together blood and milk and gore (Zeus the [Purifier]!) and the unborn young have at the same time been destroyed at the moment of birth, they may eat the most inflamed part of the creature. Still others sew up the eyes of cranes and swans, shut them up in darkness and fatten them, making the flesh appetizing with strange compounds and spicy mixtures. From these practices is it perfectly evident that it is not for nourishment or need or necessity, but out of satiety and insolence and luxury that they have turned this lawless custom into a pleasure.<sup>372</sup>

According to Plutarch, we should feel pity and pain (οἰκτεῖροντες καὶ ἀλγοῦντες) at the slaughter of animals, and they should not be maltreated (ὕβριζω) nor tortured (βασανίζω). It is evident what sort of torture Plutarch means here, as he gives us three examples of the sort of processes by which some animals are processed in the ancient world. These examples are vivid, brutal and meant to confront the reader with some extremely shocking scenes of violence against animals. He even includes an emphatic ὦ Ζεῦ καθάρσιε (O, Zeus the Purifier!) in the middle to voice his own horror at what he is describing. These butchery practices have nothing to do with τροφή or χρεία (nourishment or need) nor are they done by necessity (ἀναγκαίως), the only reasons for which Plutarch has allowed the ingestion of meat anywhere else in his texts. It is on account of surfeit or gormandizing (κόρος), arrogance (ὕβρις) and extravagance (πολυτέλεια) that Plutarch calls this lawless (ἀνομία). All of this is indicative of his particularly compassionate perspective on the treatment of animals.

Realising that not everyone will be persuaded to become a vegetarian, and perhaps not even being one himself, Plutarch wishes to at least remove the excessive violence and maltreatment of animals from the process. He appears to find

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<sup>372</sup> Cherniss and Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 12: 565.



particular fault with large-scale butchering and third-party intervention in animal slaughter: too many animals are being killed when they are not being eaten, elaborate cooks and spicers are employed, special processes, like the ones we just discussed, are being used which torture and maltreat the animals. He suggests a time-honoured tradition:

εἰ δὲ λέγεις πεφυκέναι σεαυτὸν ἐπὶ τοιαύτην ἐδωδήν, ὃ βούλει φαγεῖν πρῶτον αὐτὸς ἀπόκτεινον, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς διὰ σεαυτοῦ...<sup>373</sup>

If you declare yourself that you are naturally designed for such a diet, then first kill for yourself what you want to eat. Do it, however, only through your own resources...<sup>374</sup>

Whether this would really be feasible for most people in the ancient world, especially those in urban settings, is questionable. But it certainly removes Plutarch's main objection from the picture. One kills only what one can, no more, no less, and eats it oneself. In this simplified situation, there is no room for expensive and time-consuming butchering practices or cooking techniques, which eliminates any experimenting with cruel and unusual treatment of animals. Modern life and luxury appear to be at the root of the mistreatment of animals, at least according to Plutarch, and have allowed for this absence of compassion.

Finally, Plutarch does what many modern day animal advocates do in their defense of the humane treatment of animals: he uses it to interpret our own humanity and compassion. He writes,

Χωρὶς δὲ τούτων ὁ πρὸς φιланθρωπίαν ἔθισμός οὐ δοκεῖ θαυμαστὸν εἶναι; τίς γὰρ ἂν ἀδικήσειεν ἄνθρωπον οὕτω πρὸς ἀλλότρια καὶ ἀσύμφυλα διακείμενος [καὶ] πράως καὶ φιλανθρώπως; ἐμνήσθη δὲ τρίτην ἡμέραν διαλεγόμενος τὸ τοῦ Ξενοκράτους (fr. 99 H.), καὶ ὅτι

<sup>373</sup> Plut. *Mor. De esu carn.* 995a

<sup>374</sup> Cherniss and Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 12: 551.

Ἀθηναῖοι τῷ ζῶντι τὸν κριὸν ἐκδείραντι δίκην ἐπέθηκαν· οὐκ ἔστι δ', οἶμαι, χείρων ὁ ζῶντι βασανίζων τοῦ παραιρουμένου τὸ ζῆν καὶ φονεύοντος...<sup>375</sup>

But apart from these considerations, do you not find here a wonderful means of training in social responsibility? Who could wrong a human being when he found himself so gently and humanely disposed toward other non-human creatures? Two days ago in a discussion I quoted the remark of Xenocrates, that the Athenians punished a man who had flayed a ram while it was still alive; yet, as I think, he who tortures a living creature is no worse than he who slaughters it outright.<sup>376</sup>

The reasoning is, how we treat animals is a reflection of how we treat others. Plutarch calls practicing compassion towards animals ὁ πρὸς φιλανθρωπίαν ἐθισμός – the habituation of humanity. This is along the lines of the habituation he spoke of in *De sollertia animalium*, but with the opposite effect. Here, by treating animals compassionately, either by becoming a vegetarian or at least limiting oneself to humanely slaughtered meat, one becomes gradually exposed to compassion, as opposed to cruelty. Rather than empathy erosion, it is empathy creation. Plutarch asks the rhetorical question: τίς γὰρ ἂν ἀδικήσειεν ἄνθρωπον οὕτω πρὸς ἀλλότρια καὶ ἀσύμφυλα διακείμενος [καὶ] πράως καὶ φιλανθρώπως; (“For who could wrong a person, being so gently and benevolently disposed towards strange and unlike creatures?”) A person who is kind to and has empathy for animals will feel the same towards his fellow human beings.

Empathy and compassion are at the centre of Plutarch’s treatises on the treatment of animals. He believed that animals had emotional lives very similar to humans and deserved to be treated morally by them, in how they were both hunted

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<sup>375</sup> Plut. *Mor. De esu carn.* 996a-b

<sup>376</sup> Cherniss and Helmbold, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 12: 557, 59.

and slaughtered. Ideally, vegetarianism appears to have been attractive to Plutarch; however, he also appears to realise that it is a lifestyle choice which others may find hard to adopt, perhaps because he has difficulty committing to it himself since he never states that he is one. Regardless, he passionately argues for the humane treatment of animals and censures the violent slaughtering methods of his day. These, he says, are not only morally wrong, but reflect on our humanity; however, through the compassionate treatment of animals we actually encourage empathy and compassion for each other.

### **Chariton**

Chariton's *Callirhoe* is the oldest complete and extant Greek novel.<sup>377</sup> It contains many references to feelings of compassion, pity, mercy, benevolence and humanity, but mainly through the use of the noun φιλανθρωπία, which can in particular contexts mean all these things. The only other word Chariton uses frequently in similar circumstances is ἔλεος, meaning pity. Both these terms have been rendered by several English translators with various synonyms, and so I will alter or adapt the translations where I see fit below.

First, a word on φιλανθρωπία. φιλανθρωπία is a term which has been an area of interest for various scholars, many of whom have also noted its differences from

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<sup>377</sup> Chariton and Longus, *Greek Fiction: Callirhoe, Daphnis and Chloe, Letters of Chion*, trans. Rosanna Omitowoju, Phiroze Vasunia, and John Penwill, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin Books, 2011), xxiv; Niklas Holzberg, *The Ancient Novel: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1995), 32.

and connection to the Latin term *humanitas*.<sup>378</sup> φιλανθρωπία is defined as humanity, benevolence, kind-heartedness, humane feeling, kindness, and courtesy in the LSJ, but the compound word literally means 'love of mankind'; *humanitas* is defined as human nature, humanity, and the qualities, feelings, and inclinations of mankind. Thus, the first difference, as Nikolaidis points out, is that while *humanitas* was very much associated with humans and 'human-ness', φιλανθρωπία was (at least originally) associated with the gods and animals – a word applied to non-human entities who love human beings.<sup>379</sup> Also, φιλανθρωπία and *humanitas* were not originally equivalent terms and Aulus Gellius, the second-century AD author of *Attic Nights* tells us so:

Qui uerba Latina fecerunt quique his probe usi sunt, 'humanitatem' non id esse uoluerunt, quod uolgens existimat quodque a Graecis φιλανθρωπία dicitur et significat dexteritatem quandam beniuolentiamque erga omnis homines promiscam, sed 'humanitatem' appellauerunt id propemodum, quod Graeci παιδείαν uocant, nos eruditionem institutionemque in bonas artis dicimus.<sup>380</sup>

Those who have spoken Latin and have used the language correctly do not give to the word *humanitas* the meaning which it is commonly thought to have, namely, what the Greeks call φιλανθρωπία, signifying a kind of friendly spirit and good-feeling towards all men without distinction; but they gave to *humanitas* about the force of the Greek παιδεία; that is, what we

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<sup>378</sup> Hubert Martin, Jr., "The Concept of *Philanthropia* in Plutarch's Lives," *The American Journal of Philology* 82, no. 2 (1961): 164-75; S. Tromp De Ruiter, "De Vocis Quae Est Φιλανθρωπία Significatione Atque Usu," *Mnemosyne* 59, no. 3 (1931): 271-306; Nikolaidis, "A Note on the Relationship between *Philanthropia* and *Humanitas*," 350-55; Marta Várzeas, "Tragedy and *Philanthropia* in the Lives of Demosthenes and Cicero," in *Symposion and Philanthropia in Plutarch*, ed. José Ribeiro Ferreira, et al. (Coimbra: Centro de Estudos Clássicos e Humanísticos da Universidade de Coimbra, 2009), 333-40; Francesco Becchi, "La Notion De *Philanthropia* Chez Plutarque: Contexte Social Et Sources Philosophiques," in *Symposion and Philanthropia in Plutarch*, ed. José Ribeiro Ferreira, et al. (Coimbra: Centro de Estudos Clássicos e Humanísticos da Universidade de Coimbra, 2009), 263-73; Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1953).

<sup>379</sup> Nikolaidis, "A Note on the Relationship between *Philanthropia* and *Humanitas*," 350-51.

<sup>380</sup> Gell. NA 13.17.1

call eruditionem institutionemque in bonas artes, or "education and training in the liberal arts."<sup>381</sup>

So, *humanitas* for early Latin writers simply meant the particular quality of being human, which involved the intellectual and cultural pursuits which humans alone undertake. As Aulus Gellius says, this definition aligns itself better with Greek παιδεία, which is often translated as 'education' but which encompasses much more than that. One's παιδεία meant one's intellectual, artistic and physical education, as well as one's socialization and the learning of one's culture. φιланθρωπία, then, was part of one's παιδεία, which taught one to be courteous, benevolent, gentle, *civilized*.<sup>382</sup> *Humanitas* had an original meaning more similar to this as opposed to the connection φιλανθρωπία had to the need of others and the social context in which was usually used.<sup>383</sup> Over time, however, φιλανθρωπία began to win out as a concept, being used by various Greek authors in a wider variety of ways, applying the term to people and even cities, and expanding its meaning to allow for the "cultural implications of *humanitas*."<sup>384</sup> *Humanitas*, meanwhile, began to take on the sense of 'humaneness' that we now commonly associate with it.<sup>385</sup>

φιλανθρωπία, strictly speaking, is a virtue not an emotion; however, as it was associated with ideas of benevolence and kindness, its connection with the emotion of compassion is evident, especially by the time of Plutarch. For him, φιλανθρωπία is the mark of cultured man and is deeply connected with civilization and

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<sup>381</sup> J. C. Rolfe, ed. *Aulus Gellius: Attic Nights*, vol. 2, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), 459.

<sup>382</sup> Nikolaidis, "A Note on the Relationship between *Philanthropia* and *Humanitas*," 353.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

<sup>384</sup> Rudolf. Hirzel, *Plutarch* (Leipzig: Dietrich, 1912), 352. Cited in Nikolaidis, "A Note on the Relationship between *Philanthropia* and *Humanitas*," 355.

<sup>385</sup> ———, "A Note on the Relationship between *Philanthropia* and *Humanitas*," 352, 54. Nikolaidis asserts that from Cicero onwards this change occurred.

Hellenism.<sup>386</sup> In a passage from his *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae*, he associates φιланθρωπία with words often used to demarcate the emotion of compassion:

οὐ γὰρ αὐθάδης οὐδ' ἐπαχθὴς ὁ χρηστὸς οὐδ' αὐθέκαστος ἐστὶν ὁ σῶφρων ἀνὴρ... ἀλλὰ πρῶτον μὲν εὐπροσήγορος καὶ κοινὸς ὧν πελάσαι καὶ προσελθεῖν ἅπασιν, οἰκίαν τε παρέχων ἄκλειστον ὡς λιμένα φύξιμον αἰεὶ τοῖς χρήζουσι, καὶ τὸ κηδεμονικὸν καὶ φιλάνθρωπον οὐ χρεΐαις οὐδὲ πράξεσι μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ συναλγεῖν πταίουσι καὶ κατορθοῦσι συγχαίρειν ἐπιδεικνύμενος.<sup>387</sup>

For the good man is neither presumptuous nor offensive, and the prudent man is not over-blunt in his speech... but in the first place he is affable and generally accessible and approachable for all, keeping his house always unlocked as a harbour of refuge for those in need, and showing his solicitude and friendliness, not only by acts of service, but also by sharing the griefs of those who fail and the joys of those who succeed...<sup>388</sup>

These are the characteristics of a χρηστὸς man, a man who is not necessarily good in a morally upright way (although it would be difficult to be morally compromised and be χρηστὸς), but good in a ‘useful’ way – in this case, good and useful to the people around him and his community. He is εὐπροσήγορος καὶ κοινὸς ὧν πελάσαι καὶ προσελθεῖν ἅπασιν (“affable and generally accessible and approachable for all.”) Even more than accessible, he provides his home as φύξιμος λιμὴν (“harbour of refuge”) for those in trouble. Most importantly, his τὸ φιλάνθρωπον comes not only from χρεΐα and πράξις (‘use’ and ‘service’), but also from the fact that he feels pain with (συναλγέω) those who fail and also feels joy with (συγχαίρω) those who succeed. These σύν- compounds are associated with compassion, an emotion similar to pity (ἔλεος) but which, according to Aristotle, is reserved for close kin and

<sup>386</sup> Martin, "The Concept of *Philanthropia* in Plutarch's Lives," 167. This idea comes up often in Plutarch's discussion of Greek statesmen; however, φιλανθρωπία is also a virtue associated with prominent Roman figures and politicians. (E.g., Plut. *Vit. Phoc.* 10.7-8; *Vit. Pub.* 1.2)

<sup>387</sup> Plut. *Mor. Prae. ger. reip.* 823a

<sup>388</sup> H. N. Fowler, *Plutarch's Moralia*, vol. 10, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), 285.

friends.<sup>389</sup> Plutarch, however, appears not to use these σύν- words in the same way as Aristotle meant them and takes a broader approach to their meaning.<sup>390</sup> And notably, he associates them with φιλανθρωπία, which shows how this concept is linked, at least for Plutarch, with compassion.<sup>391</sup>

Chariton makes relatively extensive use of the term φιλανθρωπία in his novel, where its meaning changes subtly according to context, but it is always regarded as a pro-social concept or emotion, even though in some scenes we see characters manipulate others through its use. The same is true of ἔλεος, as we shall see, but it has a different, although related, meaning.

For a human being, a love of mankind, φιλανθρωπία, means, showing kindness, consideration, and compassion to your fellow humans. As already stated, in ancient Greek culture this became wrapped up with παιδεία and what it meant to be fundamentally human, so that to have φιλανθρωπία meant that you were a properly cultured and civilized person. Thus, it came to denote civilization and all the appropriate behaviours that came with it: courtesy, politeness, and kindness. By extension, then, the leaders of centres of civilization – cities, towns, prominent men generally – are often expected to be, and are thus described as, φιλόανθρωπος and, indeed, even cities themselves are characterized this way. Chariton uses

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<sup>389</sup> See Chapter One.

<sup>390</sup> For more on Plutarch's ideas of pity and compassion, see Christopher Pelling, "Pity in Plutarch," in *Pity and Power in Ancient Athens*, ed. Rachel Hall Sternberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 284-86, 88.

<sup>391</sup> The fact that both desirable (joy) and undesirable (pain) emotions are included here may also suggest an element of empathy in this passage as well; however, there is not really a sense of spontaneous, involuntary reflection of feeling, as I have defined empathy to be for the scope of this project. Both the shared joy and the shared pain here appear more considered, but perhaps there is a melding of the two emotions, empathy and compassion, as so easily happens, even for us in modern life.

φιланθρωπία in these ways at various points in his novel. For example, Dionysius is described in Book Two with the adjectival form of the noun:

Διονύσιος γάρ, ὁ δεσπότης ἡμῶν, χρηστός ἐστι καὶ  
φιλόανθρωπος.<sup>392</sup>

Dionysius, our master, is decent and kind.<sup>393</sup>

φιλόανθρωπος is often paired with another adjective of similar value, as is the case here. Dionysius is both φιλόανθρωπος, which the translator renders here as ‘kind’, and χρηστός, the same word as was used in the Plutarch passage above, which means a useful kind of ‘good.’ This characterizes his personality as one appropriate to a benevolent leader who is civilized, fair, and appropriate in his behaviour to others. More than that, these words are said by Plangon to Callirhoe, and are used to assure Callirhoe that Dionysius will be gentle and compassionate towards her. This brings the sense of his φιλόανθρωπος nature down to more of a personal level, where emotions like compassion work, as opposed to the ‘grander’ scale of a general love of mankind and civility. Essentially, it is a guarantee he will care about her and treat her kindly.

Dionysius is aware of his reputation as φιλόανθρωπος and states it outright further on in Book Two:

Διονύσιός εἰμι, Μηλῶν πρῶτος, σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ τῆς ὅλης Ἰωνίας,  
ἐπ' εὐσεβείᾳ καὶ φιλανθρωπίᾳ διαβόητος.<sup>394</sup>

I am Dionysius, the foremost citizen of Miletus and probably all  
Ionia, well known as a devote and kindly man.<sup>395</sup>

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<sup>392</sup> Charit. 2.2.1

<sup>393</sup> G. P. Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 89.

<sup>394</sup> Charit. 2.5.4

<sup>395</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 105.



In this passage, φιланθρωπία is paired with εὐσεβεία (piety) which is another concept closely associated with civility and proper behaviour. Dionysius has developed a reputation for both and is not afraid to state so outright, for these are qualities every good leader should have: he should behave suitably towards the gods and towards other people. His quality of φιланθρωπία is touched on several more times. First, in the scene where Plangon is fabricating a story to manipulate Callirhoe and she says of Dionysius:

φύσει δέ ἐστι βαρύθυμος, ὥσπερ καὶ φιλάνθρωπος.<sup>396</sup>

His nature is to be as severe [when angry] as he is [normally] kind.<sup>397</sup>

Another character, Leonas, persuades Callirhoe to tell Dionysius what has happened to her and not to be afraid of him because he has φιλανθρωπία:

ἀλλὰ μόνον ἀπλῶς αὐτῷ διαλέγου, καὶ μηδὲν ὑποκρύψεως τῶν ἀληθῶν· τοῦτο γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἐπικαλέσεται μᾶλλον τὴν εἰς σὲ φιλανθρωπίαν.<sup>398</sup>

Just speak with him frankly and hide nothing of the truth. This will rather induce him to have sympathy for you.<sup>399</sup>

Goold translates the word here as ‘sympathy’ but this seems to be the same sort of quality which is described in the previous passages. Finally, Miletus itself is characterized as φιλάνθρωπος:

ἀλλὰ δέομαί σου, Διονύσιε (Ἑλλήν γὰρ εἶ καὶ πόλεως φιλανθρώπου καὶ παιδείας μετείληφας)...<sup>400</sup>

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<sup>396</sup> Charit. 2.7.2

<sup>397</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 115. I have placed in parentheses parts of the translation that do not actually occur in the Greek.

<sup>398</sup> Charit. 2.5.3

<sup>399</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 105.

<sup>400</sup> Charit. 2.5.11

But I beg you, Dionysius, since you are a Greek and belong to a civilized city and are cultured...<sup>401</sup>

Here we can see the concept of φιланθρωπία related to a number of different ideas: leadership, the quality of being Greek, civilization and cities, and παιδεία.<sup>402</sup> A good Greek man is endowed with φιланθρωπία which requires him to be kind to those who need his assistance. And cities themselves, as human creations and centre of human civilization, can be characterized as φιλάνθρωπος. The city of Syracuse is described the same way by Theron during his trial. He says:

μη οὖν ὑμεῖς, ὦ Συρακόσιοι, δῆμος ἐπὶ φιλανθρωπία περιβόητος, γέννησθέ μοι καὶ δίψους καὶ θαλάσσης ἀγριώτεροι.<sup>403</sup>

Men of Syracuse, city famed for humanity, do not be more cruel to me than thirst and the sea!<sup>404</sup>

Syracuse is, like Dionysius, famous for its φιλανθρωπία, and this trait is juxtaposed with the ἀγριώτερος sea – cruelty is the opposite of kindness or humanity. And two further examples come in Books Four and Seven:

δόξει δέ σοι τὰ τότε φιλανθρωπότερα.<sup>405</sup>

Miletus was kinder to you then.<sup>406</sup>

πρὸς τὴν σύγκρισιν τῶν παρόντων ἦν μοι καὶ Βαβυλῶν φιλάνθρωπος.<sup>407</sup>

Compared to my present state, even Babylon was kindly.<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 109.

<sup>402</sup> The Greek concept of παιδεία can be translated as 'education' but it involved more than simple schooling, and was comprised of the moral, intellectual, social and physical training that were considered important to the aristocratic class. For a general discussion of Greek παιδεία, see Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, trans. Gilbert Highet, vol. 1-3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944).

<sup>403</sup> Charit. 3.4.9

<sup>404</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 159.

<sup>405</sup> Charit. 4.4.4

<sup>406</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 211.

<sup>407</sup> Charit. 7.5.4

<sup>408</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 347.

Other powerful characters in Chariton's novel display this type of *φιλανθρωπία* as well. Mithradates says to the king in book five:

“δέομαί σου” φησί, “βασιλεῦ, δίκαιος γὰρ εἶ καὶ φιλόανθρωπος...”<sup>409</sup>

“Your Majesty, you are just and compassionate...”<sup>410</sup>

Just as in the examples with Dionysius, the king's *φιλανθρωπία* is linked with another complementary quality: he is *δίκαιος* (just) and *φιλόανθρωπος*. Callirhoe refers to his *φιλανθρωπία* as well, albeit as a diversion from the king's overtures towards her, which were delivered by means of his eunuch:

θαυμάζω δὲ πῶς συνετώτατος ὑπάρχων ἀγνοεῖς τὴν βασιλέως  
φιλανθρωπίαν, ὅτι οὐκ ἔρᾳ δυστυχοῦς γυναικὸς ἀλλὰ ἔλεει.<sup>411</sup>

I am surprised, too, that for one so intelligent you fail to recognize the king's humanity, and that he is not in love with an unfortunate woman, but rather pities her.<sup>412</sup>

Here *φιλανθρωπία* is connected with *ἔλεος* (pity), suggesting that one's innate quality of *φιλανθρωπία* is likely to make you feel *ἔλεος* for someone in trouble, both prosocial responses to suffering. Goold translates *φιλανθρωπία* as 'humanity,' drawing out the human side of the term, but it is still the same attribute which was ascribed to Dionysius as a good leader.

Certain behaviours are characterized as *φιλόανθρωπος* as well. For example, one of the pirates suggests claiming *φιλανθρωπία* as their reason for opening the tomb of Callirhoe:

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<sup>409</sup> Charit. 5.7.1

<sup>410</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 261.

<sup>411</sup> Charit. 6.5.10

<sup>412</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 305.

ἀκούσαντες δὲ φωνὴν ἠνοιξάμεν κατὰ φιланθρωπίαν, ἵνα  
σώσωμεν τὴν ἔνδον ἀποκεκλεισμένην.<sup>413</sup>

But hearing a cry we opened it out of humanity so as to rescue the  
girl inside.<sup>414</sup>

Not simply kindness, but compassion, is included here in this use of φιλανθρωπία, with its connection to rescue (σώζω.) This idea comes up again when Theron constructs a temporary shelter for Callirhoe and makes her comfortable:

αὐτὰ δὲ οὐκ ἐκ φιλανθρωπίας ἔπραττεν ἀλλ' ἐκ φιλοκερδίας, ὥς  
ἐμπορος μᾶλλον ἢ ληστής.<sup>415</sup>

This he did not out of compassion but from a desire for gain, more  
as a dealer than a pirate.<sup>416</sup>

Not a feeling of love for his fellow human beings, not compassion, but a feeling of love for gain, φιλοκερδία, is what motivates Theron, the narrator tells us. He is not showing her kindness because he feels φιλανθρωπία but because he sees what he can gain by keeping her comfortable and agreeable. Callirhoe even thanks him, despite the fact that she knows he only wants to use her to his own benefit, because she feels it is safer to go along with his plan than resist:

καὶ “χάριν σοι” φησὶν “ἔχω, πάτερ, ὑπὲρ τῆς εἰς ἐμέ  
φιλανθρωπίας.”<sup>417</sup>

“I thank you, sir,” she said, “for you kind consideration towards  
me.”<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> Charit. 1.10.2-3

<sup>414</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 63.

<sup>415</sup> Charit. 1.12.1

<sup>416</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 69.

<sup>417</sup> Charit. 1.13.10

<sup>418</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 79.

Callirhoe is shown the same false φιланθρωπία in the court of the king by his servant, the eunuch Artaxates. He affects kindness and compassion towards her, as the narrator tells us:

ὁ δὲ εὐνοῦχος ἰδὼν τὴν Καλλιρόην μόνην ἀπολελειμμένην, ἐμβαλὼν τὴν δεξιάν, ὥς δὴ τις φιλέλλην καὶ φιλάνθρωπος, ἀπήγαγε τοῦ πλῆθους τῶν θεραπαινίδων.<sup>419</sup>

Then the eunuch, seeing that Callirhoe was left alone, took her hand, as if he were fond of Greeks and all mankind, and led her away from her group of attendants.<sup>420</sup>

Artaxates is described as imitating a person who is φιλέλλην and φιλάνθρωπος – loving of Greeks and humans generally. φιλέλλην is a term applied to foreigners, especially foreign kings.<sup>421</sup> The eunuch wants to appear compassionate; however, Callirhoe sees through his act.

In one instance slavery is regarded as φιλάνθρωπος, at least when compared to beatings and death. When the Persians are defeated by the Egyptians in Book Seven, Chariton writes:

Αἰγύπτιοι μὲν γὰρ ἔχαιρον ἀπηλλαγμένοι πολέμου καὶ δουλείας Περσικῆς, οἱ δὲ ἐαλωκότες Περσῶν δεσμὰ καὶ μάστιγας καὶ ὕβρεις καὶ σφαγὰς προσεδόκων, τὸ φιλανθρωπότατον δέ, δουλείαν· ἡ δὲ Στάτειρα ἐνθεῖσα τὴν κεφαλὴν εἰς τὰ γόνατα Καλλιρόης ἔκλαιεν· ἐκεῖνη γάρ, ὥς ἂν Ἑλληνὶς καὶ πεπαιδευμένη καὶ οὐκ ἀμελέτηςτος κακῶν, παρεμυθεῖτο μάλιστα τὴν βασιλίδαν.<sup>422</sup>

The Egyptians exulted in their deliverance from war and Persian domination, while the captured Persians awaited chains and whips, outrage and death, with slavery the [most compassionate] fate. Statira was weeping with her head resting in Callirhoe's lap. Indeed,

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<sup>419</sup> Charit. 6.7.5

<sup>420</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 311.

<sup>421</sup> Hdt. 2.178; Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 23

<sup>422</sup> Charit. 7.6.5-6

the latter could best comfort the queen, since she was a cultured Greek lady and not without experience of misfortune.<sup>423</sup>

Victors who only enslave the defeated are therefore considered φιλάνθρωποι, because they do not subject them to torture or execute them, and this is the best outcome for which the Persians can hope. What is interesting is that in the same passage, Callirhoe comforts the queen, Statira, in a more intimate and personal example of φιλανθρωπία. The narrator tells us that Callirhoe can console her (παραμυθέομαι) the best (μάλιστα) because, first, she is educated (παιδεύω), and, second, she understands what it means to suffer misfortune (she is not ἀμελέτητος – ‘unpracticed’ or ‘inexperienced.’) The verb παραμυθέομαι that Chariton uses to describe Callirhoe’s consoling of the queen is the same verb used by Soranus for the comforting of patients and by Plutarch in his consolation of Apollonius.<sup>424</sup> This is very much a verb of compassion which aims its action at another, usually suffering, individual in an effort to relieve that suffering. As for the reasons for Callirhoe’s success with this, the second is understandable: it seems natural that someone who has undergone a similar experience can more easily express empathy for the sufferer.<sup>425</sup> The first reason, however, is less immediately understandable: why should her education be a factor in her empathy? This is due to the connection between παιδεία and φιλανθρωπία. Callirhoe, being upper-class and raised therefore in a particular way, is the beneficiary of Greek παιδεία which is not simply

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<sup>423</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 355.

<sup>424</sup> Sor. *Gyn.* 1.4.3-4; Sor. *Gyn.* 2.4.3-2.5.1 (see Chapter Three); Plut. *Mor. Consol. ad Apoll.* 101f-102b (see this chapter, Five.)

<sup>425</sup> See C. Daniel Batson, Susie C. Sympson et al., "'I've Been There, Too': Effect on Empathy of Prior Experience with a Need," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 22, no. 5 (1996): 474-82; Sara D. Hodges, Kristi J. Kiel et al., "Giving Birth to Empathy: The Effects of Similar Experience on Empathic Accuracy, Empathic Concern, and Perceived Empathy," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 36, no. 3 (2010): 398-409.

her education but also her culture. As we have seen, φιланθρωπία means showing kindness and compassion to your fellow human beings. A human who loves humankind, therefore, becomes associated with what it meant to be fundamentally human, so that to have φιланθρωπία meant that you were a properly cultured and civilized person. And you receive your culture and civilization as an ancient Greek from your παιδεία. Thus Callirhoe embodies both the wider, cultural value of φιλανθρωπία, as well as the more interpersonal emotion of compassion through her comforting of the queen.

Another word which comes up frequently in Chariton's text is ἔλεος, commonly translated as pity. ἔλεος is a more personal and specific emotion than φιλανθρωπία, which characterised as a virtue as opposed to an emotion. Those who have φιλανθρωπία are likely to be compassionate or feel ἔλεος for the unfortunate. Pity is aroused in Chariton's text by the unfortunate circumstances of an individual, such as Chaereas' lovesickness for Callirhoe at the start of the novel:

πολυπραγμονοῦντες δὲ τὴν αἰτίαν ἔμαθον τῆς νόσου, καὶ ἔλεος πάντας εἰσῆει μαιρακίου καλοῦ κινδυνεύοντος ἀπολέσθαι διὰ πάθος ψυχῆς εὐφυοῦς.<sup>426</sup>

Their curiosity found out the cause of his sickness, and all felt pity for a handsome youth who seemed likely to die from the passion of an honest heart.<sup>427</sup>

The people of Syracuse find out that Chaereas' unrequited love for Callirhoe is the cause of his illness and feel pity for him – a feeling of sadness on behalf of the youth's unfortunate situation. This prompts the crowd to help him, by petitioning the marriage of the two young people.

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<sup>426</sup> Charit. 1.1.10

<sup>427</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 33.

Pity can be evoked through words, especially in a speech in front of a crowd, as in a court trial, which is the circumstance under which Aristotle defines pity. Juries can be manipulated into feeling ἔλεος for a person if he can evoke it through his narrative, creating *pathos* and playing the victim. This is what Theron attempts in book three, before someone from the crowd refutes his version of things:

Ταῦτα λέγοντος οἰκτρῶς ἔλεος εἰσῆλθε τὰ πλήθη, καὶ τάχα ἂν  
ἔπεισεν...<sup>428</sup>

At his pathetic words the crowd was seized with pity, and he might  
have persuaded them...<sup>429</sup>

Theron's words are described as οἰκτρῶς (pathetic, pitiable) which causes the crowd to feel ἔλεος for him. This creates the possibility of persuasion (πείθω) to his version of events before a fisherman from the crowd identifies him. Polycharmus receives the same pity from a crowd in Book Four, when he says he wishes to die with Chaereas:

ἐπεκλάσθησαν αἱ ὀργαὶ τῶν ἀκουόντων καὶ ὁ θυμὸς εἰς ἔλεον  
μετέπεσε, Μιθριδάτης δὲ ὑπὲρ πάντας συνεχύθη...<sup>430</sup>

The mood of his listeners turned full circle: anger changed to pity,  
and Mithridates was more moved than the rest.<sup>431</sup>

Polycharmus is not giving a speech in front of a jury, but his words are heard by those around him, including Mithridates, king of Caria, and they create an emotional response. The mood or disposition (ὀργή) of the crowd changes with his words, from anger (θυμὸς) to pity (ἔλεος) and Mithridates is 'moved.' συγχέω is a term which literally means 'to pour together' or 'mix up', but when used of a person's

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<sup>428</sup> Charit. 3.4.10

<sup>429</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 159.

<sup>430</sup> Charit. 4.2.14

<sup>431</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 203.



mind or emotions means ‘to trouble.’ This is the emotional response to an individual’s suffering. Mithridates spares Polycharmus and Chaereas, who describes the king’s actions to Callirhoe as ἔλεος:

τοὺς μὲν οὖν ἄλλους πολίτας οὐκ οἶδ' ὃ τι γεγόνασιν, ἐμὲ δὲ καὶ  
Πολύχαρμον τὸν φίλον ἤδη μέλλοντας φονεύεσθαι σέσωκεν ἔλεος  
δεσπότης.<sup>432</sup>

I do not know what has become of the rest of my fellow citizens, but when my friend Polycharmus and I were about to be executed, the mercy of our master saved us.<sup>433</sup>

Goode translates ἔλεος as ‘mercy’ here, which works as well as ‘pity’ since it was his pity which moved Mithridates to action and spare Polycharmus and Chaereas.

Finally, we see ἔλεος make an appearance in a deeply personal way between Callirhoe and her unborn child:

πάλιν δὲ μετενόει καὶ πῶς ἔλεος αὐτὴν τοῦ κατὰ γαστρὸς εἰσῆει.  
ἀλλ' ὅσω μᾶλλον ἐκείνη τὴν φθορὰν ἔσπευδε, τοσοῦτω μᾶλλον  
αὐτὴ τὸ κατὰ γαστρὸς ἠλέει...<sup>434</sup>

Then again she changed her mind, and pity for the unborn child came over her. But the more Plangon urged her to destroy the unborn child, the greater became her pity for it...<sup>435</sup>

Callirhoe initially believes that aborting her pregnancy is the best decision, given her circumstances. Once Plangon, Dionysius’ servant, applies some reverse psychology by way of encouraging her to choose abortion, Callirhoe begins to doubt her decision and feel pity for her unborn child. This type of ἔλεος is more interpersonal than the public displays we have seen amongst large groups, and not directly elicited by the one being pitied. Chariton also uses another associated term,

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<sup>432</sup> Charit. 4.4.7-8

<sup>433</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 213.

<sup>434</sup> Charit. 2.9.3 & 2.10.7.

<sup>435</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 121, 27.

συμπαθής, in the same context of Callirhoe and Plangon. This is his only use of this term, but it relates to this more personal type of pity. Plangon, in order to please her master, Dionysius, and win her freedom, must find a way to manipulate Callirhoe into having her child, and she believes that having her marry Dionysius and pass the child off as his is the surest way. For this, she needs Callirhoe's trust, which she gets by being friendly with her and showing her sympathy:

τῆς δὲ ὑστεραίας ἐλθοῦσα ἡ Πλαγγὼν πρῶτον μὲν καθῆστο  
σκυθρωπὴ καὶ σχῆμα συμπαθὲς ἐπεδείξατο...<sup>436</sup>

The next day Plangon came back and first sat down beside her,  
looking sad and presenting a sympathetic figure...<sup>437</sup>

Plangon presents herself as sad for Callirhoe (σκυθρωπός) and sympathetic (συμπαθής). συμπαθής means literally 'feeling together', that is, having like feelings, and so together with σκυθρωπός Plangon is attempting to imitate the feelings of pity and empathy – feeling sorry for Callirhoe, but also being affected by and sharing her grief.

Chariton's expression of compassion is included in his use of the words φιланθρωπία and ἔλεος. φιλανθρωπία is related to the Latin *humanitas* and was an important concept for the cultured ancient Greek. It subsumed notions of civilization, culture, and humanity and it is employed in Chariton's novel as both a claim to all these things and the actual expression of compassion or mercy. ἔλεος is similar but works on a more personal level and has elements of empathy wrapped up in it. This does not appear to be the socially constructed concept of supplication

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<sup>436</sup> Charit. 2.11.4-5

<sup>437</sup> Goold, *Chariton: Callirhoe*: 129.

and pity of the fifth century BC, but something less structured and more spontaneous.

### **Achilles Tatius**

Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* is not a novel short on emotion, and in particular, the emotions of empathy and compassion. The characters suffer a number of misfortunes and respond accordingly with grief, hopelessness and requests for mercy. A variety of passages have characters telling other characters about their misfortunes, which creates similar emotions in the listener. Achilles Tatius' vocabulary of pity and compassion has a tendency to diverge from the traditional Aristotelian definitions, using ἔλεος, οἶκτος and σύν- words together in the same passages, with no particularly great difference between them or adherence to their traditional definitions. Overall, the novel explores the effect of one's emotion on another in a number of different ways, but all conform to one basic idea: the suffering of one person has the power to affect similar emotions in another, which often leads to compassion.

Early on in the novel, the main character, Clitophon, and his friend, Clinias, after suffering a number of misfortunes themselves, encounter another man, Menelaus, who tells them his own sad tale. He once killed a young man he loved in a hunting accident, and is now in exile for his crime. Menelaus feels great remorse for his actions (he did not resist the charges laid against him by the young man's parents in court but even asks for the death penalty<sup>438</sup>) and his emotionally-charged

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<sup>438</sup> Ach. Tat. 2.34.6

speech affects Clitophon and Clinias greatly, for they have suffered the loss of loved ones themselves:

ἐπεδάκρυσεν ὁ Κλεινίας αὐτοῦ λέγοντος Πάτροκλον πρόφασιν, ἀναμνησθεὶς Χαρικλέους. καὶ ὁ Μενέλαος, “Τὰμὰ δακρύεις,” ἔφη, “ἢ καὶ σέ τι τοιοῦτον ἐξήγαγε;” στενάξας οὖν ὁ Κλεινίας καταλέγει τὸν Χαρικλέα καὶ τὸν ἵππον, κἀγὼ τὰμαυτοῦ. Ὅρων οὖν ἐγὼ τὸν Μενέλαον κατηφῇ πάνυ τῶν ἑαυτοῦ μεμνημένον, τὸν δὲ Κλεινίαν ὑποδακρύνοντα μνήμη Χαρικλέους, βουλόμενος αὐτοὺς τῆς λύπης ἀπαγαγεῖν, ἐμβάλλω λόγον ἐρωτικῆς ἐχόμενον ψυχαγωγίας.<sup>439</sup>

As he was speaking Clinias wept, ‘apparently for Patroclus’, but in fact recalling Charicles. ‘Are you weeping for my sufferings,’ Menelaus asked, ‘or has some such event accounted for your exile too?’ With a groan, Clinias recounted the story of Charicles and the horse. I then told mine. Then, seeing Menelaus altogether downcast as he reminisced about his sufferings, and Clinias weeping quietly in memory of Charicles, and wanting to coax them out of their grief, I struck up a conversation aimed at erotic entertainment.<sup>440</sup>

The retelling of Menelaus’ tragic tale affects both men because they see their own stories in his. Menelaus does not know their background and so asks if they are simply affected by the sadness of his story (Τὰμὰ δακρύεις) or if they have suffered something similar. The power of narrative to emotionally affect the audience can be done on two potential levels: through empathy and imagination, it can bring about similar emotions (like sadness), or it can remind the listener of their own similar situation and bring about their own emotions regarding such. It has been suggested that empathy is more powerful when the listener has experienced a similar situation and therefore similar emotions to the ones expressed by the individual to whom to

<sup>439</sup> Ach. Tat. 2.34.7 – 2.35.1

<sup>440</sup> Tim Whitmarsh, *Achilles Tatius: Leucippe and Clitophon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 39.

they are listening.<sup>441</sup> Clitophon then, observing how all three of them are being affected by the story, is moved to compassion: he desires to “coax them out of their grief” (βουλόμενος αὐτοὺς τῆς λύπης ἀπαγαγεῖν) through the diversion of a completely different type of story.<sup>442</sup> This echoes similar themes in other sources where characters attempt to distract others from their painful emotional state by telling jokes or erotic stories. Book Eight of the *Odyssey* where Demodocus sings the tale of Aphrodite and Ares being caught in the middle of their adulterous liaison is one; the cheering up of Demeter in the *Homeric Hymn* by Iambe’s jokes (or Baubo’s humorous lewd gesture in the *Orphic Fragment* (Kern 52)) is another. All of these stories serve to distract characters from their current emotional state and make them feel better, which certainly could be considered compassionate action.

As was previously recounted, the English term ‘empathy’ was coined in the context of aesthetics to explain the effect that art could have on one’s emotions.<sup>443</sup> Interestingly, this comes up briefly in the novel as well in a scene of *ekphrasis*.<sup>444</sup> Clitophon visits a temple in the third chapter where he comes across a painting. It depicts Prometheus suffering his punishment: chained to a rock, he writhes in pain as the bird pecks at and eats his liver. The Titan’s pain is rendered in detail, as the narrator states:

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<sup>441</sup> Batson, Sympson et al., “‘I’ve Been There, Too’: Effect on Empathy of Prior Experience with a Need,” 474-82.

<sup>442</sup> Compare this scene to other stories?

<sup>443</sup> See Chapter One for Lipp’s theory of ‘aesthetic empathy.’

<sup>444</sup> This could be considered a form of ‘mimetic imagination’ whereby the speaker appeals to the emotions of his audience by describing a scene vividly and accurately. For more on mimetic imagination, see Ruth Webb, “Imagination and the Arousal of the Emotions in Greco-Roman Rhetoric,” in *The Passions in Roman Thought and Literature*, ed. Susanna Morton Braund and Christopher Gill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 112-27.

ἤδη μὲν ἀνεωγμένην, ἀλλὰ τὸ ῥάμφος ἐς τὸ ὄρυγμα κεῖται, καὶ ἔοικεν ἐπορύττειν τὸ τραῦμα καὶ ζητεῖν τὸ ἥπαρ· τὸ δὲ ἐκφαίνεται τοσοῦτον, ὅσον ἀνέωξεν ὁ γραφεὺς τὸ διόρυγμα τοῦ τραύματος· ἐρείδει τῷ μηρῷ τῷ τοῦ Προμηθέως τὰς τῶν ὀνύχων ἀκμὰς. ὁ δὲ ἀλγῶν πάντῃ συνέσταλται καὶ τὴν πλευρὰν συνέσπασται καὶ τὸν μηρὸν ἐγείρει καθ' αὐτοῦ· εἰς γὰρ τὸ ἥπαρ συνάγει τὸν ὄρνιν· ὁ δὲ ἕτερος αὐτῷ τοῖν ποδοῖν τὸν σπασμὸν ὀρθιον ἀντιτείνει κάτω καὶ εἰς τοὺς δακτύλους ἀποξύνεται. τὸ δὲ ἄλλο σχῆμα δείκνυσι τὸν πόνον· κεκύρτῳ τὰς ὀφρῦς, συνέσταλται τὸ χεῖλος, φαίνει τοὺς ὀδόντας. ἠλέησας ἂν ὡς ἀλγοῦσαν τὴν γραφήν.<sup>445</sup>

...the belly had already been prised apart, but the bird's beak was buried in the trench, seemingly digging further into the gash in search of the liver. The latter was just visible, inasmuch as the artist had sundered the trench of the wound. The tips of the bird's claws were sunk into Prometheus' thigh. Prometheus himself was hunched in agony at this, one side of his body doubled up as he raised his thigh towards it; in this way, he only brought the bird closer to his liver. The other leg had been stretched out downwards in the opposite direction with a jerk, in a straight line that narrowed towards the toes. The rest of his posture also indicated his pain: his eyebrows were contracted and his lips pursed, revealing his teeth. [You pitied him], as though the very painting were suffering.<sup>446</sup>

Prometheus' suffering is meant to affect the viewer; all the realistic detail accurately communicates a body in pain:<sup>447</sup> the bird tears apart his wound and digs into his thigh; Prometheus is "hunched" (συστέλλω – 'to contract') in pain (ἄλγος); one leg shoots out "with a jerk" (σπασμὸν); his eyebrows are described with the verb κυρτόω (to 'hunch' or 'bulge'); his lips contract the same as his body (συστέλλω), showing his teeth.<sup>448</sup> The scene reminds one of descriptions of tetanus and epilepsy in Aretaeus where bodies are dramatically pulled, tensed, and contracted in painful ways; even some of the terminology is similar (e.g., σπασμὸν.) The narrator uses the

<sup>445</sup> Ach. Tat. 3.8.2-4

<sup>446</sup> Whitmarsh, *Achilles Tatius: Leucippe and Clitophon*: 49.

<sup>447</sup> For a visual vocabulary of pain, see Wilson, "Depictions of Pain in the Roman Empire," 206.

<sup>448</sup> The description of Prometheus here does not sound too far off from the statue of Laocoön, who also has an animal (the serpent) attack his abdomen, and who shoots out his legs in different directions and has a similar facial expression.

verb ἐλέω (ἠλέησας – ‘you pitied’) to describe the painting, which is used at various points in the novel (along with οἶκτος) to describe how a character feels after hearing about the hardships or suffering of another. The vehicle of the emotion, whether it is narrative or art, does not seem to matter as long as the emotion is communicated effectively.<sup>449</sup>

As we stated previously, stronger empathy may be encouraged by a listener’s experience with a sufferer’s situation. Clitophon takes this a step further to nationality. Early on in the novel, the main characters are captured by bandits and during a moment when he speaks out to the gods about their circumstance, he bemoans the fact that their captors are not Greek:

νῦν δὲ καὶ παραδεδώκατε ἡμᾶς λησταῖς Αἰγυπτίοις, ἵνα μηδὲ ἐλέους τύχωμεν. ληστὴν μὲν γὰρ Ἑλλήνα καὶ φωνὴ κατέκλασε καὶ δέησις ἐμάλαξεν· ὁ γὰρ λόγος πολλάκις τὸν ἔλεον προξενεῖ· τὸ γὰρ πονοῦν τῆς ψυχῆς ἢ γλῶττα πρὸς ἱκετηρίαν διακονουμένη τῆς τῶν ἀκουόντων ψυχῆς ἡμεροῖ τὸ θυμούμενον.<sup>450</sup>

Now you have placed us in the hands of Egyptian bandits, so that we cannot even expect compassion. Had the bandit been Greek our voices could have broken down his resistance, our prayers could have softened him. Speech often procures compassion; for when the tongue is mandated by a grieving soul to appeal for clemency it softens the raging souls of its audience.<sup>451</sup>

Communication – effective communication – is essential for eliciting emotions like empathy or compassion from an audience. Clitophon recognizes this when he says ὁ γὰρ λόγος πολλάκις τὸν ἔλεον προξενεῖ (“Speech often procures compassion.”) Translated by Whitmarsh twice in this passage as ‘compassion,’ ἔλεος can also be ‘pity’ or ‘mercy.’ This is the same word we saw previously in the context of the

<sup>449</sup> Refer back to Horace’s views on communicating emotion in performance (Chapter One.)

<sup>450</sup> Ach. Tat. 3.10.2

<sup>451</sup> Whitmarsh, *Achilles Tatius: Leucippe and Clitophon*: 51.

painting of Prometheus, and it appears to be used consistently in the novel when one's suffering has an emotional effect on another, as we have seen. He also used the term ἱκετήριος, an adjective which indicates something 'fit for a suppliant.' This is the context in which ἔλεος is requested, when mercy is needed. This sort of pity is therefore traditional: individuals supplicating strangers when in a vulnerable position.

Clitophon explains this concept of compassion further a few passages later when he encounters a general who saves his group from the bandits. Having impressed the general with his equestrian skills, he dines with him and tells him his story:

ποιεῖται δὴ με ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν ὁμοτράπεζον καὶ παρὰ τὸ δεῖπνον ἐπυνθάνετο τὰ μὰ καὶ ἀκούων ἡλέει. συμπαθῆς δέ πως εἰς ἔλεον ἄνθρωπος ἀκροατὴς ἀλλοτρίων κακῶν, καὶ ὁ ἔλεος πολλάκις φιλίαν προξενεῖ· ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ μαλαχθεῖσα πρὸς τὴν ὧν ἤκουσε λύπην, συνδιατεθεῖσα κατὰ μικρὸν τῇ τοῦ πάθους ἀκροάσει τὸν οἶκτον εἰς φιλίαν καὶ τὴν λύπην εἰς τὸν ἔλεον συλλέγει.<sup>452</sup>

Indeed, he invited me to dine with him that day, and over dinner he asked me about myself, expressing pity when he heard the reply. A man who listens to another's troubles is somehow drawn through sympathy into [pity]. [Pity], moreover, often procures friendship, for the soul is softened by grief at what it hears, and, by gradually attuning itself to this tale of suffering, transforms [compassionate grief] into friendly feelings and grief into compassion.<sup>453</sup>

Unlike the passage immediately above, this one does not appear to contain the same traditional sense of pity, if Aristotle is to be our judge of it. If ἔλεος (pity) is reserved for those at a distance and σύν- compounds (compassion) are for those close to us, then Achilles Tatius mixes the two in an interesting way here. ἔλεος, οἶκτος and σύν-

<sup>452</sup> Ach. Tat. 3.14.2-3

<sup>453</sup> Whitmarsh, *Achilles Tatius: Leucippe and Clitophon*: 53.



words are all used here. According to Clitophon, pity comes from listening to another person's κακοὶ ('evils' or 'hardships') which happens through a process of συμπάθεια, a 'fellow-feeling' or 'corresponding affection.' This is only the first step, though, as this ἔλεος can create φιλία ('friendship') and as the listener 'attunes' (σύνδιατίθημι – 'to be sympathetically affected together') his soul to the other person's story, and οἶκτος (another form of pity, often associated with the vocal expressions of pitiable lamentation) can become friendship, and grief, pity (ἔλεος.) Achilles Tatius appears to be working within a slightly different framework of pity and compassion than Aristotle's, which may not be surprising considering that we have already seen Plutarch do the same.

Pity or compassion may not only come spontaneously from another person, but can be sought or requested by someone suffering, in hopes that his or her audience will relieve this suffering. This is the supplication or clemency referenced in the previous passage (ἱκετήριος.) Upon entering the city of Ephesus, Clitophon and Melite are besought by a young woman:

καὶ ἐπεὶ τάχιστα παρεγενόμεθα, διεβαδίζομεν τοὺς ὀρχάτους τῶν φυτῶν, καὶ ἐξαίφνης προσπίπτει τοῖς γόνασιν ἡμῶν γυνή, χοῖνιξι παχεύαις δεδεμένη, δίκελλαν κρατοῦσα, τὴν κεφαλὴν κεκαρμένη, ἐρρυπωμένη τὸ σῶμα, χιτῶνα ἀνεζωσμένη ἄθλιον πάνυ, καί, "Ἐλέησόν με," ἔφη, "δέσποινα, γυνὴ γυναῖκα, ἐλευθέραν μὲν, ὡς ἔφυν, δούλην δὲ νῦν, ὡς δοκεῖ τῇ Τύχῃ" ...καὶ ἅμα διανοίξασα τὸν χιτῶνα δείκνυσι τὰ νῶτα διαγεγραμμένα ἔτι οἰκτρότερον. ὡς οὖν ταῦτα ἠκούσαμεν, ἐγὼ μὲν συνεχύθην.<sup>454</sup>

As soon as we arrived, we began to stroll around the orchard avenues, when suddenly a woman threw herself at our knees. She was bound in heavy irons, carrying a mattock, her head shaven and her body filthy, girl with an extremely shoddy tunic. 'Pity me, mistress!' she cried. 'You are a woman, so am I, and a free woman

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<sup>454</sup> Ach. Tat. 5.17.3, 6-7

by birth – though a slave now, thanks to Fortune’s designs.’ ...As she spoke, she parted her tunic and showed us the marks etched onto her back, an even more pitiable sight. When we heard this, I for my part was extremely upset...<sup>455</sup>

In this passage, we can see some of the same concepts and vocabulary which were used in previous examples. The woman (whom we later learn is Callirhoe) uses ἐλεέω in the aorist imperative, entreating Melite who she knows is a powerful woman in Ephesus. She also appeals to their shared gender and tells her that she was once free like her, emphasising their similarities. This is comparable to the passage where Menelaus’ story affects the other men through their shared experiences. Finally, she accentuates her wretched appearance by exposing the scars on her back, providing a visual representation of her suffering, not unlike Prometheus’ in the painting from the temple. All of this accomplishes exactly what the woman desires: Clitophon describes the sight of her exposed scars as οἰκτρότερον (‘most pitiable’), uses the verb συνεχύθην (‘very upset’ or ‘stirred up’) to express his feelings about this (obviously feeling affected by the sight of her, despite not recognising Callirhoe) and Melite grants the young woman her freedom.

The young lovers in this novel are beset by a number of obstacles, one of which is Melite’s desire for Clitophon. Believing Leucippe to have died, he agrees to accompany Melite to Ephesus, but finds a number of excuses to avoid consummating their relationship, despite feeling friendly towards her, although not in a romantic way. She appeals to him on several occasions, unsuccessfully; however, Clitophon does feel some sympathy for her situation:

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<sup>455</sup> Whitmarsh, *Achilles Tatius: Leucippe and Clitophon*: 88.

ταῦτα ἔλεγε καὶ ἔκλαεν, ἐπιθεῖσά μου τοῖς στέρνοις τὴν κεφαλὴν  
οὕτως ἐλεεινῶς, ὥστε συμπαθεῖν μέ τι τὴν ψυχὴν. οὐκ εἶχον δὲ ὅστις  
γένωμαι· καὶ γὰρ ἐδόκει μοι δίκαια ἐγκαλεῖν.<sup>456</sup>

While she was saying this sort of thing through her tears, she  
leaned her head on my chest so pathetically that I felt compassion  
stirring in my soul. I had no idea how to respond...<sup>457</sup>

In this passage, body language and touch elicit pity and compassion, as Melite's action of leaning her head on Clitophon's chest is described as οὕτως ἐλεεινῶς. A συμπάθ- word comes up again here, but this time as a verb (συμπαθέω) in order to express the feeling Clitophon has in response. Whitmarsh translates it as 'compassion' which works well with Aristotle's definition of the term which in his framework is conveyed in Greek by the use of σύν- compounds. But again within the same passage, in the exact same scene, both an ἐλέος word (pity) and a σύν- compound (compassion) are used. Achilles Tatius does not appear to be greatly differentiating between the two; both terms equally express Clitophon's feelings for Melite.<sup>458</sup> If any difference can be discerned, it may be in that ἐλεεινῶς describes how Melite *looks*, while συμπαθέω describes how Clitophon *feels*. But the mixing of terminology appears to be natural for Achilles Tatius.

Finally, having discovered that Leucippe is still alive and promising to provide a safe escape for the two lovers, Melite tries once more to seduce Clitophon:

σπεῖσαι κἄν νῦν, ἐλέησον... ὥς οὖν με ἔλυσε καὶ περιέβαλε κλαίουσα,  
ἔπαθόν τι ἀνθρώπινον...<sup>459</sup>

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<sup>456</sup> Ach. Tat. 5.21.5

<sup>457</sup> Whitmarsh, *Achilles Tatius: Leucippe and Clitophon*: 91-92.

<sup>458</sup> We have seen this occur already in Plutarch (see Chapter ????)

<sup>459</sup> Ach. Tat. 5.27.2

“Call a truce, even now! Pity me!”... When she had loosed me, thrown her arms around me, and wept, I felt a natural human reaction.<sup>460</sup>

Like Leucippe who begged for mercy from Melite, Melite herself begs Clitophon in the same way. A connection between Leucippe’s slave status could also be made here with Melite’s situation – she certainly behaves as one enslaved to Eros.<sup>461</sup> Melite’s words, and her crying and hugging of Clitophon, elicit a similar response in him as in the previous passage, but here he describes it as ἔπαθόν τι ἀνθρώπινον (“I felt a natural human reaction” – literally, “something human.”) This is an interesting, but vague, way to refer to his feelings. It appears to be empathy at work: Clitophon has a basic and innate response to Melite’s desperate cry for pity, something that could almost be described as involuntary. Perhaps this is why he refers to it in this way, rather than using pity or σύν- terms – he is feeling something different from these emotions. This then moves him to be compassionate towards her, and grant Melite what she desires.

The main character and narrator of the novel, Clitophon, provides quite a lot of commentary on the action where he digresses to explain certain aspects of human behaviour. During a scene in which Leucippe is being held captive and is the subject of the lustful advances of Melite’s husband, she cries, and the narrator takes a moment to explain the effect tears have on another person:

ἔστι μὲν γὰρ φύσει δάκρυον ἐπαγωγότατον ἐλέου τοῖς ὁρῶσι· τὸ δὲ τῶν γυναικῶν μᾶλλον, ὅσῳ θαλερώτερον, τοσοῦτῳ καὶ γοητότερον. ἐὰν δὲ ἡ δακρύουσα ἦ καὶ καλὴ καὶ ὁ θεατῆς ἐραστής, οὐδ’ ὀφθαλμὸς ἀτρεμεῖ, ἀλλὰ τὸ δακρύν ἐμιμήσατο.<sup>462</sup>

<sup>460</sup> Whitmarsh, *Achilles Tatius: Leucippe and Clitophon*: 97.

<sup>461</sup> And she admits as much at Ach. Tat. 5.25.6, 5.26.1, 5.26.10.

<sup>462</sup> Ach. Tat. 6.7.4

It is a fact of nature that a tear is most likely to attract pity in its beholders. All the more so a woman's: in that it is more luxuriant, it has more power to bewitch. If the weeper is a woman of beauty and the spectator her lover, then not even the eye is unmoved, but imitates the tears.<sup>463</sup>

Achilles Tatius may be talking of ἐλέος (pity) here, but what he describes is very close to empathy. As he says, tears cause the observer to feel ἐλέος; this effect is intensified if the crier is a woman, if she is beautiful and if the observer is romantically attached to her. Then he says that the emotion is echoed or imitated (μιμέομαι) by the observer. And not simply the man himself, but the eye (ὀφθαλμός) is “not unmoved” (ἀτρεμεῖ) as if the reaction is an involuntary bodily function.<sup>464</sup> Following Konstan's assessment of Aristotle's definitions, the close relationship described here would lead one to expect a σύν- compound word but that is not what Achilles Tatius uses. I suggest that this is another example of how the terminology is shifting slightly in this period and losing the very specific meaning it had in the fifth century BC.s

*Leucippe and Clitophon* is full of emotion, especially tragic emotion which tends to elicit pity and compassion from its characters and perhaps even its readers. It also provides some possible instances of empathy, whereby characters are spontaneously affected by the emotions of others. Achilles Tatius appears to be much more flexible in his use of pity and compassion vocabulary, too, employing ἐλέος, οἶκτος and σύν- compounds within the same scenes and not adhering to Aristotle's clear differentiation between them. By this period, perhaps the lines have

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<sup>463</sup> Whitmarsh, *Achilles Tatius: Leucippe and Clitophon*: 101-02.

<sup>464</sup> Aretaeus, for example, describes gall being stationary in the body. (Aret. *SD* 1.15.11)

been blurred and the definitions expanded sufficiently enough to do this. The extensive emotion presented in the novel tends to focus on the fact that the distress and misery of one person has the ability to influence the emotions in another in a similar way, leading often to compassion.

## **Conclusion**

Plutarch, Chariton and Achilles Tatius, although writing in different genres than medicine, show the same interest in and concern regarding empathy and compassion as the medical writers analysed here. Their focus differs, however, in subject matter. Plutarch expresses the most empathy and compassion when confronting the treatment of animals. He empathises with their plight, using rhetorical device to give a voice to what he believes would be their feelings (if they could express them) about the abuse they receive at the hands of humans. He advocates for their compassionate treatment and attempts to offer solutions to this moral issue. Chariton concerns himself mostly with larger concepts of compassion and pity, and how it is expressed as a Greek cultural phenomenon through ἔλεος and φιλάνθρωπία vocabulary. Characters express pity and compassion for one another, the importance of it is filtered through a grander lens of παιδεία and civilization. It is also used occasionally to manipulate characters. Achilles Tatius, coming back around to empathy again, as well as compassion, writes a highly emotional novel, in which his characters often affect one another emotionally through narrating their own tragic stories or through art, or through pleas for pity and compassion. This is done by means of a variety of vocabulary which is familiar but used more broadly than we have seen in earlier authors (such as Aristotle.) Overall, Plutarch, Chariton

and Achilles Tatius show that preoccupation of certain first and second-century AD medical writers exists in them as well.

## CHAPTER 6: ARETAEUS AND THE EMPATHY OF PERSONIFICATION

Aretaeus has a propensity towards personification when describing the human body and disease in his text. Organs, such as the stomach and the lungs, but also diseases and their functioning are given agency, purpose and characterization. Spleens 'delight in' (χαίρω) things, hearts 'comprehend' (συνάπτω) the presence of other organs, and diseases 'lurk' (έμφωλεύω) in the body – all processes not possible for bodily organs and more likely to describe human beings. The connection between empathy and language devices, such as personification and metaphor, has been made by certain scholars and some research has suggested that heightened levels of empathy may contribute to increased personification. At the very least, the act of personification appears to be linked to empathy, as it involves the representation of mental states or feelings in inanimate objects.<sup>465</sup> This differs from empathy with a person (or perhaps even an animal) where the emotion comes from the person with whom one is empathising and resonates in oneself. This resonance then lets one know how the other feels; that is, you attribute it to the internal state of the other person. With an object, the resonance occurs by actively imagining the internal state through personification. This happens particularly with

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<sup>465</sup> M. Amin, O. Olu-Lafe et al., "Understanding Grapheme Personification: A Social Synaesthesia?," *Journal of Neuropsychology* 5, no. 2 (2011): 255-82. Amin's study showed that higher empathy scores were possible for some of their participants; however, this was a group of people who exhibited grapheme personification (an extreme version of personification applied to numerals and letters.) This was also a small sample size which made the results difficult to consider significant. For scholarship on the connection between empathy and language devices, see Gilda Parrella, "Image and Mirror: Empathy in Language Devices," *Western Speech* 36, no. 4 (1972): 251-60; W. Ray Crozier and Paul Greenhalgh, "Beyond Relativism and Formalism: The Empathy Principle," *Leonardo* 25, no. 1 (1992): 83-87; Richard H. Fogle, "Empathic Imagery in Keats and Shelley," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 61, no. 1 (1946): 163-91.



art which is specifically designed to elicit emotional reactions.<sup>466</sup> Aretaeus' inclination to personify organs and diseases then reveals his empathy in that he 'feels his way' into these inanimate objects and attributes behaviour and motivations to them, which he describes in language that suggests human-like agency and autonomy.<sup>467</sup> This could also be conceived of as 'projection' – an "activity in which the self asserts its own identity over the object instilling that object with the nature of the self" – a concept put forth by Gilda Parrella with regards to literature criticism and analysis, and it applies fittingly to Aretaeus' use of the literary device of personification in his medical text.<sup>468</sup> Actively imagining the emotional and motivational states of these organs and diseases exhibits a level of empathy particularly present in Aretaeus' writing.

How the ancient Greeks used personification to conceptualise the world around them has been demonstrated by Webster. His definition of personification is the one I apply to this study: "...all cases in which something not a human being is described as if it had a quality or qualities normally associated with human beings." The qualities he lists are physical life and movement; mental powers and feelings; and bodily appearance.<sup>469</sup> Webster asserts that personification is used to understand the external world; I would say that Aretaeus employs it to understand

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<sup>466</sup> Crozier and Greenhalgh, "Beyond Relativism and Formalism: The Empathy Principle," 85-86. The connection between empathy and art has already been touched upon in Chapter One.

<sup>467</sup> Empathy, as expressed for objects, can be expressed this way as well: Gregory Currie, "Empathy for Objects," in *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, ed. Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 82-95.

<sup>468</sup> Gilda C. Parrella, "Projection and Adoption: Toward a Clarification of the Concept of Empathy," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 57, no. 2 (1971): 204-13.

<sup>469</sup> T. B. L. Webster, "Personification as a Mode of Greek Thought," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17, no. 1/2 (1954): 10.

an *internal* world, the body.<sup>470</sup> For him, the inside of the human body has a community of characters who behave, feel and interact with each other in a very human-like way. Webster does alert us to the fact that personification can work its way from person personification into technical terminology and when examining a medical text like Aretaeus' this is certainly a possibility. However, Webster himself admits that in scientific texts it is "impossible and perhaps unprofitable" to know exactly where personal personification ends and technical terminology begins, but that the vividness of the language may suggest that the personification has not completed died.<sup>471</sup> I would argue that Aretaeus' personification is quite vivid; however, where I believe a good case could be made for a dead metaphor or complete transition into technical terminology, I have noted it.

In the following examples from Aretaeus' text, particular themes or categories of personification are observable: deception and secrecy; tolerance and attraction; cooperation and neighbours; troubled organs; happy or authoritative organs; cognition, provocation and shame; and, finally, hysteria and the uterus as an animal. In this last section, the 'wandering womb' is evaluated from the perspective of Aretaeus' empathetic penchant for personification, which may help to explain his adherence to this concept when other physicians of the period, such as Soranus, disregarded this belief. All of these themes involve emotions, motivations or reactions reserved for human agents, but which Aretaeus attributes to organs and diseases. We have already witnessed the empathy (and compassion) he felt for his

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<sup>470</sup> For another view on how metaphorical thinking is used by an ancient author, specifically Plutarch, see Arda Harms, "The Metaphorical Conceptualization of Emotions in Plutarch" (Ph.D., University of Calgary (Canada), 2011).

<sup>471</sup> Webster, "Personification as a Mode of Greek Thought," 16.

patients in Chapter Two; these examples will show Aretaeus' empathy at work in a different way, whereby personification and language devices, such as simile, show him imaginatively endowing organs and diseases with emotions and motivations and indicate a level of empathy which is a striking quality in his writing.

### Deception and Secrecy

Given the mysterious nature of some diseases, conceptualizing them as 'deceitful' (ἀπάτη) and behaving 'secretly' (λάθρη) is perhaps not surprising. Aretaeus personifies some organs and diseases this way, suggesting an agency behind these inanimate objects and bodily processes. In *Περὶ αἵματος ἀναγωγῆς* (*On the Bringing Up of Blood*) the disease is credited with deceiving observers in terms of the location from where the blood is being brought up:

καὶ ἥδε ἐστὶ ἡ ἀπάτη τοῖσι ἡγευμένοισι ἀπὸ σπλάγχνων τῶν κάτωθεν ἀνάγεσθαι... ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἥδε ἀπάτη, ὥς ἀπὸ στομάχου φέρεσθαι δοκέειν.<sup>472</sup>

And this is the deceit with regard to those believing (that) it is brought up from the lower viscera... And this is the deceit, that from the stomach it seems to come.<sup>473</sup>

ξυνὰ γὰρ πολλὰ σημεῖα, καὶ ἡ ἀπάτη ῥηϊδίη, καὶ ἰητρεὶη ἐτέρη.<sup>474</sup>

For many of the symptoms are common, deception is easy, and the cure different.<sup>475</sup>

ἀπάτη is used in the *Iliad* in reference to the 'deceit' of the gods<sup>476</sup> and in the *Odyssey* in reference to Odysseus' 'wiles'.<sup>477</sup> Herodotus uses the term in Croesus'

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<sup>472</sup> Aret. SA 2.2.4

<sup>473</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 265.

<sup>474</sup> Aret. SA 2.2.12

<sup>475</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 267.

<sup>476</sup> Hom. *Il.* 2.114

<sup>477</sup> Hom. *Od.* 13.294

message to Sparta, to become allies “without deceit.”<sup>478</sup> This is human ἀπάτη – something purposefully done to mislead others or beguile them. The passage does not directly state that the disease is causing ἀπάτη; however, this is the only way for it to exist here, given the context. For Aretaeus, symptoms and diseases have this agency: they can mislead the physician, causing him to misinterpret them and their causes or origins. They are therefore dangerous and the physician must be aware and careful of them. Symptoms of disease cannot, of course, have this agency in reality; however, Aretaeus attributes it to them as if they had the human capability for deceit and therefore shows his capacity for this sort of empathetic thinking, even with a disease, which is characterised and believed to be ‘bad.’ The patient, on the other hand, is victim of the disease and there is an implied compassion as a result of this personification.

In certain cases, even something innocent can act deceptively. In *Περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὴν κιονίδα παθῶν* (*On Affections about the Uvula*) simple ‘tickling’ is personified as behaving ‘secretly’ (λάθρη):

γαργαλισμὸς γὰρ τῆς ἀρτηρίης ἀπὸ τῶν ὑμένων γίγνεται· ἔσθ' ὅπη δὲ καὶ ἐνστάζει τι τοῦ ὑγροῦ λάθρη ἐς τὴν ἀρτηρίην, ὅθεν ἀναβήσσουσι.<sup>479</sup>

For a tickling of the trachea is produced by the membrane, and in some cases it secretly instils some liquid into the windpipe, whence they cough.<sup>480</sup>

λάθρη has the sense of something being done ‘by stealth’ and ‘unknown’ to others and implies human-like agency to the γαργαλισμὸς and in a negative way at that.

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<sup>478</sup> Hdt. 1.69

<sup>479</sup> Aret. SA 1.8.3

<sup>480</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 253.

Herodotus uses the term λάθρη to describe Themistocles' actions when he extorts funds from the Carystians and Parians through threats, and this behaviour is said to have been "unknown to the other generals" (λάθρη τῶν ἄλλων στρατηγῶν.<sup>481</sup>) In the *Odyssey*, Telemachus tells his friend Peiraeus to keep the gifts he received from Menelaus because he worries about the suitors killing him "secretly" (λάθρη) in his own home and taking his property.<sup>482</sup> The tickling in the trachea acts with the same purpose, 'secretly' imparting liquid into the windpipe, unknown to the patient and perhaps even the physician. In this way, it has the same sense as ἀπάτη (discussed previously) and Aretaeus has ascribed the same purposeful, human-like agency to the γαργαλισμὸς as to the symptoms of the disease of bringing up blood.

Similar descriptions arise in *Περὶ διαβήτεω* (*On Diabetes*) and *Περὶ ἀρθρίτιδος καὶ ἰσχιάδος* (*On Arthritis and Sciatica*) where diseases are characterised as acting secretly:

αἰτίη δέ, ὁξέων νόσων τις ἀπέσκηψεν ἐς τόδε καὶ ἐν κρίσει  
κρύβδην τὸ κακότηες ἐγκατέλιπον αἱ νοῦσοι.<sup>483</sup>

The cause of it may be, that some one of the acute diseases may have terminated in this; and during the crisis the diseases may have left some malignity secretly.<sup>484</sup>

ἦν γε μὴν σχέδιος ἢ ἐπὶ τι τῶν προσκαίρων αἰτίων ὁ πόνος, ἢ  
κρύβδην [δὲ] μελετήσῃ πολλὸν χρόνον ἢ νοῦσος, εὖτε ἐπὶ προφάσει  
σμικρῇ ὁ πόνος καὶ ἡ νοῦσος ἐξήφθη.<sup>485</sup>

The pain then is either sudden, arising from some temporary cause; or the disease lies secretly for a long time, when the pain and the disease are kindled up by any slight cause.<sup>486</sup>

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<sup>481</sup> Hdt. 8.112

<sup>482</sup> Hom. *Od.* 17.80

<sup>483</sup> Aret. *SD* 2.2.5

<sup>484</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 339.

<sup>485</sup> Aret. *SD* 2.12.1

<sup>486</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 362.

The adverb κρύβδην means something done secretly, and is used in the *Odyssey* to describe a ship put into harbour or a handmaid sent to deliver a message.<sup>487</sup> Plutarch also uses it in reference to a vote taken secretly (κρύβδην φέρουσα τὴν ψῆφον.<sup>488</sup>) These are all actions taken purposefully and with intended deceit, which characterises the diseases as having agency.

Along the same lines, the tragic disease of elephantiasis receives from Aretaeus both the personification of ‘lurking’ and the simile of fire in *Περὶ ἐλέφαντος* (*On Elephas*):

ἀλλὰ τοῖσι σπλάγχνοισι ἐμφωλεῦσαν ὅκως ἀΐδηλον πῦρ ἤδη  
τύφεται...<sup>489</sup>

...but [the disease] lurking among the bowels, like a concealed fire it  
smolders there...<sup>490</sup>

The verb ἐμφωλεύω means to ‘lurk’ – a word with deceptive undertones. Simile is piled on top of personification in this example, where elephantiasis is a disease which ‘lurks’ around the bowels, much like a burglar or animal lurking in the darkness. For example, Plutarch describes the she-wolf who raises Philomena’s children as ἐμφωλεύουσα (‘lurking’) in a hollowed-out tree.<sup>491</sup> The disease is also not only like a fire which ‘smolders’ (τύφω) but one which is ἀΐδηλος (‘concealed’). ἀΐδηλος is used in the *Iliad* to describe a snake sent by Zeus as a portent.<sup>492</sup> This adds to the imagery and personification of the disease as something sinister, hidden and dangerous to both the patient and the doctor.

<sup>487</sup> Hom. *Od.* 11.455; *Od.* 16.153

<sup>488</sup> Plut. *Mor. Quaest. Graec.* 292a

<sup>489</sup> Aret. *SD* 2.13.10

<sup>490</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 368.

<sup>491</sup> Plut. *Mor. Paral. min.* 314e

<sup>492</sup> Hom. *Il.* 2.318

## Tolerance and Attraction

Human patients are described as able to tolerate or endure certain symptoms, treatments, or diet in several ancient medical writers. Aretaeus also writes of organs which can either tolerate or not tolerate particular circumstances or injuries in a similar way, this becoming like the patients themselves. In *Περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὰ παρίσθμια ἐλκῶν* (*On ulcerations about the tonsils*) the lungs and heart are characterized as not having a particularly high tolerance:

πνεύμων γὰρ καὶ κραδίη, οὔτε ὁσμῆς τοιῆσδε, οὔτε ἐλκέων, οὔτε  
 ἰχώρων ἀνέχονται, ἀλλὰ βῆχες καὶ δύσπνοιαί γίνονται.<sup>493</sup>

For the lungs and heart can neither endure such smells, nor  
 ulcerations, nor ichorous discharges, but coughs and dyspnoea  
 supervene.<sup>494</sup>

The verb ἀνέχω means to ‘hold up,’ and in the middle voice, ‘to hold oneself up’ – in the sense of bearing up or bearing with something difficult or unpleasant – and it is usually used of living creatures. In the *Odyssey*, when Odysseus approaches the palace of King Alcinous the disguised Athena tells him not to make eye contact or question anyone as he makes his way inside because the Phaeacians do not “tolerate” strangers (οὐ γὰρ ξείνους οἳ γε μάλ' ἀνθρώπους ἀνέχονται.<sup>495</sup>) Herodotus applies the term to animals in several places, too,<sup>496</sup> and Aulus Gellius tells us that Epictetus, the Stoic philosopher, used “ἀνέχου καὶ ἀπέχου” as a Stoic motto.<sup>497</sup> This sensitivity of the lungs and heart to smells, ulcers and discharges characterizes them

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<sup>493</sup> Aret.SA 1.9.2

<sup>494</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 254.

<sup>495</sup> Hom. *Od.* 7.32

<sup>496</sup> E.g., Hdt. 4.28

<sup>497</sup> Gell. *NA* 17.19

as having the same dislikes as a human being or an animal – an organism with sense perception.

Some organs are more tolerant than others, however, as *Περὶ εἴλεοῦ* (*On Ileus*) shows, with the colon:

ἔστι δὲ ὁ ἐντεῦθεν κίνδυνος τοσόνδε ἀσινέστερος, ὁκόσον καὶ τὸ κῶλον τῶν λεπτῶν ἐντέρων σαρκοειδέστερον καὶ παχύτερον καὶ ἀνεξικακώτερον.<sup>498</sup>

And the danger therefrom is so much the less, as the colon is more fleshy, and thicker than the small intestines, and consequently more tolerant of injury.<sup>499</sup>

ἀνεξίκακος, a combination of ἀνεξία and κακός, has the same sense of ‘tolerance’ or ‘endurance’ as ἀνέχω. Plutarch uses the term to describe a trait Coriolanus and Pelopidas do not possess but Epaminondas does. He writes of Coriolanus,

οὐδὲ τὴν ἐρημίᾳ σύνοικον, ὡς Πλάτων ἔλεγεν, αὐθάδειαν εἰδὼς ὅτι δεῖ μάλιστα διαφεύγειν ἐπιχειροῦντα πράγμασι κοινοῖς καὶ ἀνθρώποις ὁμιλεῖν, καὶ γενέσθαι τῆς πολλὰ γελωμένης ὑπ’ ἐνίων ἀνεξικακίας ἐραστήν.<sup>500</sup>

Nor did he [Coriolanus] know that one who undertakes public business must avoid above all things that self-will which, as Plato says, is the "companion of solitude"; must mingle with men, and be a lover of that submissiveness to injury which some people ridicule so much.<sup>501</sup>

And of Epaminondas and Pelopidas, he says,

τὸ δὲ συκοφάντημα καὶ τὴν πεῖραν Ἐπαμεινώνδας ἤνεγκε πράως, μέγα μέρος ἀνδρείας καὶ μεγαλοψυχίας τὴν ἐν τοῖς πολιτικοῖς ἀνεξικακίαν ποιούμενος· Πελοπίδας δὲ καὶ φύσει θυμοειδέστερος ὢν, καὶ παροξυνόμενος ὑπὸ τῶν φίλων ἀμύνασθαι τοὺς ἐχθροὺς, ἐπελάβετο τοιαύτης αἰτίας.<sup>502</sup>

<sup>498</sup> Aret. SA 2.6.5

<sup>499</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 277.

<sup>500</sup> Plut. Vit. Cor. 15.4

<sup>501</sup> Bernadotte Perrin, *Plutarch's Lives*, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916), 153.

<sup>502</sup> Plut. Vit. Pel. 25.2



Epaminondas bore patiently with this attempt to calumniate him, considering that forbearance under political injury was a large part of fortitude and magnanimity; but Pelopidas, who was naturally of a more fiery temper, and who was egged on by his friends to avenge himself upon his enemies, seized the following occasion.<sup>503</sup>

Coriolanus could not tolerate the injury to his ego which public life entails, and neither could Pelopidas, while Epaminondas had the patient personality to do so. Aretaeus suggests that the colon has the same trait – a tolerance for injury – and thus the same sense of pain or injury as a person or animal.

The verb ἔλκω is employed by Aretaeus when describing internal organs which have the ability to draw, drag or attract things to themselves, such as other internal organs just as if they were human agents. ἔλκω has the sense of force or exertion; for example, bodies are dragged in the *Iliad* (“Ὡς εἰπὼν ποδὸς ἔλκε κατὰ κρατερὴν ὑσμίνην ἥρως Ἰδομενεύς.”<sup>504</sup>), ships are pulled or towed in Thucydides (“καὶ τῶν νεῶν τινὰς ἀναδούμενοι εἴλκον κενάς”<sup>505</sup>), and people are dragged along in Plutarch (“καὶ τῶν βασιλικῶν ὅσους δυνατὸς ἦν ἔλκοντος εἰς τὴν ἀγοράν.”<sup>506</sup>), all using ἔλκω for the action. Aretaeus uses the same word in the lung’s ability to draw various bodily symptoms to itself in *Περὶ πλευρίτιδος* (*On Pleurisy*) where he writes:

ἔλκει γὰρ ὁ πνεύμων ἐς ἑωυτὸν...<sup>507</sup>

For the lung attracts to itself...<sup>508</sup>

<sup>503</sup> Bernadotte Perrin, *Plutarch's Lives*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916), 401.

<sup>504</sup> Hom. *Il.* 13.383

<sup>505</sup> Thuc. 2.90

<sup>506</sup> Plut. *Vit. Publ.* 5.4

<sup>507</sup> Aret. *SA* 1.10.3

<sup>508</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 256.

A certain level of agency is present in the reflexive quality of “ἐς ἑωυτὸν” as the lung is not simply attracting something automatically or unconsciously, but drawing something towards itself in a more active way.

Areteaus describes a more complicated relationship between the heart and the lungs and their ability to attract in *Περὶ περιπνευμονίης (On Pneumonia)* where the heart is said to ‘impart’ (ἐνδίδωμι) a ‘desire’ (ποθή) to attract cold air:

ἦδε καὶ τῷ πνεύμονι τῆς ὀλκῆς τοῦ ψυχροῦ ἡέρος τὴν ποθὴν ἐνδιδότ' ἐκφλέγει γὰρ αὐτόν· ἔλκει δὲ καρδίη... ἔλκει δὲ καρδίη.<sup>509</sup>

It [the heart] imparts to the lungs the desire of drawing in cold air, for it raises a heat in them; but it is the heart which attracts... And the heart attracts.<sup>510</sup>

ἀλλὰ γὰρ τῆς καρδίας γειτόνημα καίριόν ἐστι ὁ στόμαχος, ἐξ οὗπερ ἔλκει ἡ καρδίη οἰκεῖον ἢ ἀξύμφορον.<sup>511</sup>

But to the heart the vicinity of the stomach is most important, for from it the heart draws both what is suitable and what is unsuitable.<sup>512</sup>

Both the heart and the lungs in the first passage are given agency: the heart instills (ἐνδίδωμι) and attracts (ἐλκω). Areteaus actually stresses twice in this passage that the heart ‘attracts’ – using the same term as previously used with regard to the lungs. The lungs are said to have a desire or longing (ποθή) for the attraction (ὀλκή) of cold air. ποθή (=πόθος) is very much a human feeling; both his mother and the swineherd feels πόθος for Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, and Theocritus talks of πόθοι in his *Idylls*.<sup>513</sup> In just these few short lines, Areteaus has created a complex

<sup>509</sup> Aret. SA 2.1.1

<sup>510</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Areteaus, the Cappadocian*: 262.

<sup>511</sup> Aret. SA 2.3.3

<sup>512</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Areteaus, the Cappadocian*: 271.

<sup>513</sup> Hom. *Od.* 11.202; *Od.* 14.144; Theoc. *Id.* 2.143

relationship between heart and lungs where both have agency and the lungs an emotion, thereby personifying both organs. In the second passage, the heart again is said to attract (ἔλκω) - the same concept of attraction or drawing as in the other passages.

### Cooperation and Neighbours

At several places in his text, Aretaeus describes organs and symptoms as working together and being neighbourly with one another. They participate in activities 'together' (ξυν/συν) like human labourers in some of these instances, as in the following passage from *Περὶ πλευρίτιδος* (*On Pleurisy*):

χρὴ δὲ ταῦτα πάντα ἀλλήλοισι ξυνωδὰ καὶ ξύμπνοα ἔμμεναι...<sup>514</sup>

But all these symptoms must harmonize and conspire together as all springing up from one cause...<sup>515</sup>

συνωδός means 'singing together' and σύμπνοος, 'breathing together.' Both of these terms are used metaphorically to mean 'in agreement' and 'concordant' and are used in this context to describe the symptoms of pleurisy, which must all "ξυνωδὰ καὶ ξύμπνοα" in order for the disease to be considered pleurisy. This attributes the ability of cooperation to the disease, thus personifying it. Diodorus Siculus uses a very closely related term (σύμπνοια) to refer to the relation between the populace and the knights before Gracchus<sup>516</sup> and συνωδός to describe the agreement of several philosophers' opinions on happiness.<sup>517</sup>

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<sup>514</sup> Aret. SA 1.10.1

<sup>515</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 256.

<sup>516</sup> Diod. Sic. 35.25

<sup>517</sup> Plut. *Mor. De lib. ed.* 6a

Sometimes organs fail to work together and in *Περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὸ ἥπαρ ὀξέων παθῶν* (*On Acute Affections about the Liver*) Aretaeus describes an uncooperative diaphragm:

ἀναπνοὴ κακὴ· οὐ γὰρ συντιμωρέει τῷ πνεύμονι τὸ διάφραγμα, ξυνομαρτέον ἐς ξυναγωγὴν καὶ διάστασιν.<sup>518</sup>

...respiration bad, for the diaphragm does not co-operate with the lungs, by assisting them in contraction and dilatation.<sup>519</sup>

τιμωρέω is a verb that can be used to mean ‘to give aid or help.’ For example, Herodotus uses it for the Chians giving aid to the Milesians (οὔτοι δὲ τὸ ὅμοιον ἀνταποδιδόντες ἐτιμώρεον<sup>520</sup>) Here, Aretaeus uses the ‘συν’ form which appears to be favoured by himself and Hippocrates.<sup>521</sup> This form changes the meaning slightly from ‘to give help’ to something more like ‘to work together.’ Aretaeus uses it in a more negative context elsewhere: “συντιμωρέει γὰρ ἀλλήλοισι δίψος καὶ ποτόν.”<sup>522</sup> (“For the thirst and the drink conspire together.”<sup>523</sup>) συνομαρτέω has a somewhat similar meaning, ‘to act together,’ such as when Orestes comes to Mycenae preparing to commit suicide: “σὺν δ’ ὁμαρτοῦσιν φίλοι κλαίοντες, οἰκτίροντες.”<sup>524</sup> (“his friends accompany him, crying and bewailing.”<sup>525</sup>) Both of these verbs suggest the notion that the organs, the diaphragm and the lungs, have the capacity to work together as a team, or in this case, that this relationship can break down, to the detriment of respiration.

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<sup>518</sup> Aret. SA 2.7.3-2.7.4

<sup>519</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 278.

<sup>520</sup> Hdt. 1.18

<sup>521</sup> Hippoc. Art. 48; Hippoc. Acut. 17

<sup>522</sup> Aret. SD 2.2.6

<sup>523</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 340.

<sup>524</sup> Eur. Or. 950

<sup>525</sup> Author’s translation.

The stomach appears to be an important ‘character’ for Aretaeus, and he describes it in two different passages as ἡγεμῶν (“president”) and also a γειτόνευμα (“neighbour”):

Στόμαχος ἡδονῆς καὶ ἀηδίας ἡγεμῶν· καρδίας καίριον γειτόνευμα  
ἐς τόνον καὶ θυμόν, ἢ ἀθυμίην, τῆς ψυχῆς συμπαθείη.<sup>526</sup>

The stomach is the president of pleasure and disgust, being an important neighbour to the heart for imparting tone, good or bad spirits, from the sympathy of the soul.<sup>527</sup>

τροφὴ γὰρ αἰτίη τοῦ ζῆν· τροφῆς δὲ ἡγεμῶν ὁ στόμαχος· ποτὶ καὶ  
τὰ φάρμακα ὅδε τοῖσι εἴσω διαφέρει.<sup>528</sup>

For the food is the cause of life, but the stomach is the leader in the process of nutrition, and it also sometimes conveys medicines to the internal parts.<sup>529</sup>

The stomach is described as a ἡγεμῶν – a leader, commander or guide. It is used this way in the *Iliad*,<sup>530</sup> and in later Greek texts in a Roman context serves as a translation for *princeps*.<sup>531</sup> Aristotle describes the leaders of beehives as οἱ ἡγεμόνες (thinking them to be male, not female).<sup>532</sup> This commander, the stomach, takes the lead in pleasurable and disgusting things, presumably mostly food and drink, which is either enjoyed or disliked, much like a human being (so perhaps even suggesting a sense of taste?) In addition, the stomach is γειτόνευμα, which we can assume to be a ‘neighbour’ or perhaps a ‘neighbourhood’ and therefore by extension a neighbour, much like the term δούλευμα, which is a ‘service’ but is also used to reference the

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<sup>526</sup> Aret. *SD* 2.6.1

<sup>527</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 347.

<sup>528</sup> Aret. *CD* 1.13.1

<sup>529</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 479-80.

<sup>530</sup> Hom. *Il.* 2.365; *Il.* 11.304

<sup>531</sup> E.g., Plut. *Vit. Cic.* 2

<sup>532</sup> Arist. *Hist. An.* 553a25

slave. There is a sense of a ‘community of organs’ in this sort of language, which conveys a sense of individuals affecting and cooperating with each other.

Those organs that are neighbours, also share in suffering, as we see in *Θεραπεία πλευρίτιδος* (*The Cure of Pleurisy*):

πλευρῶν δὲ γειτόνημα πνεύμων καὶ κοινωνὸς ἀλγέων<sup>533</sup>

...the lungs are also the neighbours of the ribs, and their associates in suffering...<sup>534</sup>

Again, we see the use of γειτόνευμα as a neighbour, but this time it is the lungs and the ribs which live near and affect each other. κοινωνὸς denotes a partner or companion, and is used by Thucydides in Nicias’s speech at Syracuse to the Athenians and their allies.<sup>535</sup> Plutarch uses the term in conjunction with συνωμότης (‘conspirator’) in his *Life of Cato the Younger*<sup>536</sup> and is often used in political contexts.<sup>537</sup> This, like the others examples, creates and personifies a relationship between different parts of the body.

### Troubled Organs

Beyond being neighbours and having authority in the body, for Aretaeus organs also suffer and feel pain in an anthropomorphic manner. In *Περὶ πλευρίτιδος* (*On Pleurisy*) the bowel is ‘troubled’:

εὔτε καὶ κοιλίης ἐκταραχθείσης χολωδέων...<sup>538</sup>

When the bowel is troubled by bile...<sup>539</sup>

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<sup>533</sup> Aret. *CA* 1.10.2

<sup>534</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 410-11.

<sup>535</sup> Thuc. 7.63

<sup>536</sup> Plut. *Vit. Cat. Min.* 51.3

<sup>537</sup> E.g., Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 2; Hdn. 4.14.2; Hdt. 7.148

<sup>538</sup> Aret. *SA* 1.10.4

<sup>539</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 256.

Areteus describes the bowel here with the verb ἐκταράσσω, which in the passive means ‘to be greatly troubled’ or ‘be confounded.’ Lucian uses the word in relation to fear of being hit (“έμοι δοκεῖν ἐκταραχθεῖς πρὸς τὸν τῶν πληγῶν φόβον.”<sup>540</sup>)

Again, in *Περὶ αἵματος ἀναγωγῆς* (*On the Bringing Up of Blood*) the wind-pipe feels ‘wretched,’ and not on its own but together with the stomach:

ξυνταλαιπωρεῖ γὰρ ἡ ἀρτηρίη τῷ στομάχῳ...<sup>541</sup>

For the wind-pipe is wretched along with the stomach...<sup>542</sup>

The wind-pipe ‘shares the misery’ (συνταλαιπωρέω) of the stomach in this passage. Sophocles has Oedipus use this word when speaking of his misfortunes, saying that only those who know them can suffer with him (“τοῖς γὰρ ἐμπείροις βροτῶν μόνοις οἷόν τε συνταλαιπωρεῖν τάδε.”<sup>543</sup>) The prefix ‘συν-’ gives a sense of a shared experience which, as we have seen previously, is also connected with terms of empathy and compassion.<sup>544</sup>

In the chapter *Περὶ ἄσθματος* (*On Asthma*) the lungs are described as suffering much like a human patient suffers:

πάσχει δὲ πνεύμων.<sup>545</sup>

The lungs suffer...<sup>546</sup>

πάσχω has the meaning of being acted upon (usually negatively) and thus affected by something or someone else, and is most often a word used of human beings, not

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<sup>540</sup> Lucian *Somn.* 16; This is also a term used in Hippocrates in relation to bowel troubles, which may render this a dead metaphor in this particular case.

<sup>541</sup> Aret. *SA* 2.2.13

<sup>542</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Areteus, the Cappadocian*: 268.

<sup>543</sup> Soph. *OC* 1136

<sup>544</sup> See Chapter One.

<sup>545</sup> Aret. *SD* 1.11.1

<sup>546</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Areteus, the Cappadocian*: 316.

inanimate objects. For example, the Camarinaeans are affected by a speech by Euphemus (“οἱ δὲ Καμαρινᾶιοι ἐπεπόνθεσαν τοιόνδε.”<sup>547</sup>) and the Aeginetans feel they have suffered wrong-doing in Plutarch’s *Life of Pericles* (“Αἰγινῆται δὲ κακοῦσθαι δοκοῦντες καὶ βίαια πάσχειν...”<sup>548</sup>) The lungs suffer similarly here, and Aretaeus uses the word with both persons and organs.<sup>549</sup>

The chapter, Θεραπεία φρενιτικῶν (*The Cure of Phrenitics*), demonstrates Aretaeus’ personification of organs feeling pain in a number of different places, as can be seen in the following series of passages:

ἀτὰρ ἡδὲ ἐν μαλθακοῖσι· ἀστεργῆς γὰρ τοῖσι νεύροισι ἢ σκληρὴ κοίτη. οὐχ ἥκιστα δὲ τῶν ἄλλων τοῖσι φρενιτικοῖσι τὰ νεῦρα πονέει· μάλα γάρ τοι σπῶνται φρενιτικοί.<sup>550</sup>

But on a soft one, for a hard bed is offensive to the nerves; as in phrenitics, above all others, the nerves especially suffer, for they are subject to convulsions.<sup>551</sup>

First, Aretaeus tells us that hard surfaces are ‘ἀστεργῆς’ (‘implacable’ or ‘repellant’) to the nerves, asserting that the nerves themselves feel this, not the patient. ἀστεργῆς is used by Sophocles to describe the anger of a goddess in his *Ajax* (Τοιοῖσδέ τοι λόγοισιν ἀστεργῇ θεᾷς ἐκτίσας ὀργήν<sup>552</sup>) and the Hippocratic writer of *On Fractures* says that having splint of wood next to the skin without something soft in between is ἀστεργῆς to the patient.<sup>553</sup> Aretaeus then talks of the nerves ‘suffering’ (πονέω) – a term used mainly for people, either ‘toiling’ or ‘suffering’ and

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<sup>547</sup> Thuc. 6.88

<sup>548</sup> Plut. *Vit. Per.* 29.5

<sup>549</sup> For example. Aret. *SA* 1.5.6; 1.6.3; 1.9.3; 2.3.4

<sup>550</sup> Aret. *CA* 1.1.2

<sup>551</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 378.

<sup>552</sup> Soph. *Aj.* 776

<sup>553</sup> Hippoc. *Fract.* 16



meant negatively. Hippocrates describes patients suffering (πολλῶ ἂν μᾶλλον πονήσειεν<sup>554</sup>) and Thucydides uses the verb for those ill from the Athenian plague:

ἐπὶ πλέον δ' ὅμως οἱ διαπεφευγότες τὸν τε θνήσκοντα καὶ τὸν πονούμενον ὥκτιζοντο διὰ τὸ προειδέναι τε καὶ αὐτοὶ ἤδη ἐν τῷ θαρσαλέῳ εἶναι.<sup>555</sup>

Nevertheless, those having escaped (the disease) all the more pitied both the dying and the suffering, because these people had experienced (it) already beforehand and were (now) of good courage.<sup>556</sup>

In *Θεραπεία ληθαργικῶν* (*The Cure of Lethargics*) the bladder suffers as well:

τοισίδε μέντοι καὶ τὴν κύστιν καταιονεῖν καὶ ὡς νεῦρον πάσχουσιν καὶ ὡς οὔρων ὁδὸν κάμνουσαν...<sup>557</sup>

With these, moreover, the bladder is to be soothed, which suffers, as being of a nervous nature, and is stressed as being the passage for the urine...<sup>558</sup>

The verb being used here to describe the suffering of the bladder is the same as in the lungs passage, πάσχω. The other verb used is κάμνω – a word which can also have the meaning of suffering or distress, especially with regards to human patients in the Hippocratic texts.<sup>559</sup>

The stomach suffers pains in *Θεραπεία κοιλιακῶν* (*Cure of the Coeliac Affection*) as well:

χρὴ ὦν τὴν κοιλίην πρώτιστα μὲν πόνων ἀνιέναι ἡρεμίῃ καὶ ἀποσιτίῃ.<sup>560</sup>

In the first place then, the stomach is to be relieved from its sufferings by rest and abstinence from food...<sup>561</sup>

<sup>554</sup> Hippoc. *Acut.* 46 (12.22 Diogenes?)

<sup>555</sup> Thuc. 2.51

<sup>556</sup> Author's translation.

<sup>557</sup> Aret. *CA* 1.2.6

<sup>558</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 389.

<sup>559</sup> Eg., Hippoc. *Acut.* 3.8; 11.10; 11.40; 18.45.

<sup>560</sup> Aret. *CD* 2.7.1

πόνος is a very common word, and it might be pushing things to see it as personification here, but Aretaeus so directly addresses the stomach in this passage that I believe it can be included. The stomach is ‘relieved’ (‘loosened’ or ‘set free’) from its pains (πόνος), the way a physician often refers to relieving the pain of his patient, by means of restricting food (that is, controlling diet) and by rest, something routinely recommended by physicians. The stomach is being treated as the patient in this passage, and Aretaeus prescribes the same regime for it as he would a human patient.

The stomach also has the power and autonomy to ‘reject’ things as well, as Aretaeus tells us in *Θεραπεία τετάνου* (*The Cure of Tetanus*):

ἦν δὲ πρὸς τόδε ἀπαυδήση ὁ στόμαχος...<sup>562</sup>

But if the stomach reject this...<sup>563</sup>

The verb ἀπαυδάω is one which has a human context, with a sense of agency and free-will of refusal. Theseus in Euripides’ *Suppliants* says he cannot refuse a task as a hero (οὐκ οὖν ἀπαυδᾷν δυνατόν ἐστὶ μοι πόνους<sup>564</sup>) and in his *Moralia*, Plutarch warns against giving children tasks that are too difficult so that they fail at them and reject instruction (“σπεύδοντες γὰρ τοὺς παῖδας ἐν πᾶσι τάχιον πρωτεῦσαι πόνους αὐτοῖς ὑπερμέτρους ἐπιβάλλουσιν, οἷς ἀπαυδῶντες ἐκπίπτουσι, καὶ ἄλλως

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<sup>561</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 491.

<sup>562</sup> Aret. *CA* 1.6.9

<sup>563</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 403.

<sup>564</sup> Eur. *Supp.* 342

βαρυνόμενοι ταῖς κακοπαθείαις οὐ δέχονται τὴν μάθησιν εὐηνίως.”<sup>565</sup>) In the *Life of Dion*, the enemy is described as ἀπαυδῶν.<sup>566</sup>

### Happy and Authoritative Organs

If organs can suffer, they can also feel happy, at least for Aretaeus. They can also have authority in the body, leading and commanding other organs. In *Θεραπεία φρενιτικῶν* (*The Cure of Phrenitics*) the spleen is said to both delight and find relief in the therapeutics offered by the physician:

μάλα γὰρ τοῖσδε ὁ σπλὴν χαίρει τε καὶ πρηϋνεται.<sup>567</sup>

...for the spleen delights in and is relieved by such things.<sup>568</sup>

The verb χαίρω means to delight, rejoice or take pleasure, often with the dative to express the object in which the subject is delighting. Telemachus rejoices in a speech in the *Odyssey* (“χαῖρε δὲ φήμη Ὀδυσσεῆος φίλος υἱός”<sup>569</sup>) and the god, Eros, in Chariton’s *Callirhoe*, delights in being successful against the odds (“φιλόνηκος δὲ ἔστιν ὁ Ἔρως καὶ χαίρει τοῖς παραδόξοις κατορθώμασιν”<sup>570</sup>) Here, the spleen is very much directly delighting in the treatment recommended by Aretaeus, and is said to be calmed or relieved (πραύνω) by it. πραύνω is a word used in medical contexts of wounds, but it also used of persons; for example, in Plato’s *Republic* a human’s soul is calmed by reason.<sup>571</sup>

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<sup>565</sup> Plut. *Mor. De lib. ed.* 9b5-6

<sup>566</sup> Plut. *Vit. Dion* 30.11

<sup>567</sup> Aret. *CA* 1.1.17

<sup>568</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 384.

<sup>569</sup> Hom. *Od.* 2.35

<sup>570</sup> Charit. 1.1.4

<sup>571</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 440d

In the next passage it is not an organ, but the disease of arthritis, which feels delight, this time at the application of coldness in *Περὶ ἀρθρίτιδος καὶ ἰσχιάδος* (*On Arthritis and Schiatica*):

έμοι δὲ ἀνδάνει μίαν μὲν αἰτίην τὴν ἔμφυτον ψῦξιν ἔμμεναι, μίαν δὲ καὶ πάθην. ἀλλ' ἦν μὲν εὐθέως ἐποιδέη καὶ θερμὴ φανῇ, ἐμψύξιος χρέος, καὶ τοῖσι τέρπεται.<sup>572</sup>

But, I fancy, that the cause is a refrigeration of the innate heat, and that the disease is single; but if it speedily give way, and the heat reappears, there is a need of refrigeration and it delights in such things...<sup>573</sup>

The verb τέρπω, like χαίρω, has the meaning of delight, but also enjoy and is usually used of people delighting in or enjoying typical pleasures, such as music, stories, drink, and visual and aural sensations.<sup>574</sup>

The power that internal organs can hold over other organs, bodily processes, and just generally in the health of a person, is also personified by Aretaeus. Organs are described as ‘ministering’ to life in *Περὶ περιπνευμονίης* (*On Pneumonia*):

ἀλλὰ τᾶλλα μὲν ὅκως ὄργανα μοῦνον διακονέεται τῷ ζῳῳ.<sup>575</sup>

But other parts indeed minister only as instruments to the animal.  
<sup>576</sup>

διακονέω means to ‘minister’ or ‘serve’ and is used in the New Testament for ‘to be a decon.’<sup>577</sup> Herodotus uses it in his *Histories* to mean ‘do a service’ for someone.<sup>578</sup> Aretaeus then conceives of the internal organs as ministering or doing a service for the life of the body.

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<sup>572</sup> Aret. *SD* 2.12.10

<sup>573</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 364-65.

<sup>574</sup> Hom. *Il.* 9.186; Hom. *Od.* 23.301; Hdt. 2.78; Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.24

<sup>575</sup> Aret. *SA* 2.1.1

<sup>576</sup> Author’s translation.

<sup>577</sup> 1 Ep.Ti. 3.10

<sup>578</sup> Hdt. 4.154

One's nature is often cited as determining one's health, where certain natures make individuals prone to certain states, be they healthy or unhealthy. This power of the nature of the body is personified in *Περὶ συγκοπῆς* (*On Syncope*) as an agent in the body which governs the parts and functions therein:

εὖτε μὲν γὰρ ἔρρωται ἡ φύσις καὶ ἐστὶν εὐκράτος, πάντων μὲν κρατέει, πᾶσι δὲ σημαίνει, καὶ ὑγρῷ, καὶ πνεύματι, καὶ στερεοῖσι...<sup>579</sup>

For when nature is strong, and of the proper temperament, it rules all and commands all, whether humour, spirit (*pneuma*), or solid...<sup>580</sup>

The verb *κρατέω* is frequently used and means to 'rule' or 'be master of.' It is used in the *Odyssey* for those who rule areas, for example, the Epeans at Elis.<sup>581</sup> Achilles Tactius also uses the verb when his character, Thersander, bemoans the success of his romantic competitor, Clitophon: ὁ μοιχὸς μου κρατεῖ πανταχοῦ.<sup>582</sup> ("The adulterer is master of me altogether."<sup>583</sup>)

The bodily fluid of pus is personified in *Περὶ περιπνευμονίης* (*On Pneumonia*) when it is described as 'rushing':

ἦν δὲ ἐς τὸν πνεύμονα ὀρμήσῃ τὸ πῦον...<sup>584</sup>

And if to the lungs the pus rushes...<sup>585</sup>

ὀρμάω, meaning 'rush' or 'hasten,' is used most often in a military context, for example, of troops rushing headlong. Xenophon uses the term for rushing chariots upon enemy lines (ὀρμήσεται δὲ τηνικαῦτα Ἀβραδάτας ἤδη σὺν τοῖς ἄρμασιν εἰς

<sup>579</sup> Aret. SA 2.3.5

<sup>580</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 271.

<sup>581</sup> Hom. *Od.* 13.275

<sup>582</sup> Ach. Tat. 6.17.1

<sup>583</sup> Author's translation.

<sup>584</sup> Aret. SA 2.1.5

<sup>585</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 263.

τοὺς ἐναντίους<sup>586</sup>) This gives a sense of the pus charging with purpose and in an organized way towards the lungs, and thus with power and determination.

Areteus talks about the ‘job’ of the kidneys in two different chapters, *Περὶ τῶν κατὰ τοὺς νεφροὺς ὀξέων παθῶν* (*On the Acute Affections about the Kidneys*) and *Περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὴν κύστιν ὀξέων παθῶν* (*On the Acute Affections about the Bladder*):

ἀδενώδεες γὰρ τὴν φύσιν, ἐς δὲ ὅλεθρον εὐήθεις... ἐπίκαιρον δὲ αὐτέων τὸ ἔργον, ἢ τε διάκρισις τῶν οὕρων ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος καὶ ἡ ἀπόκρισις.<sup>587</sup>

For, being of a glandular nature, they are mild and do not experience deadly diseases... but their office is important, namely, the secretion of the urine from the blood, and its expulsion.<sup>588</sup>

ἀλλὰ καὶ <τὸ> ἔργον αὐτέης ἐπίκαιρον, ἢ τῶν οὕρων ἔξοδος.<sup>589</sup>

But, also, its office is of vital importance, namely, the passage of the urine.<sup>590</sup>

The noun ἔργον means ‘work,’ ‘task’ or ‘business’ and is usually employed as something human beings partake in, either as employment or daily actions. In the *Iliad*, more men make better work (πλεόνων δέ τι ἔργον ἄμεινον.<sup>591</sup>) Land is ‘worked’ and women’s work is weaving.<sup>592</sup> These are the jobs of men and women, and here Areteus characterizes the kidneys as having a similar ἔργον – that is, the removal of urine from the blood – and one that is of particular importance to the body.

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<sup>586</sup> Xen. *Cyr.* 7.1.9

<sup>587</sup> Aret. *SA* 2.9.1

<sup>588</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Areteus, the Cappadocian*: 282.

<sup>589</sup> Aret. *SA* 2.10.2

<sup>590</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Areteus, the Cappadocian*: 284.

<sup>591</sup> Hom. *Il.* 12.412

<sup>592</sup> Hom. *Od.* 14.344; *Il.* 9.390

## Cognition, Provocation and Shame

In several places, Aretaeus also personifies organs with verbs of perception and cognition, similar to that of a whole human being: In *Περὶ ἰκτέρου* (*On Jaundice*) the tongue ‘perceives’ (αἰσθάνομαι) and ‘is not grieved’ (οὐδὲ ἄχθομαι):

ἡ γὰρ γλῶσσα ἀναπιοῦσα τῆς χολῆς τῆσδε, οὐκ ἐκείνων, αἰσθάνεται. καὶ τὸν μὲν πρόσθεν τὸν τῆς ἀποσιτίης χρόνον ἀτρεμέει ἡ χολή, ἀτὰρ οὐδὲ ἡ γλῶσσα τῷ ἥθει ἄχθεται.<sup>593</sup>

...for the tongue, having imbibed the bile, does not perceive them, while, during the season of abstinence from food, the bile remains torpid, neither is the tongue unpleasantly affected with that to which it is habituated...<sup>594</sup>

Normally, you would conceive of the person perceiving a sensation, like taste, through an organ, like the tongue, but here Aretaeus has the tongue perceiving directly. αἰσθάνομαι is a verb used for sense perception and can also mean ‘to understand’ or simply ‘to take notice of.’ Attributing the perceiving to the tongue directly has the effect of giving it agency and autonomy. ἄχθομαι has the primary meaning of ‘to be loaded’ but is used mostly of mental oppression, so as to mean ‘to be vexed’ or ‘to be upset.’<sup>595</sup> This verb is used by Aretaeus in other circumstances pertaining to the mental state of his patients, but is used here with the tongue as the subject.<sup>596</sup> The tongue is said *not* to be grieved, but this implies that it has the capacity to be grieved or upset.

<sup>593</sup> Aret. *SD* 1.15.11

<sup>594</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 327.

<sup>595</sup> Aretaeus also uses the same verb for the body: ἀτὰρ καὶ τὸ σῶμα πρὸς ἅπαντα ἄχθεται (Aret. *SD* 2.13.18)

<sup>596</sup> Aret. *SD* 1.2.2-3; Aret. *SD* 1.6.11. See Chapter 2 for these passages in full.

The stomach is personified in *Θεραπεία ληθαργικῶν* (*The Cure of Lethargics*) as forgetful since it has to be ‘reminded’ of its duties, not unlike an absent-minded servant:

χρὴ ὧν ὀλιγοσιτίῃ χρέεσθαι ἐς ἐκάστην ἡμέρην. ἀθρόον δὲ μὴ  
ἀσιτεῖν· ὑπομνήσιός τε γὰρ ἡδ' ἀλέης τῷ στομάχῳ χρέος ἀνὰ  
πᾶσαν τὴν ἡμέρην.<sup>597</sup>

It is proper, then, to administer a little food every day, but not to withdraw food altogether; for the stomach to be reminded of its duties and fomented, as it were, during the whole day.<sup>598</sup>

Areteus says that there must be a ὑπόμνησις (‘reminding’) for the stomach, which is something very particular to human memory.<sup>599</sup> This implies a memory on behalf of the stomach, attributing to it thoughts which it can forget and then remember. This personifies this organ greatly, presenting it like a human being with memories.

Areteus also characterises organs as provoking and able to provoke. In *Θεραπεία νωτιαίας φλεβὸς καὶ ἀρτηρίας ὀξείας νόσου* (*The Cure of the Acute Disease of the Dorsal Vein and Artery*) the bowels are ‘roused’ by the medication:

λίνου ὧν καρποῦ χυλὸς ἔστω καὶ τήλιος καὶ μαλάχης τῶν ῥιζῶν  
ἔψημα, [καὶ] ἐς πρόκλησιν καὶ δῆξιν ἱκανόν.<sup>600</sup>

The juice, therefore, of linseed and of fenugreek, and the decoction of the roots of mallows, are sufficient to rouse and stimulate the bowels.<sup>601</sup>

The noun, πρόκλησις, has the sense of a ‘challenge’ or ‘proposal’ and personifies both the juice, which does the ‘challenging’ or ‘rousing’ and the bowel, which can be

<sup>597</sup> Aret. CA 1.2.4

<sup>598</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Areteus, the Cappadocian*: 388.

<sup>599</sup> Thuc. 1.72; Plut. Vit. Artax. 22.12

<sup>600</sup> Aret. CA 2.7.3

<sup>601</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Areteus, the Cappadocian*: 443-44.



roused into a different state. δῆξις is also the word for ‘bite’ and is used by Stoic philosophers for mental ‘pangs.’

This last passage from *Θεραπεία ἀποπληξίης* (*The Cure of Apoplexy*) is a slight departure from Aretaeus’ usual subjects, which are most often organs, but sometimes diseases. In this instance is it the sheets on the bed, which feel shame at the presence of an ointment stain:

οὔτε γὰρ περιρρέει ἐς τὸ τῶν στρωμάτων αἴσχος<sup>602</sup>

...for [the ointment] does not run down so as to [shame] the bed-clothes...<sup>603</sup>

It is clear that Aretaeus is talking about the ointment staining the bed-sheets; however he does not use one of the various ‘stain’ words in Greek (κηλὶς, λύθρον, or σπιλωμα would suffice) but chooses αἴσχος. This is a noun which can mean ‘shame’ or ‘disgrace,’ but also ‘ugliness’ or ‘deformity.’ It is used in the Homeric epics (usually in the plural) for disgraceful deeds or shameful words<sup>604</sup> and Danaus worries of bringing shame upon his people in the *Suppliants* (μηδ' αἴσχος ἡμῖν, ἡδονὴν δ' ἐχθοῖς ἐμοῖς πράξωμεν.<sup>605</sup>) As we have seen the previous chapter, Aretaeus is particularly empathic and compassionate in situations which involve patients with disease which cause deformity or shameful behaviour, and here he attributes a similar feeling to the bed sheets of the patient. The stain is a shame, which the physician, applying the ointment, must guard against, presumably to avoid shaming or embarrassing, not the patient, but the bed clothes.

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<sup>602</sup> Aret. *CA* 1.4.9

<sup>603</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 396.

<sup>604</sup> E.g., Hom. *Il.* 3.242

<sup>605</sup> Aesch. *Supp.* 1008-9

### **Hysteria: the Uterus as an Animal**

Like the Hippocratics, Aretaeus discusses the movement of the uterus within the female body. He then takes it one step further and perpetuates the idea, first seen in Plato, of the uterus being like an animal.<sup>606</sup> This is certainly problematic, since the chapters in which he talks of the ‘wandering womb’ contrast greatly with his text in general, which has been lauded as generally quite observant, practical and progressive, and especially when Soranus of Ephesus, a contemporary, had already dismissed this as false.<sup>607</sup> Given how little we know about Aretaeus, it is certainly possible that he may have never encountered the writings of Soranus. He may be writing in relative isolation, if Cappadocia is really his homeland and where he did his work. However, nothing in his text seems to suggest that he was ‘out of touch’ with other medical theory and writers, despite the lack of references to famous physicians outside of Hippocrates. What I would like to suggest is that considering his penchant personification, as we have seen in the above examples, it is very easy for him to see the uterus as personified in this case as an animal, given its mysterious nature and how it has been described by previous authors, like Hippocrates and Plato. If other organs can command, be delighted, reject, suffer and act as neighbours, the uterus certainly can take on characteristics of a similar sort, at least for Aretaeus. Thus, its attraction to pleasant odours and repulsion by unpleasant odours, as well as its ability to affect other organs, is not so different from the way Aretaeus describes other organs, such as the stomach or the heart. In addition, Aretaeus has a certain proclivity for Hippocrates, which is demonstrated in

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<sup>606</sup> Pl. *Ti.*70e

<sup>607</sup> Sor. *Gyn.* 1.8.2. Soranus does say, however, that it is similar (παραπλήσιος.)

his emulation of his Ionic dialect and his employment of humoral theory. It must be noted, however, that King has shown that no Hippocratic text ever describes the uterus as animal or like an animal; Plato is the first to do so in the *Timaeus*.<sup>608</sup> This means that Aretaeus is not following Hippocratic tradition with regards to his statements about the womb being 'like an animal'; however, he *is* doing so when he describes it as moving in the body and how it is attracted and repulsed by pleasant and unpleasant odors.<sup>609</sup>

In Περί ὕστερικῶν (*On Affections of the Womb*) Aretaeus describes the uterus and its movements:

Ἐν τῇσι λαγόσι τῶν γυναικῶν μέσῃσι ἐγκέεται ἡ μήτηρ, σπλάγχνον γυναικῆιον, ἄγχιστα ζωῶδες. κινέεται γὰρ ἐξ ἑωυτέης ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα ἐπὶ τὰς λαγόνας.<sup>610</sup>

In the middle of the flanks of women lies the womb, a female viscus, closely resembling an animal; for it is moved of itself hither and thither in the flanks.<sup>611</sup>

Aretaeus says that the uterus is 'most nearly like an animal' - ζωώδης – but does not commit entirely to calling the organ an animal outright. He does say that it moves “ἐξ ἑωυτέης” ('of or by itself') and so does believe that it travels around the woman's abdomen. He also includes the uterus' reaction to odors:

<sup>608</sup> Helen King, "Once Upon a Text: Hysteria from Hippocrates," in *Hysteria Beyond Freud*, ed. Sander L. Gilman, et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 27.

<sup>609</sup> For more on hysteria, see ———, "Conversion Disorder and Hysteria: Social Section," in *A History of Clinical Psychiatry: The Origin and History of Psychiatric Disorders*, ed. German E. Berrios and Roy Porter (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 442-50; ———, "Recovering Hysteria from History: Herodotus and the First Case of 'Shell-Shock'," in *Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Hysteria*, ed. Peter Halligan, Christopher Bass, and John C. Marshall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 36-48.

<sup>610</sup> Aret. SA 2.11.1

<sup>611</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus, the Cappadocian*: 285.

καὶ εὐώδεσι ὁσμήσεσι τέρπεται καὶ ἐπ' αὐτὰ ἵεται· ἄχθεται δὲ τοῖσι  
κακόδομοις καὶ αὐτὰ φεύγει· καὶ τὸ ξύμπαν ἐν τῇ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐστὶ ἡ  
ὕστερη, ὁκοῖόν τι ζῶον ἐν ζῳῳ.<sup>612</sup>

It delights, also, in fragrant smells, and advances towards them; and  
it has an aversion to fetid smells, and flees from them; and, on the  
whole, [in a person] a womb is like [some living creature] within [a  
living creature].<sup>613</sup>

Areteus uses the same verb, *τέρπω*, as he did the previous example involving  
arthritis, meaning 'to delight in' or 'enjoy' something. This, again, is an emotion  
reaction reserved in Greek for humans and personifies the uterus as such. *ἄχθομαι*  
was also used in a previous passage regarding the tongue, and means the opposite  
of *τέρπω* – to be vexed or upset by something. Again, a human emotion attributed to  
an organ. The uterus also is described as reacting to these feelings, by moving  
towards or away from the odors which cause the attraction or repulsion.

The same concepts and description occur in Areteus' therapy for the  
wandering womb, in his chapter, *Θεραπεία ὑστερικής πνιγός* (*The Cure of the  
Hysterical Convulsion*):

ἵεται γὰρ ἐπὶ τοῖσι εὐώδεσι πρὸς ἡδονὴν καὶ τὰ κάκοσμα καὶ  
ἀτερπέα ὑπὸ ἀχθηδόνοιο φεύγει. ἦν μὲν ὧν τῶν ἄνω τι λυπῇ,  
πρόεισι τῶν γυναικῶν ἔξω· ὧν δὲ κατὰ στόμα τι ἂν εἴη, ὀπίσω  
χάζεται ἢ δὲ ἄνωθεν.<sup>614</sup>

For it follows after fragrant things as if for pleasure, and flees from  
fetid and disagreeable things as if for dislike. If, therefore, anything  
annoy it from above, it protrudes even beyond the genital organs.  
But if any of these things be applied to the os, it retreats backwards  
and upwards.<sup>615</sup>

<sup>612</sup> Aret. SA 2.11.1

<sup>613</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Areteus, the Cappadocian*: 286.

<sup>614</sup> Aret. CA 2.10.1

<sup>615</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Areteus, the Cappadocian*: 449.

Areteaus attributes several emotions to the uterus in this passage – feelings of pleasure (ἡδονή), vexation (ἀχθηδών) and grief (λύπη) – which personifies and humanizes the uterus as an organ capable of the same feelings and sensations as a person. A further example of the uterus’ ability to perceive is given in *Περὶ ὑστερικῶν* (*On Affections of the Womb*):

προπίπτει κοτὲ τὸ στόμιον τῆς ὑστέρης μοῦνον μέσφι τοῦ αὐχένος,  
ἀλλ’ αὖθις εἴσω δύεται, ἣν ὀσφραίνεται ἡ ὑστέρα θυμῖσι  
κακώδεσι· ἔλκει δὲ αὐτέην καὶ ἡ γυνή, ἣν ὀσφραίνεται θυμητῶν  
εὐωδέων.<sup>616</sup>

Sometimes the mouth of the womb only, as far as the neck, protrudes, and retreats inwardly if the uterus be made to smell to fetid fumigation; and the woman also attracts it if she smells to fragrant odours.<sup>617</sup>

In its ability to ‘smell’ (ὀσφραίνομαι) the uterus is ascribed the facility of a person, but also maintains its ‘animal-like’ nature that Areteaus mentions earlier. It also is attracted (ἔλκω) to nice smelling things – the same verb used by Areteaus in previous examples.<sup>618</sup>

Areteaus talks about organs, diseases and other things relating to the body and its health with the language of personification. He ascribes organs emotions and motivations which one would consider of a person. He organizes parts of the body like a community and ‘feels into’ them, as well as other inanimate objects, feelings, abilities, and intentions which personify them and make them appear human. They

<sup>616</sup> Aret. *SD* 2.11.10

<sup>617</sup> Adams, *The Extant Works of Areteaus, the Cappadocian*: 361-62.

<sup>618</sup> Another example may be found in Areteaus’ chapter, *On Mania*, where the uterus comes up again with regards to how women are affected by madness: ἐμάνησάν κοτε καὶ γυναῖκες ὑπὸ ἀκαθαρσίας τοῦ σκήνεος, εὔτε αὐτέησι ἀπηνδρώθησαν αἱ μήτραι... (Aret. *SD* 1.6.4) (“Women also sometimes become affected with mania from want of purgation of the system, when the uterus has attained the development of manhood...” Ibid., 302.) ἀπανδρόομαι means “reach sexual maturity” and perhaps this one is a bit of a long shot, but the original etymological sense may still be working in this verb.

lead, attract, perceive and understand like sentient beings. His empathy, his ability to 'feel into,' this organs and diseases allows for the conception of the body in this way.

## CONCLUSION

Spontaneous sharing of affect and the care or concern we feel for another's suffering, which we have defined as empathy and compassion in this dissertation, is a vital aspect of human interpersonal relationships. Adam Smith conceived of these two ideas together as 'sympathy' which he defined as "our fellow-feeling with any passion whatsoever" and believed it was a basic human emotion:

How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortunes of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it, except the pleasure of seeing it. Of this kind is pity or compassion, the emotion we feel for the misery of others, when we either see it, or are made to conceive it in a very lively manner. That we often derive sorrow from the sorrows of others, is a matter of fact too obvious to require any instances to prove it; for this sentiment, like all the other original passions of human nature, is by no means confined to the virtuous or the humane, though they perhaps may feel it with the most exquisite sensibility. The greatest ruffian, the most hardened violator of the laws of society, is not altogether without it.<sup>619</sup>

Considering that we deem empathy and compassion to be so important to human life, this project set out to explore whether the Greeks and Romans of the first and second centuries AD understood and expressed these emotions themselves. If they did, what did they think about them? Were they important? Desired? Dangerous? Bearing in mind that modern medicine has embraced empathy and compassion as important qualities for physicians, nurses and other healthcare providers, did ancient physicians feel this way, too? Did they have emotional reactions to their patients' pain and suffering? If so, how did they express it? I believe this dissertation has shown that the ancients most certainly did understand and express empathy

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<sup>619</sup> Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*: 11.

and compassion, and the rich literature of the first and second centuries AD demonstrate this. The wealth of medical literature in particular has proven to be a valuable source for physicians' empathy and compassion.

Aretaeus of Cappadocia was a Greek physician who expressed a great deal of empathy and compassion for his patients and their families in his extant writings. Diseases which cause the patient to desire death, which push the skill and sensitivity of the physician to the limit, and which cause extreme amounts of deformity, depression and shame appear to be the most likely to elicit empathy and compassion from Aretaeus. Chronic diseases especially cause him to do so, most likely because of their nature as long-term, painful illnesses often without sufficient cures. His vocabulary and rhetorical techniques demonstrate this in his writing, where he uses potent terminology and rhetorical questions to emphasise either the suffering of the patient (both emotionally and physically) or the helplessness of the physician in combating the disease (or both.) Aretaeus most certainly reflects his patients' emotions and feels compassion for their suffering.

The expression of empathy through literary device, specifically personification, is also present in Aretaeus. In addition to personifying mostly human organs, such as the spleen or the stomach, he characterises diseases and their functions as having agency, purpose and personality, indicating a high level of empathy. He 'feels his way into' these inanimate objects and ascribes behaviour and motivations to them, which he describes in language that suggests human-like agency and autonomy. The ability to actively imagine the emotional and motivational states of these organs and diseases may have been a mindset



particularly apt for ancient Greeks, but the frequency and vividness of his personification indicates a high level of empathy present in Aretaeus' writing.

Empathy is often considered as laying the groundwork for compassion. Soranus' *Gynecology* focuses on women, infants and midwives specifically and in it he exhibits a general sense of compassion and a concern for the overall well-being for his female patients. The qualities he asserts as important for a midwife are also compatible with empathetic and compassionate values. Recognition of his female patients' negative emotional states and the desire to alleviate those feelings come across in a few different passages, through his vocabulary and treatments. Soranus, despite his practical and un-superstitious personality, also did not forbid certain things to his patients. Whether it was unnatural food cravings during *pica* or believing in the power of an amulet, he allowed it if he felt it would improve the patient emotionally. Rufus values patient-focused medicine greatly. His compassion is expressed through his concentration on understanding his patients, their personalities, likes and dislikes, and natural states. He is attuned to individual differences and shows his sensitivity to their emotions this way. He also shows concern for their emotional well-being and, like Soranus, the affect that psychological factors can have on the physical body.

Compassion is an importance consideration in the field of medical ethics. Both Caelius Aurelianus and Scribonius Largus have a particular interest in this idea and how patients are treated by their attending physicians. Caelius is very much concerned with the comfort of his patients when it comes to his therapies. He displays an ability to understand the patient's perspective and takes issue with the

inhumane and cruel treatment he attributes to certain physicians, saying that it is against the *humanitas... medicinae* and he disapproves of their use of cruel physical therapies, especially with regards to the mentally ill. Scribonius Largus iterates the concept of *humanitas* and the criticism of uncompassionate physicians seen in Caelius, but with more of a focus on the profession of medicine and its ethical obligations. He states that medicine makes a pledge to provide compassionate and caring treatment to those who need it. The Hippocratic Oath serves as his foundation for this medical philosophy, but it is essentially his compassion that motivates him. He adds that only those who endeavour to provide all possible remedies for a patient are truly practicing. Both Caelius and Scribonius exhibit, in their concern for the treatment of patients and adherence to the *humanitas* of medicine, a point of view that can be characterized as empathetic and compassionate.

Empathy and compassion can be practiced between humans, but Plutarch believed that when extended to animals, this truly demonstrated a person's humanity. Fueled by the philosophy of Pythagoras and disgust at the treatment of beasts raised and slaughtered for consumption, he passionately argued for the moral treatment of animals in his *Moralia*. By way of particular rhetorical techniques, Plutarch expresses his empathy for what he sees as mistreated animals and advocates more humane behaviour and vegetarianism, although his realism forces him to realise that this might not be embraced by everyone. He then allows for compromises which help address both sides of the issue. Regardless of the practicalities of this for the ancient world, Plutarch certainly displays a

compassionate attitude towards animals and insists that our treatment of them reflects our own humanity. In this way, he foreshadows a great number of modern movements, in which empathy, compassion and morality are considered the foundation from which we must build and change our relationships with animals and the environment if we are to continue to co-exist.

The novelists, Chariton and Achilles Tatius, take empathy and compassion into the realm of fiction, but it is no less recognisable in the loves stories of Chaereas and Callirhoe and Leucippe and Clitophon. Chariton expresses the concepts pity and compassion through the use of the terms ἔλεος and φιλανθρωπία (related in some ways with the Latin *humanitas*.) ἔλεος is pity, but φιλανθρωπία is slightly more complex. It is wrapped up with what it meant to be fundamentally human and covers both the emotional sharing effect of empathy and the mercy of compassion, reflecting the rather imprecise language of these ideas in Greek, but by no means rendering the situations incomprehensible to the modern reader. Characters in *Chaereas and Callirhoe* are affected by each other emotionally, extend compassion to one another and consider it important to their humanity to do so. Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* has a more varied vocabulary to express the emotions of empathy, compassion and pity. The characters suffer a number of misfortunes and respond accordingly with grief, hopelessness and requests for mercy. A variety of passages involve narratives and images which evoke mirrored emotions in the listener. What we see, however, is that Achilles Tatius mixing his vocabulary in a way which demonstrates that these words are now meant in a different way; pity and compassion have broadened their application. Overall, the novel explores the

effect of one's emotion on another in a number of different ways, but all conform to one basic idea: the suffering of one person has the power to affect similar emotions in another, which often leads to compassion.

The first and second-century Greeks and Romans understood and expressed empathy and compassion. The literature of the first and second centuries AD examined in this dissertation shows us this. Medical texts, novels, and moral philosophy all indicate an awareness of, and even a concern with, the suffering of others, compassionate treatment, medical ethics, the moral treatment of animals, and the infectious nature of emotions. Vocabulary for pity and compassion often conforms to traditional Aristotelian definitions; but just as often it shows that it has widened its application as well. The question is then: does this suggest a shift in this particular time period? There appears to be a significant amount of 'cross-chatter' between some of the literature in this era: the concepts of *φιλανθρωπία* and *humanitas* overlap in the texts of Plutarch, Chariton, Caelius Aurelianus and Scribonius Largus; medical writers such as Aretaeus and Soranus share some linguist similarities when discussing the compassion and sensitivity of the physician or midwife; and Aretaeus himself shows an empathetic perspective in his description of internal organs and diseases. A permeability of genres appears to have occurred in this era whereby empathy and compassion became a common concern.

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