

and synthetic method as mediating between two entrenched extremes, occupying a previously unexplored middle ground, his need to distinguish himself from Diocles, with some interpretative license, becomes clear.

There are some similarities of approach and expression between Diocles and Aristotle. Diocles seems to share the Peripatetic awareness of the limits of causal explanation, and some Peripatetic phraseology too, though the resemblances are insufficient to support any of the stronger claims of Aristotelian affiliation that have been made for him. The point is, once again, to emphasise the wider set of associations and interactions in play here, which V.d.E. finds, and explores, from a more Aristotelian perspective in about half the articles in this collection. So such Hippocratic treatises as *On Regimen* have much to offer an understanding of Aristotle's investigations of sleep and dreams, and many more medical authors participate, together with philosophers, in debates about the nature, location, and workings of the soul more broadly. The strength of the overlap between medicine and philosophy further encourages V.d.E. to allow for a greater breadth in Aristotelian authorship than is customary. He argues, for example, that the text transmitted as Book 10 of Aristotle's *History of Animals*, which treats possible reasons for sterility and related matters, and which is usually labelled spurious on account of its more practical, medical, orientation, is in fact by Aristotle himself; indeed, is one of his 'medical' works, as alluded to in the indirect tradition.

In each case, in each chapter and for each theme, V.d.E. applies the same methods of meticulous but open-minded textual analysis, whether it be of the fragments of Diocles of Carystus, the Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease*, or Aristotle's *On Dreams*, to name but a few of the works scrutinised in detail. From close readings he constructs careful interpretations, well situated within their wider discursive and intellectual context. This approach is individually and collectively productive, providing both specific insights and a cumulative process of understanding.

Jesus College, Cambridge

REBECCA FLEMMING
ref33@cam.ac.uk

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS' DIALECTICAL MOVES

LA SALA (R.) *Die Züge des Skeptikers. Der dialektische Charakter von Sextus Empiricus' Werk.* (Hypomnemata 160.) Pp. 204. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005. Cased, €49.90. ISBN: 978-3-525-25259-8.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X07000522

La Sala sets himself a challenging task: to cast new light on the nature of ancient Pyrrhonism, particularly on the scholarly crux of whether Pyrrhonian scepticism, as depicted in Sextus Empiricus' work, advertised a life without beliefs (radical or 'rustic' Pyrrhonism) or allowed the Sceptic to retain every sort of ordinary beliefs, targeting for suspension of judgement only philosophic-scientific tenets (moderate or 'urbane' Pyrrhonism). L. approaches this issue by elucidating the precise way and measure in which Sextan Pyrrhonists argued *dialectically* against

the 'Dogmatists': they borrowed dogmatic terminology, principles, presuppositions and logical standards and tools and used them against the Dogmatists themselves, with no commitment *in propria persona*. L. investigates how well this dialectical interpretation fits various specific anti-dogmatic inquiries in *PH* 2–3 and *M* 1–11, rather than focussing on Sextus' general sketch of the 'Pyrrhonian way' in *PH* 1.

The first chapter is devoted to the discussion of the *status quaestionis*, which is generally reliable. L.'s choice to organise his exposition around terminological and thematic nuclei rather than by author is refreshing, but risks making the overall shape and internal coherence of the seminal interpretations discussed (Frede's, Burnyeat's, and Barnes's, as collected in *The Original Sceptics*, Indiana: Hackett, 1997) less than perspicuous for readers not already acquainted with them. I am not convinced by L.'s uncritical juxtaposition of the different views of Frede 1979 and 1984, and one might perhaps have expected more attention to other valuable and more recent literature on the topic.

The second chapter examines the structure of Sextus' work and illustrates in convincing detail his general 'rule' of borrowing and using dogmatic concepts, presuppositions and logical and expository procedures against the Dogmatists themselves. (I should signal that L. incorrectly includes motion, place and time among the 'material principles' studied by physics, p. 59.)

The third chapter analyses the way in which Sextus structures the content of his specific inquiries in a similarly dialectical way. Since the Dogmatists maintain that we can attain knowledge of something only if we possess a coherent concept of it, Sextus starts by showing the intrinsic inadequacy of the concept (or concepts) of the object of inquiry (when the Dogmatists and laymen use the same term with different meanings, Sextus typically distinguishes them; when a stricter and more technical meaning can be singled out, since according to the Dogmatists themselves this must 'precede' [logically] the less proper ones, the latter will be 'cancelled' by the sceptical arguments together with the former, which becomes the specific target of Sextus' inquiry). Only as a second step does Sextus show directly and 'more aporetically' that the existence of the object of inquiry cannot be established anyway (taking as an example Sextus' discussion of the criterion in *M* 7, L. lucidly shows that these direct arguments too make considerable use of dogmatic presuppositions, or derive from rival dogmatic schools).

In the fourth chapter L. explains that Sextus' practice of distinguishing senses of terms and phrases (e.g. 'criterion', 'sign', 'to comprehend', '*dogma*', 'no more') serves another important function, a defensive one against the Dogmatists' objections that (1) the Pyrrhonist refutes himself (the *peritropê* charge), that (2) he cannot investigate dogmatic concepts and doctrines since he admits to not having any 'comprehension' of them, and that (3) he cannot live without beliefs (the *apraxia* charge). L. shows that the Sceptic defends himself by following an indirect route: he individuates and indicates all those dogmatic characters that he carefully eschews. L.'s treatment of the dogmatic objections in defence of the existence of criterion, sign and proof and of Sextus' dialectical counters is clear, but sometimes imprecise in the finer details. L.'s proposal of how Sextus' reply to the *apraxia* charge in *PH* 1 might be construed as yet another dialectical move is questionable: that the Dogmatists can be forced to concede the possibility of inquiring into concepts and doctrines to which one does not subscribe (cf. *PH* 2.1–11) does not imply that they would (or should) also admit that one could coherently live in accordance with such concepts and principles without any personal commitment.

The final chapter returns to the scholarly debate sketched in Chapter 1, to cash in some dividends on the clarification of the dialectical character of Pyrrhonism. L. argues that some form of ‘insulation’ can be attributed, *contra* Burnyeat, to Sextus’ brand of scepticism: the Pyrrhonist suspends judgement only on those matters concerning which he perceives a disturbing *anómalia*, and not on everything indiscriminately (pp. 174–5, drawing on Barnes’s proposal); more importantly, however, even on those matters on which he suspends judgement the Pyrrhonist does not abandon the ordinary beliefs he shares with laymen; what he does abandon is the dogmatic pretension that his beliefs are (and can be) rationally justified (p. 178). L.’s thought-provoking contention is that his purely dialectical and allegedly ‘moderate’ Frede-style Pyrrhonist is, *in some sense*, even more radical than the ‘rustic’ one: he is not committed to any dogmatic presupposition and can take sides with the *bios* unreservedly, whereas on the ‘rustic’ interpretation the Pyrrhonist who only acquiesces in his non-epistemic appearances and avows them while suspending judgement on *any* matter of fact remains committed, ultimately, to some dogmatic presuppositions. For he must at least adopt (1) the framework of the opposition between being (‘external’ reality) and appearances (‘internal’ mental affections not open to inquiry) and (2) the idea that if we suspend judgement on all dogmatic concepts, doctrines and criteria, then we must suspend judgement about everything, an idea rooted in the dogmatic presupposition that the possibility of forming and defending beliefs (even ordinary ones) ultimately depends upon, and is reducible to, the acceptance and vindication of rationally justified concepts, doctrines and criteria. L.’s argument has some merit; it might be replied, however, that *some* limited common ground between the Sceptic and the Dogmatist (apart from that guaranteed by the dialectical character of the Sceptic’s anti-dogmatic strategy) is only to be expected, if the former must be able to communicate his own ‘position’. Consider also that the Pyrrhonist, as Sextus explains, is a natural-born Dogmatist (or, at least, a natural-born would-be Dogmatist), who converted to Pyrrhonism because of the failure of dogmatism to deliver the therapy it had promised (*PH* 1.28–9): the Pyrrhonian arguments were not conceived, *initially*, as purely dialectical weapons, and this is bound to be somehow reflected in the deep structure and method of mature Pyrrhonism.

Frede-style interpretations of Sextus deserve careful attention and have gained large scholarly currency. What L. regrettably does not attempt to do is to tackle at least the most serious objections that such interpretations face, among which, crucially, is the difficulty of squaring them with the declared therapeutic vocation of Sextus’ Pyrrhonism: L.’s conclusion on p. 181 would certainly need to be nuanced, since as it stands it leaves the Pyrrhonist content hanging on to all sorts of ordinary beliefs, which must include the intoxicating ones concerning values which Pyrrhonism is supposed to purge. Does L. succeed in delivering fresh compelling reasons for preferring the interpretation he adopts to the rival ones? That the ancient Pyrrhonists argued dialectically against their dogmatic foes is far from controversial, although L.’s emphasis on this character is certainly commendable. Whether *everything* Sextus tells us about his Pyrrhonism (especially in *PH* 1) is intended as a purely dialectical anti-dogmatic move is quite a different story, L.’s reading of Sextus falls short of establishing this more ambitious conclusion.