1. Introduction

The catalogue of Democritus' writings in Diogenes Laertius' chapter on the Abderite philosopher derives from the Roman astrologer Thrasyllus (d. c. 36 CE) who organized Democritus' works, as he did Plato's, into tetralogies. The first and second tetralogies contain what are said to be Democritus' ethical (ēthika) works, and these are presented as follows:

TETRALOGY ONE: Pythagoras, Concerning the Disposition of the Wise Man, Concerning Things (or Those) in Hades, Tritogeneia

TETRALOGY TWO: On Manly Valor, Amalthea's Horn, Peri Euthumiēs, Ethical Reminders.

It is questionable whether all of these titles refer to genuine works by Democritus. It is questionable whether all of the titles refer to distinct works. For example, possibly a work such as Concerning the Disposition of the Wise Man is an alternative title for Pythagoras. It is questionable whether all of the titles refer to ethical works. And while all of these are important questions, none of them seriously infringes on the aim of this paper.

The aim of the paper is a partial reconstruction of the work in the second tetralogy entitled Peri Euthumiēs. There is little doubt that Peri Euthumiēs was a genuine work by Democritus and that it was an ethical work. While it was known under at least one other title—Clement refers to it as On the Goal—evidently that title is not listed among Thrasyllus' tetralogies.

I have deliberately left the title Peri Euthumiēs untranslated since one of my aims here is to consider the meaning of "euthumiē." And I speak of a "partial" reconstruction of the work since, in my estimation, the evidence does not enable us to determine with great confidence the entire scope of Peri Euthumiēs even in bare outline. Nonetheless, I am confident that a significant advancement in our understanding of this lost work is possible.

My partial reconstruction will begin with Diels' fragment B3, which is the one fragment that is straightforwardly attributable to Peri Euthumiēs. There is also compelling evidence that B3 constitutes the opening lines of Peri Euthumiēs. So, I will
consider B3 the "primary" fragment of *Peri Euthumiēs* and use it to anchor my partial reconstruction of the work.

Precisely, I will use B3 in the following three ways. First, I will argue that several aspects of B3 indicate that Democritus conceives of the ethical content in *Peri Euthumiēs* in terms of and by analogy with medicine and medical literature of his time. Second, as the title of the work itself indicates and as the content of B3 indicates, the central term of *Peri Euthumiēs* is "*euthumiē*." Taken in conjunction with the fact that "*euthumiē*" and its cognates are very rare in Greek prose in this period, this encourages consideration of those other ethical fragments of Democritus' containing instances of the noun "*euthumiē*" or its adjectival, adverbial, or verbal cognates. There are six such fragments: B174, B189, B191, B258, B279, and B286. Among these "secondary" fragments, B191 is particularly valuable for the following reasons: it contains four instances of "*euthum-*"; its content is in several respects akin to B3; and it is the longest of Democritus' ethical fragments. The contents and language of B3 and B191 corroborate the view that B174, B189, B258, B279, and B286 are indeed fragments of *Peri Euthumiēs*. Third, B3 states that in order to be *euthumos* or to achieve *euthumiē*, a man must manage himself in both his private life and his public life. I suggest that this is a programmatic statement and that in the main body of the text Democritus discussed precisely how a man should manage himself within each of these domains. Accordingly, the remainder of the partial reconstruction focuses on fragments pertaining to the appropriate sort of self-management. Regarding the private domain, I focus on fragments pertaining to marriage, child-rearing, and wealth. Regarding the public domain, I focus on fragments pertaining to political activity, law, and justice.

2. The Opening of Democritus' *Peri Euthumiēs*

Diels' fragment B3 almost certainly constitutes the opening lines of Democritus' *Peri Euthumiēs*. Several versions of the fragment exist. The following derives from Stobaeus:

"He who is going to be *euthumos* to achieve *euthumiē* (*euthumeisthai*) must not do many things, either in private or in public; nor must he choose what he does beyond his own power and nature. Rather, he must be on guard so that even when fortune seizes him and urges him in his judgment toward more, he sets it aside and does not attempt more than what is possible. For a good portion is more secure than a great portion."  

τὸν εὐθωμείσθαι μέλλοντα χρὴ μὴ πολλὰ πρῆσσειν, μὴ τε ἰδίῃ μὴτε ἔξωνη, μηδὲ ἀσσ’ ἀν πρῆσῃ, ὑπὲρ τε δύναμιν αἱρεῖσθαι τὴν ἑωτοῦ καὶ φύσιν· ἀλλὰ τοσαύτην ἔχειν φυλακήν, ὡστε καὶ τῆς τυχῆς ἐπιβαλλούσης καὶ ἐς τὸ πλέον ὑπηγεομένης τῶν δοκεῖν, κατατίθεσθαι, καὶ μὴ πλέω προσάπτεσθαι τῶν δυνατῶν. ἢ γὰρ εὔογκη ἀσφαλέστερον τῆς μεγαλογίης.  

---

4 Stob. 4.39.25.
The reason for taking this to be the opening line of one of Democritus' works derives from the following passage of Seneca's *On Tranquility of the Mind* (*De tranquillitate animi*):

"I think that Democritus agreed with this when he began as follows (*ita coepisse*): 'If a man should want to live tranquilly (*tranquille ... vivere*), let him not engage in many affairs either in private or in public (*nec privatim agat multa nec publice*),' referring of course to useless affairs ... For if a man engages in many affairs, he often puts himself in the power of fortune, while his safest course is rarely to tempt her ..."\(^5\)

Seneca is here clearly referring to B3; and his claim that Democritus "began as follows" strongly encourages the thesis that B3 opens one of Democritus' works.

Based on the content of B3 and the Latin rendition that Seneca produces, it is most reasonable to attribute the fragment to Democritus' *Peri Euthumiēs*. But the following conjunction of facts corroborates this attribution. As noted, Seneca is discussing the passage in the context of his own work *On Tranquility of the Mind*. Toward the beginning of this work, Seneca writes of the Latin word "*tranquillitas*":

"The Greeks call this settled state of the soul 'euthymia,' on the subject of which there is an excellent book by Democritus. I call it 'tranquillitas.'"\(^6\)

Consequently, I will maintain that B3 constitutes the opening lines of Democritus' *Peri Euthumiēs*.

3. B3 and the Openings of Several Hippocratic Treatises

The form and content of the opening sentence of B3 is of the following type:

For one to achieve such-and-such, it is necessary to do such-and-such.

Introductory statements in several Hippocratic treatises of the same period also have this type of form and content. The following three are from *Airs Waters Places*, *On Regimen in Health*, and *On Regimen* respectively:

"Whoever desires to inquire into medicine correctly, it is necessary to do these things (*tade chrē poiein*)."\(^7\)

\(^5\) *De tranq. an.* 13.1.

\(^6\) 2.3. Seneca also proceeds to explain how he understands "*tranquillitas*": "the state in which the soul proceeds always in a measured and untroubled course, and is well disposed to itself, and looks on its own affairs happily and never interrupts this joy. It remains in this peaceful state, never raising nor depressing itself. That will be *tranquillitas*." (2.4; cp. Cic. *Fin.* 5.23)

\(^7\) *Airs Waters Places* 1.
"It is necessary (chrē) for laymen to constitute their regimen in the following way (hōde)."\textsuperscript{8}

"I claim that he who is going (mellonta) to treat human regimen correctly must (dein) first acquire a discernment of the nature of man in general …"\textsuperscript{9}

The first of these treatises is generally dated to the second half of the fifth century;\textsuperscript{10} the second to 410-400;\textsuperscript{11} and the third to the second half of the fifth century or first half of the fourth century.\textsuperscript{12}

Consider also the introductory remarks from \textit{Affections} and \textit{Diseases I}, both standardly dated to the 380s, which are of a similar type.\textsuperscript{13}

"Whoever (hostis) is intelligent, it is necessary (chrē) for him, considering that health is of the utmost value to human beings, to have the personal understanding necessary to help himself in diseases … Now a person would best be able to know such things by knowing the following (tade)."\textsuperscript{14}

"Whoever (hos an) desires to ask correctly about healing and, on being asked, to reply and rebut correctly, it is necessary (chrē) to consider the following things (tade)."\textsuperscript{15}

Compare also the following introductory line from the Hippocratic treatise \textit{Law}, which is post-Platonic,\textsuperscript{16} but which evidently follows the type of form and content of earlier treatises:

"Whoever (hostis) is going (mellei) to truly acquire an understanding of medicine, it is necessary (chrē) for him to have a natural ability, teaching, a suitable place, instruction from childhood, diligence, and time."\textsuperscript{17}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{8} \textit{On Regimen in Health} 1.
\item \textsuperscript{9} \textit{On Regimen} 2.1.
\item \textsuperscript{10} "The author [of \textit{Airs Waters Places}] is probably the same as that of \textit{The Sacred Disease}. [The date of composition is the] second half of the fifth century." (J. Jouanna, \textit{Hippocrates}, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999, 375)
\item \textsuperscript{11} "The treatise [Jouanna is referring to \textit{Nature of Man}, here taken to include \textit{On Regimen in Health}] is generally dated to the years 410-400." (Jouanna 1999, 400)
\item \textsuperscript{12} "The treatise [\textit{On Regimen}] is put by scholars either at the end of the fifth century or the first half of the fourth." (Jouanna 1999, 409)
\item \textsuperscript{13} "The date of the treatise [\textit{Affections}] may be put sometime in the 380s." (Jouanna 1999, 374) "\textit{Diseases I} can likewise be dated to the 380s." (Jouanna 1999, 382)
\item \textsuperscript{14} \textit{Affections} 1.
\item \textsuperscript{15} \textit{Diseases I} 1.
\item \textsuperscript{16} "The opscule cannot be earlier than the fourth century." (Jouanna 1999, 396)
\item \textsuperscript{17} \textit{Law} 2.1.
\end{itemize}
Democritus' dates are standardly taken to be 460-370. Presumably then, *Peri Euthumiēs* was composed c. 400. I suggest then that in composing the opening line of *Peri Euthumiēs*, Democritus was influenced by one common type of introduction in the medical literature of his time.

It is interesting to observe that Democritus' *Peri Euthumiēs* is not the only ethical work of this period whose introductory sentence shares its type of form and content with some of the Hippocratic treatises. The *Anonymus Iamblichii*, which is also standardly dated to c. 400, begins this way:

"Whatever one (ho ti an tis) desires to accomplish to the fullest extent— whether it be wisdom, whether it be courage, whether it be eloquence, whether it be excellence (aretē) in its entirety or in part— it is possible (hoion te) to accomplish this by the following means (tōnde).”

So far as I can tell, the *Anonymus Iamblichus* does not share further characteristics with the medical literature of its time. Consequently, the fact that Democritus' *Peri Euthumiēs* shares the type of form and content of its introductory sentence with some of medical literature of its time cannot by itself be taken as evidence that the content of *Peri Euthumiēs* was further influenced by late fifth or early fourth century medicine or medical literature. However, there are additional correspondences between the medical literature and Democritus' *Peri Euthumiēs* as well as between the medical literature and other ethical fragments of Democritus.

---

18 *Anon. Iambl*. 1.1.