Melancholy, Greek μελαγχολία, as we first find it in a number of literary and philosophical texts of the classical period, means something quite different from depression; from Aristophanes (Av. 14; Eccl. 251; Pl. 12) to Plato (Phdr. 268e2; Rep. 573c9) to Aristotle (Eth. Nic. 1150b25–26; 1151a1–1152a19), the linguistic evidence we have shows that the word is used at that time to indicate rather an aggressive form of madness. While the case seems to be the same with the majority of the Hippocratics (5th–4th cent. BC), melancholy in the sense of depression is not entirely absent from medical discourse: one can find it associated with a pathological state of lasting sadness (δυσθυμία) and fear (φόβος) in [Hippocrates] Aphorismi 6.23 [4.568 Littré]. However the exact relation between these two aspects of melancholy (a manic and a depressive one) remains, for some time, unclear since both are for the most part explored in early medical writings independently from each other. The first author to display a more inclusive attitude is not a physician but a philosopher of the late 4th cent. BC: in a treatise which sets out

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2. See e.g. [Hippocrates] De morbis 1.30 [6.200 Littre]: προσεοίκασι δὲ μάλιστα οἱ ὑπὸ τῆς φρενίτιδος ἐχόμενοι τοῖσι μελαγχολώδεις κατὰ τὴν παράνοιαν· οἵ τε γὰρ μελαγχολώδεις, ὅταν φθαρῇ τὸ αἷμα ὑπὸ χολῆς καὶ φλέγματος, τὴν νοῦσον ἴσχουσι καὶ παράνοοι γίνονται, ἐνιοὶ δὲ καὶ μαίνονται. See the medical evidence collected in Müri 1953, 33.
3. Ἡ φόβος ἢ δυσθυμία πολὺν χρόνον διατελέῃ, μελαγχολικὸν τὸ τοιοῦτον.
4. See, however, the interesting description of the patient Parmeniscus in [Hippocrates] Epidemiae 7.89 [7.446 Littre]: Τῷ Παρμενίσκῳ καὶ πρότερον ἐνέπιπτον ἁθυμίαι καὶ ἱμερὸς τῆς ἀπαλαγῆς βίου, ὅτε δὲ πάλιν εὐθυμίη. Ἐν Ὀλύνθῳ δέ ποτε φθινοπώρου ἄφωνος· ἴσχων ἐγών, ἄγων· ἀγρυπνίη, καὶ εἰ δὲ δή τι καὶ διαλευκία, καὶ πάλιν ἄφωνος. "Ὑπνοι ἔσται, ὅτε δὲ ἐγρυπνίη, καὶ ἐπισακομοκετὰ στηθῶν, καὶ ἄλυτων, καὶ χεῖρ πρὸς ὑποχόρας—συνεχόμενα· ὅτε δὲ δειπτραφεῖς, ἐκεῖτο ἰσχυρόν ἄγων. Parmeniscus’ catatonic state (Jouanna 2000, 39 n. 1, describes it as a case of ‘mélancholie stuporeuse’; cf. Montiglio 2000, 232) alternates with fits of delirium (βιττασμός, ἀλυσμός). Nonetheless, there is nothing in the text to positively suggest that the patient is a melancholic or that black bile lies at the origin of his disease.
5. While traditionally referred to as ps.-Aristotle, most scholars agree that this philosopher is Theophrastus. See e.g. Flashar 1962, 711–714, and Sharples 1995, 5–6.
to explain the exceptional intelligence of melancholics (Problemata Physica XXX.1), ps.-Aristotle discusses melancholy as a disease which can manifest itself either as madness or as depression, depending on the temperature of black bile (μέλαινα χολή). When turning too hot, black bile is described as giving rise to ἐκστάσεις (953a25), a term which is used elsewhere in the text to describe the madness of (Sophocles’) Ajax (953a22); when turning too cold, it is said to cause ἀθυμίας and φόβους (954a23–24). Rather than treating them separately, ps.-Aristotle thus unites madness and depression as the two sides of one and the same disease.6

In what follows, I set out to discuss Cicero’s translation of μελαγχολία with furor at Tusculanae Disputationes 3.11—the first attempt made in Latin literature to investigate the meaning of the Greek term. In the first section of my paper I will demonstrate that this is by no means a passing linguistic remark but should rather be situated within the context of Cicero’s critical engagement with ps.-Aristotle’s text and ideas, as this becomes evident at other points of his philosophical work (Tusc. Disp. 1.80; De divinatione 1.81). I will then proceed to argue that, while Cicero’s translation is not followed by the observation that μελαγχολία can also have the meaning of depression (tristitia),7 his allusion to ps.-Aristotle’s treatment of Bellerophon as a depressive melancholic (953a21–25) at Tusc. Disp. 3.63 (a part of the treatise which discusses the results of extreme sorrow) reveals that Cicero is familiar with both sides of the disease.

**Cicero and Ps.-Aristotle**

Cicero’s discussion of μελαγχολία runs as follows (TD 3.11):

Graeci autem μανίαν unde appellent non facile dixerim: eam tamen ipsam distinguimus nos melius quam illi; hanc enim insaniam...