as series texts, Christine Proust uses enumeration to analyze their elaborate nested structure. These series texts appear to have been produced by distributing operations through a sort of combinatorial procedure over the resulting nested structure of the text, in such a way as to produce problems that are amenable, at least in principle, to the methods available to the ancient scribes. In the next chapter, Karine Chemla studies numerical algorithms presented in two classics of Chinese mathematics and some commentaries on them, as well as one ancient Chinese mathematical manuscript. An interesting finding is that the enumeration structure of texts that proscribe algorithms involving different cases requires that readers possess competence in working with these texts in order to circulate through the algorithm. This is an indication that working with these texts was part of a long-term scholarly tradition. In the last chapter, Anne Robadey shows that Poincaré, in his early work on differential equations, uses the structure of his texts as a way tacitly to treat the degree of generality of particular cases.

Taken as a whole, *Texts, Textual Acts, and the History of Science* offers a number of novel and productive approaches to textual studies; these should be particularly valuable to historians working on the premodern sciences, for which textual sources significantly predominate over other types of evidence.

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A man poses for his portrait. Rather than striking a conventionally commanding, manly stance with legs apart, Edward, Lord Herbert (ca. 1582–1642), lies down. Reclining with his head resting on his clenched fist, he stretches his booted and spurred legs out to one side and lies with his sword and shield over him. The posture is an oddly uncomfortable one (I have tried it), as no part of his torso touches the floor—fortunate, then, that he is only posing for a miniature. The artist, Isaac Oliver (ca. 1565–1617), adds surroundings: not a richly draped interior, but a verdant woodland landscape. The setting may be peaceful, but the final image is hardly so. Herbert's pose, his serious, long gaze, his stiff upper body—all conjure up the spirit of melancholy. In the foreground, a river bank drops away sharply just inches from the subject's body, hinting at the fate awaiting those afflicted with mental turmoil.

Why did Herbert choose to be pictured as a melancholic? The simple answer is that, in this period, it was fashionable for English aristocrats to be so, wearing suits of solemn black or lying in shady retreat. That melancholy was seen as desirable and glamorous stemmed ultimately from the pseudo-Aristotelian Problems 30.1, which asked why artists, thinkers, and poets were so often affected by the disease of black bile. Marsilio Ficino elaborated this prompt into a full-blown neo-Platonic theory of melancholic genius, enabling the disorder to become a self-identifying marker of high status in the early modern period.

These new studies of melancholy by Matthew Bell and Stephanie Shirilan address why melancholy has been such an enduring and—for some—attractive condition. Bell's invigorating book has the more ambitious scope: it investigates the broad cultural, social, and medical contexts of the affliction from ancient Greece up to the end of the nineteenth century, covering topics including gender, nomenclature, geography, class, and nationality. Preferring the term "melancholia," as an indicator of the "European character of the disease" (p. xiii), Bell argues that the condition is fundamentally associated with a Western understanding of self-consciousness. It is not simply a product of Renaissance cultures of individualism, as
earlier scholars have posited, but a more far-reaching, deep-rooted feature of a Western culture of interiority. This position seems plausible, although, like other arguments of such broad scope, it is impossible to prove or disprove. Bell is alert to long-range developments in perceptions of melancholy and rigorous in questioning their relationship to real cases. He carefully plots the evolution of melancholia in antiquity. The pseudo-Aristotelian Problems, for instance, is considered in the context of the rest of the text (something that is rarely done), and Bell extends his discussion by questioning whether evidence from modern psychology points to a connection between mental disorders and creativity (pp. 152–156).

One of the most rewarding aspects of Bell’s study is its organization, not by chronology, but by “methodological questions about the nature of melancholia” (p. xi). Rather than a conventional history, then, he gives us a series of points of inquiry. This makes for both a stimulating and lively reading experience and a helpful guide to what is at stake in the history of melancholy. Bell is refreshingly unafraid to tackle difficult questions: Where are the boundaries between melancholy and other mental disorders, and when and how does melancholy merge into depression? Are there national varieties—is it, for instance, a distinctively English affliction? (Bell is wary of narrow cultural biases.) How do artistic representations relate to medical data on poor mental health? In later chapters, his breadth of scope can tend toward a rapid accumulation of examples: the brief mentions of Cassius in Julius Caesar (pp. 141–142) and of T. S. Eliot’s The Waste Land (pp. 177–178) feel a little unsatisfying, even if they help to demonstrate how “the cognitive contents of melancholia have fed into literary practice and programmatic aesthetic utterances” (p. 161). I would have preferred fewer, more probing case studies: expansions of his suggestive remarks on Goethe and Schiller, for instance.

Bell is conscious of the restrictions imposed by a relatively short, general work and acknowledges that his study synthesizes earlier scholarship. Yet Melancholia: The Western Malady makes a significant intervention into the study of melancholy. The author’s interdisciplinary approach is assured, his attention to modern psychiatric theories and historical models equally meticulous. Melancholia, he argues, is distinctive among the four humors because it can “act transitively” (p. 163). This concise, crisply argued book is one of the best studies yet of the varied actions that melancholia can perform.

How does researching melancholy affect the student? Stephanie Shirilan was once cautioned by a senior colleague that The Anatomy of Melancholy, by the Oxford scholar Robert Burton (1577–1640), was a “black hole.” Is this because researchers of Burton disappear into “certain publishing doom and academic failure,” she candidly wonders? (Her own career disproves this.) Perhaps Burtonian vanishing syndrome is “a Circean lure of rhetorical pleasures that threaten to engulf scholarly objectives and turn them into something else” (p. 180). Shirilan has her own enjoyably Burtonian moments, such as when she considers Burton’s literary exploration of one of the mysteries of the world, where birds go in winter: “In winter not a bird is in Muscovy to bee found, but at the spring in an instant the woods and hedges are full of them, saith Herbastein. How comes it to passe? Doe they sleepe in winter, like Gesners Alpine mice, or doe they ly hid (as Olaus affirmes) in the bottome of lakes and rivers, spiritum continentes? often so found by Fishermen in Polan & Scandia, two together, mouth to mouth, wing to wing, & when the spring comes they revive againe, or if they be brought into a stove, or to the fire side” (Robert Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy, ed. Thomas C. Faulkner et al., 6 vols. [Oxford: Clarendon, 1989–2000], Vol. 2, pp. 36–37). Lest we may be inclined to dismiss these stories as mere exotica, Shirilan’s footnote tells us that, in the twentieth century, ornithologists proved that some waterfowl do indeed enter torpid states during the winter (and she provides references to three journal articles). As in Burton’s book, where one allusion always leads to another, Shirilan gives us a wealth of supporting material. I, for one, feel better for being pointed toward an article on “Field Observation of Torpidity in the Violet-Green Swallow.”

Indeed, the example crystallizes Shirilan’s contribution to scholarship on The Anatomy of Melancholy. Her contention is that Burton’s book is not only therapeutic in intent (which has long been recognized) but transformative through the entertainment he provides. His “ludic performance” aims to “restore or recreate the reader’s—and his own—melancholic spirits and, at the same time, to alter the reader’s understanding of melancholy altogether” (p. 11). Her reading highlights the affective dimension of melancholic
experience, which she finds inscribed within the text. She perceives Burton’s conceit of the frozen birds breathed back into life as an “almost emblematic figure for the experience of melancholic torpor and reanimation” (p. 141). Melancholics withdraw to dark and hidden places but can find restoration through imaginative “inspiration.”

Another important emphasis of Shirilan’s argument is that the Anatomy induces health-giving wonder—the fascination with the marvels of nature, among other things—through Burton’s rhetorical mode, which appeals to the powers of the imagination: hence the “How comes it to passe?” questions he articulates and explores. Countering the reading of the Anatomy as an anxious book—as postulated by critics who set much store by humoralist theory—Shirilan instead finds a positive copiosity in the work, a generosity of spirit at odds with Puritanism and neo-Stoicism. Robert Burton and the Transformative Powers of Melancholy fits well into the growing body of work on the history of emotions, while her stress on Burton’s irrationality is an enlivening change from those interpretations that prioritize the persuasive force of logical argument.

Shirilan’s bold and original readings of the Anatomy occasionally tend toward the speculative. When, in his analysis of “Love Melancholy,” Burton recounts stories of palm trees that fall in love and grow toward their beloved, Shirilan finds a symbolic linkage to “the bowing palm associated with Christ’s entry into Jerusalem” (p. 174). But there is nothing in the passage to suggest such a connection. A more substantial undergirding of her argument could sometimes enhance it. For example, she rightly draws attention to the “character of rhetorical performance” (p. 114) in the text, arguing for the Anatomy’s “sonic power” (p. 104). But she could do more with the orality of Burton’s text and his world. She is perplexed by Burton’s allusion to a sermon by his Christ Church colleague John Howson, since the sermon was never printed (p. 118), but does not consider the possibility that he heard it. Burton the melancholic was not simply a man of books.

Shirilan’s and Bell’s are both highly useful studies, thoughtfully laid out to aid the reader. Along with extensive bibliographies and subject indexes, they both use subheadings effectively to highlight the topics of sections (it is only a pity that these headings are not listed in the contents page, which would make them even better as a guide to navigation). Both critics respond sensitively to the texts they encounter and are alert to the nature of melancholy as simultaneously alluring self-definition and a deeply felt, serious affliction. If melancholy the disease is nearly extinct, its study remains in good health.

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Brian P. Copenhaver. Magic in Western Culture: From Antiquity to the Enlightenment. xiv + 600 pp., illus., bibl., index. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. $125 (cloth).

Magic in Western Culture is the culmination of nearly half a century of research on the magical and occult tradition in Europe. As such, it draws heavily on the author’s earlier research, as well as on an impressive knowledge of the relevant literature. (The bibliography counts more than fifty pages.) The central question is formulated in the preface (p. xiii): “Why did European intellectuals—philosophers especially—repudiate magic in the Enlightenment, after having previously accepted it for more than two millennia?” As such, the book is part of a rather new field of research. In the past, the repudiation of arts like magic, astrology, and alchemy was seen as a direct and natural consequence of the “rise of modern science,” but such explanations are no longer deemed acceptable. Studies such as this one are therefore very welcome.

Before addressing his main question, Brian Copenhaver considers the question of what, exactly, one should understand by “magic.” He approaches this problem via the work of J. G. Frazer (in the first chap-