

EPICUREA

V

Michael Erler, Jan Erik Heßler,
Federico M. Petrucci (eds.)

Authority and Authoritative Texts in the Epicurean Tradition

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Epicurea

Michael Erler und Jan Erik Heßler (Hg.)

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Edoardo Tortarolo, Vercelli

**Michael Erler, Jan Erik Heßler,
Federico M. Petrucci (eds.)**

With the collaboration of Michael McOske

Authority and Authoritative Texts in the Epicurean Tradition

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Preface

This volume has its roots in a conference held at the Institut für Klassische Philologie of the University of Würzburg in February 2017, which was generously funded by the Thyssen Stiftung and the University's Faculty of Philosophy. Some of the papers given at that conference were selected as the core of the present volume, while others were added later upon invitation. A twin volume, *Authority and Authoritative Texts in the Platonist Tradition*, with the same editors and stemming from the same conference, was published recently (Erler/Heßler/Petrucci 2021).

As editors, we wanted different kinds of scholarship with different approaches to be represented, and we especially sought to juxtapose papers by younger researchers with ones by more experienced scholars. For his expert proofreading and various help with linguistic matters, we would like to thank Michael McOsker warmly.

This volume has had a long history from our first conversations about the topic to the completion of the manuscript. We had to overcome several delays due to various reasons, not least COVID and its consequences. The editors would like to thank all contributors for their patience and Verlag Schwabe for publishing this volume as part of the *Epicurea* series. The support of Schwabe, especially of Christian Barth and Ruth Vachek, has been fundamental for the realisation of this volume.

Introduction

Michael Erler, Jan Erik Heßler, Federico M. Petrucci

... Epicureanism was primarily a cult of the founder and his way of life and only secondarily a system of thought.
(Norman DeWitt)

1. Preliminary Remarks

Statements like the one cited above from DeWitt (1936) as well as similar ones in ancient authors have shaped the view of the school of Epicurus for a long time: Epicurus has been seen as the sole authoritative figure for the school he founded in 306 BC, and all his disciples regarded his every word—even information about his way of life—as extremely authoritative, almost holy. Epicurus' philosophy, as recorded in these writings, would enable them to achieve salvation.

It is noteworthy that the related issue of authority in ancient thought has received increasing attention in recent years (see e.g. Ceulemans/De Leemans 2015; Asper et al. 2016; Boodts/Leemans/Meijns 2016; König/Woolf 2017; Bryan/Wardy/Warren 2018; Gielen/Papy 2020; and Dabiri 2021). Recently, the editors of this volume have explored the issue in a volume dealing with the Platonist tradition (Erler/Heßler/Petrucci 2021). The starting point for both volumes and the related conference mentioned in the Preface was a paper by Michael Erler (see now Erler 2018) which dealt with fundamental aspects of the relationship between philosophy and *auctoritas*, a term and concept with no direct equivalent in Ancient Greek (D.C. LV.3.5).

The Epicurean tradition has attracted a good deal of attention in recent years, but nonetheless no diachronic monograph or volume of collected papers specifically focuses on the fundamental issue of authority within the Epicurean tradition and explores its implications and impact. This is, therefore, the first volume entirely devoted to the topic; it is located within the lively debates about the Epicurean school as well as the general issue of authority. Hopefully, it will fill a gap in current scholarship. The remaining pages of this introduction will provide an outline of the state of research and a summary of the 12 chapters in this volume.

2. State of Research I: Epicurus and His Followers

The Epicurean tradition started in 306 BC when Epicurus founded a new philosophical school, known as the *Kēpos* (i.e. Garden), in Athens. It differs from the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions in many ways, particularly in the fact that the school-founder's texts are only partially extant, mostly in fragments—a situation comparable to that of the earlier Stoa. In contrast, at least three of Epicurus' texts are completely preserved, i.e. the three doctrinal letters to Menoeceus, Herodotus, and Pythocles. In addition, we have larger passages of Epicurus' *magnum opus On Nature* and two collections of sayings, one complete (*Principal Doctrines*) and one probably compiled out of miscellaneous excerpts (*Gnomologium Vaticanum*). A unique feature of Epicurus' school is that new texts are still published on a regular basis, many of them for the first time. Their source is the so-called Villa dei Papiri in Herculaneum, where very many carbonized papyri containing texts by prominent Epicureans were found. A major part of the collection consists of the writings of Philodemus of Gadara, who was probably the owner of the library, but Epicurus' *On Nature*, and other texts, e.g. by Polyaeus and Demetrius LaCo, were also preserved. These texts have earned ever greater recognition from the 1970s onward through the publications of the *Centro Internazionale per lo Studio dei Papiri Ercolanesi* in Naples including the journal *Cronache Ercolanesi* (featuring interpretative studies and editions) and the series *La Scuola di Epicuro* (providing editions with commentaries and translations). In addition, we have the fragments of a major inscription from Oenoanda: in this town in Lycia, Diogenes, a wealthy citizen in the 2nd century AD, wanted to heal his fellow citizens through Epicurean philosophy and erected a monumental stone inscription—the largest known from Greco-Roman antiquity—containing his own writings on ethics and physics as well as excerpts from Epicurus. Lastly, there are texts preserved on non-Herculanean papyri (mostly from Egypt) in larger collections that are published on a regular basis (e.g. the Oxyrhynchus Papyri). As this list shows, the number of texts either newly edited or made available in more reliable editions has been increasing steadily over the last 40 years. Examples are Obbink 1996; Janko 2000/2003², 2010, 2020; Leone 2012; and recently Nicolardi 2018; D'Angelo 2022; Fleischer 2023. Ongoing tests of new imaging methods (e.g. Reflectance Transformation Imaging and X-Ray Tomography, besides the already successfully implemented Infrared Imaging) promise further advances in the coming years (Fleischer 2022).

As one might guess, the special circumstances of this rapidly changing field have consequences for researchers: There are the complicated fragments in the still authoritative older editions of Arrighetti (1973²) and Usener (1887) and related studies. Simultaneously, scholars have to keep track of the continuously increasing number of new texts that not only vary the numeration or order of fragments, but often significantly change our understanding of parts of Epicure-

an philosophy. Not long ago, even the most central writings did not have recent commentaries, a gap that has been closed by Heßler (2014), Verde (2010a; 2022a), and Erbi (2020). Equally remarkable is the fact that until recently several fundamental issues had received no or only marginal treatment. The first comprehensive overview of the entire school of Epicurus and its core issues was published by Erler in 1994, now complemented and upgraded by the recent interpretations in the companions of Warren (2009), Fish/Sanders (2011), and Mitsis (2020a).

The literature dealing with specific issues of Epicurean teachings is continually increasing (e.g. Warren 2002a; 2004; Tsouna 2007a; Verde 2013a; De Sanctis/Spinelli/Tulli/Verde 2015; Masi/Maso 2015; Bakker 2016; Erler 2020; Aoiz/Boeri 2023), as well as on the school community (Capasso 1987; Roskam 2007a; Beretta/Iannucci/Citti 2014), and the sources that Epicurean authors used (Sedley 1998; Montarese 2012). A comprehensive overview of Epicurus and his successors' literary strategies is still not available, although several aspects are analysed by Milanese (1989), Obbink (1995a), Hammerstaedt/Morel/Güremen (2017), McOsker (2021), and Damiani (2021). In the 21st century especially, volumes on the reception of Epicureanism in antiquity (Erler 2000; Long 2006; Fleischer 2016; Longo/Taormina 2016a; Yona/Davis 2022) and modernity (Gordon/Suits 2004; Wilson 2008; Holmes/Shearin 2012) have been published.

3. State of Research II: Authority, Orthodoxy, and Related Issues

As we can see, research on the Epicurean tradition has been very popular over the last decades, and the constantly increasing textual basis provides new insights into certain elements of Epicurean philosophy. One problematic aspect of these interpretative studies, however, has scarcely been addressed: especially in more general studies, but also in commentaries on specific passages, the statements of later Epicureans are treated as completely dependable sources for the teachings of Epicurus himself. This approach is based on the traditional assumption that the school of Epicurus was a homogeneous unity that did not develop or innovate (see e.g. Capasso 1987). Researchers justify this assumption by references to ancient testimonies like Seneca's "With them ... whatever Hermarchus says, or Metrodorus, is ascribed to one source", that is, Epicurus (Sen. *epist.* IV.33.4: *apud istos quicquid Hermarchus dixit, quicquid Metrodorus, ad unum refertur*, transl. Gummere; Clay 1983a; 2009). The homogeneity and unchangeability of the master's doctrines asserted in texts like these has been interpreted literally, as an Epicurean form of orthodoxy, in line with the fact that Epicurus had been venerated like a god (cf. Epic. *Ep. Men.* 135.2). Already during the founder's lifetime, the members of the community called each other

“godlike” (ισόθεος), and after his death Epicurus was worshipped (Clay 1986; recently Heßler 2018a). To preserve the words of their deceased divine saviour, the Epicureans collected his writings and did not allow any modifications to his doctrines. So much for the traditional view.

Over the last decades, researchers have noticed that Philodemus (1st century BC) made remarkable concessions to the Roman public and modified the teachings of Epicurus (Erler 1992). Simultaneously—in contrast to other Epicureans—Philodemus is convinced that he is the only one who strictly follows the texts and guidelines of the masters, i.e. that he is an “orthodox” Epicurean (Sedley 1989). It has been widely accepted that over the course of time new elements were integrated into Epicurean doctrine. But this has not prevented scholars from using the writings of Epicurus, Philodemus, Lucretius, and others as if they were all the same philosopher. Furthermore, to resolve philosophical or even editorial problems, *comparanda* from later Epicureans are almost always deployed to explain passages of Epicurus. As Demetrius Laco’s treatise (2nd century BC) on textual criticism shows, this issue already created difficulties in antiquity for interpreters of Epicurus’ texts. This is the framework for the crucial questions that still await answers: what elements constitute Epicurean authority and orthodoxy? Which guidelines and methods had to be respected within the school to preserve the master’s *auctoritas*? What role do the texts of the first Epicureans play in an “orthodox” school? Does the school’s attitude towards the master and his authoritative texts change over the course of the centuries, and if so, how? These are the basic problems that are addressed in this volume on the Epicurean tradition.

4. Epicurean *auctoritas* from the End of the 4th Century BC to the 2nd Century BC

As for Epicurus’ authority and the alleged orthodoxy of his followers, already in the first generation of the school (from 306 BC on, within Epicurus’ lifetime) we can identify astonishing developments: the authoritative text *par excellence*, fundamental for any philosophical activity in the *Kēpos*, is Epicurus’ *On Nature*. But we can see even this text was by no means set in stone. Several passages in it and Epicurus’ letters show that he modifies philosophical terms and concepts over the course of time in discussions with his disciples. Furthermore, he grants them liberties that are apparently incompatible with his doctrines, and thus we are confronted with evidence of a conception of authority that has not been adequately acknowledged and requires further analysis.

According to Philodemus, deviations from the master’s doctrine occurred only after his death, but a thorough analysis of the texts mentioned above shows that this phenomenon can also be found before then. Furthermore, a reappraisal

of Philodemus' reports about contemporary "dissidents" and "orthodox" Epicureans shows that his classification is purely subjective and that the different parties claim that they strictly follow the founder's authoritative texts. Philodemus indicates that, in his explanations of various topics in Epicurean philosophy, he develops his own methods and interpretations even though he constantly refers to the authority of the master and his texts.

Philodemus was not the only Epicurean active in the Roman empire in the first century BC; Lucretius, the author of the earliest extant didactic poem in Latin, plays an important role. Philodemus had already modified Epicurus' teachings to introduce them to the Roman public. Lucretius does so, too, and uses a literary form that technically contradicts the master's principles. But like Philodemus, he constantly emphasizes the authority and the healing power of the master whom he even declares his god (Lucr. V.8: *deus ille fuit, deus*).

A few years later, Cicero—who often is regarded as the editor of Lucretius' poem (Hier. *chron.* p. 149 Helm)—reports on the religious character of the Epicurean school and the cult of the master and his authoritative texts, which he criticizes heavily in several writings.

In the Imperial period, as we already have seen, Seneca highlights the obedience of the Epicureans to the founder and their mental gridlock. Representations like these can also be found in Plutarch, who polemicizes against Colotes. In so doing, he became an important source for Epicurus' teachings as well as for the (alleged) orthodoxy and cultic worship of his followers, as were Nume-nius and Diogenes Laertius. So as these examples have shown, their critics claim that Epicureans were rigid dogmatists under the spell of their godlike master from the start until Late Antiquity—but is this really true?

This volume sheds new light not only on that specific, fundamental issue in the history of Epicureanism, but also on the more general question of Epicurus' authority. His authority is not only worthy of enquiry in itself, but it also represents a privileged access-point to a new understanding of his followers' self-perception, their engagement with his texts, and their appropriation of or polemics against other philosophies and authorities. Lastly, the contributions in this volume provide a reappraisal of the traditional account of Epicurean orthodoxy that has been repeated since antiquity. As many examples can show, Epicurus himself and consequently his followers were much more flexible in their thought, literary strategies, and even the idea of a "true Epicureanism" than has been hitherto assumed by many.

5. Content of the Volume

Brief descriptions of the chapters should show how this volume aims at providing both comprehensive and specific treatments of all these fundamental issues. As regards the general approach, we would like to cite Ceulemans/De Leemans' remarks from the introduction of their *On Good Authority* (2015, 11): "It is not the volume's aim to approach these subjects from a theoretical point of view or to offer definitions of authority or of the different literary genres dealt with. It rather presents and discusses case studies from different periods of time and different provenance".

The starting point is formed by two contributions dedicated to the phenomenon of Epicurean orthodoxy from inside (Jan Erik Heßler) and outside (Vincenzo Damiani). Both articles have a diachronic approach to Epicurus' texts, his followers, and his opponents. Together with this introduction on the *status quaestionis*, they provide the framework for the following contributions.

Jan Erik Heßler collects and analyses the testimonia to controversies between Epicurus and his disciples, to dissidents, and to the research interests of prominent Epicureans, especially of the first generation. These sources raise many doubts about the (allegedly) monolithic beliefs of Epicurus and the irrevocable validity of his maxims: Epicurus permitted disciples to become active in politics (Idomeneus) and to deal with fields of research he disapproves of in his writings (e.g. mathematics in the case of Polyaenus). These observations lead us to Philodemus in the 1st century BC whose texts, when examined thoroughly, cast strong doubts on the orthodoxy of his positions. On one hand, he claims that he always follows the authoritative texts of the venerated master, but there are other Epicureans who advocate opinions completely opposite to Philodemus'. So, whom can we really call an "orthodox Epicurean"? On the other hand, Philodemus turns out to be quite flexible in dealing with Epicurean texts and teachings. So, when can we call an Epicurean flexible? As he shows, this flexibility and the starting points for these developments already form part of the texts of Epicurus. At the end of his article, Heßler shows which guidelines followers of Epicurus have to observe so as not to abandon the school's opinion. This chapter has been described extensively, because the conclusions made here provide an important background for the following articles.

In his article treating the *Kēpos* diachronically from the outside, Vincenzo Damiani deals with neutral and not so neutral statements by non-Epicurean authors about Epicurean teachings and the community's way of life. Searching for the true core of Epicurean belief in authority, he systemizes and assesses texts from such different authors as Arcesilaus, Cicero, Seneca, Diogenes Laertius, and Numenius, and establishes a link between the historical fact of a religious cult dedicated to Epicurus and the biased accusation of inflexible doctrinal allegiance this practice provokes in external observers. In the end, he is able to differentiate

between four types of doctrinal orthodoxy present in the descriptions of the school.

Subsequently to this *tour d'horizon*, the next three articles analyse specific texts of the master himself:

Dino De Sanctis provides an overview of the many genres and forms Epicurus uses to emphasise his authority and studies his philosophical method in specific types of texts. To this end, De Sanctis draws on a fragmentary treatise, otherwise rarely treated, namely Epicurus' *Symposium*, and shows why mimetic-dialogical literature of this sort is especially suitable for emulating the master through observational learning. Especially important is the fact that Epicurus himself is directly present in the dialogue and is a participant of the discussion. He chooses this strategy in order to appear personally in a mimetic framework as the influential authority he is within the school community. De Sanctis then assesses the relationship of Epicurus' *Protrepticus* to Aristotle's homonymous work and to other of Epicurus' protreptic writings, i.e. the *Letter to Menoeceus*, the exhortative appeals in the *Gnomologium Vaticanum*, and the writings of other early Epicureans, to show how protreptic helps Epicurus invigorate his authoritative position and doctrines. Lastly, De Sanctis briefly examines Philodemus' *On the Good King according to Homer*, a writing (primarily) about politics and poetics, and discusses both its relationship to the founder's authoritative treatise *On Kingship* as well as Zeno's influence on Philodemus (see also Tiziano Dorandi's chapter).

Margherita Erbi analyses Epicurus' fragmentary letters. Because his letters were probably the most important medium of communication within the school and were considered the words of the saviour and ideal philosopher, they were passed on, preserved, and collected within the Epicurean circle. In this widely dispersed community, they served as a surrogate for personal dialogue, and consequently are called *διαλογισμοί*. Erbi shows how Epicurus combines the notion of authority, didactic elements, and the personal relationship to his disciples in his letters: included in the discussion are aspects like the overall protreptic strategy and its resulting methodological specifications for achieving a happy life, indications about Epicurus' self-image as an absolute authority, and references to how his followers edited, excerpted, and cited the master's letters as well as their use in commemorative, biographical writings. While dealing with these issues, Erbi also discusses how and with which effects Epicurus is depicted as an authoritative example in disposition, behaviour, and actions from the sphere of politics to the framework of cult in the writings of Philodemus and other Herculanum Papyri.

Giuliana Leone treats the essential authoritative text of the *Kēpos*, Epicurus' *magnum opus* *On Nature*. In Epicurus' doctrine, the science of nature ranks first—a fact he emphasizes in the letters to Herodotus and Pythocles which summarize topics featured in *On Nature*. In this treatise's 37 books, Epicurus ex-

plains the phenomena of nature at length and—just as important—how they relate to people's lives. *On Nature's* textual history is especially interesting, since most of the passages available today are preserved in the carbonized papyri from Herculaneum. Leone outlines this situation as well as the overall history of the treatise in Greece and Rome, from Epicurus' lifetime through the late Imperial period. While doing so, she also addresses the discussions, debates, and communal research (συζήτησις) within the school that are hinted at in the papyri. A final aspect treated in this article are the citations, mentions, and reception of *On Nature* in the writings of Philodemus and other authors in the Herculaneum papyri, i.e. questions related to philological activities like textual criticism, writing commentaries, and interpretative treatises.

Philological issues are also a major part of Michael McOsker's contribution. He analyses the extant writings of Demetrius Laco, who was an Epicurean of the 2nd century BC and an important witness for the way in which the Epicureans dealt with the texts of their master. By setting Demetrius' works alongside Philodemus' statements on the philological and exegetical practice of the school, McOsker reviews what has been called *philologia medicans*, which is used in service of *philosophia medicans*, Epicurus' healing philosophy. With profound knowledge of Alexandrian philology, but also of literature, Demetrius makes textual-critical judgments about problems in the authoritative texts of the master and thus tries to conserve his teachings, which provide the only path to happiness. McOsker shows, with the example of Demetrius' procedure on the question of whether parents do or do not "naturally" (φύσει) love their children, how the Epicurean philologist operates: in this case, as he intervenes in the text and argues against Stoic doctrine, he succeeds in preserving Epicurus' authoritative original position as well as a genuine Epicurean methodology and is even able, it seems, to make the master's own formulation more understandable. So, Demetrius offers his own interpretations and arguments to demonstrate that and why Epicurus was always right. From the outset, his philological work serves the purpose of re-establishing and emphasising the authority of the master.

Demetrius Laco is also treated in Francesco Verde's chapter, which deals with potential innovations in the Epicurean school in the field of natural science, an area that is generally regarded as especially resistant to change because of its crucial importance for Epicurus' soteriology. As examples, Verde analyses Demetrius' statements about the size of the sun and the mathematical teachings of Philonides. While discussing Demetrius Laco, he adduces passages from Epicurus, Philodemus, and Cleomedes' *Caelestia*. He shows that while Demetrius' statements seem *prima facie* rather different from what Epicurus says in his *Letter to Pythocles*, they are indeed compatible with it. In the end, Verde states that Demetrius uses "faithful innovation" to defend the founder of the school, in this case against the Stoics. In this sense, the evidence for Demetrius' work on the field of natural science is very much compatible with his approach to ethics and

philology, as described in McOsker's contribution. Philonides, on one hand, is well known for editing a collection of Epicurus' letters, which contain his authoritative teachings. On the other hand, his engagement in mathematics is remarkable, because Epicurus seems to rate this discipline very negatively. So, the question is, are Philonides' activities in science suitable for a guardian of the Epicurean legacy? Using the *Life of Philonides*, probably written by Philodemus, Verde looks into potential innovation on the field of meteorology. An interesting point is that Philonides discussed geometry, astrology, and meteorology simultaneously. This should be another indication of the Epicureans' endeavours to develop doctrinal details while preserving their irrefutable truth. Against this background, Verde inquires into Philonides' interpretation of the minimal parts (ἐλάχιστα) and of the size of the sun.

Previous contributions have used the writings of Philodemus as a source for the literary activities and teachings of the Epicurean school in passing, but in a chapter dedicated exclusively to Philodemus, Tiziano Dorandi deals with his relationship to Zeno of Sidon, a friend of Demetrius Laco and a figure of great importance for the history of the *Kēpos*, not least in his role of head of the school in Athens and Philodemus' teacher. Philodemus constantly refers to Zeno as an important source for his own "orthodox" doctrine. Dorandi analyses the reasons that caused Philodemus to relocate to Italy—an important factor in the transmission of Epicurean teachings to Rome. As he shows, it is very probable that Philodemus left Athens because Phaedruss succeeded the venerated Zeno as scholarch, but he, according to Philodemus, was obviously not the right candidate to guarantee continuity of doctrine. So, Dorandi's contribution deals with issues of authority in two ways: (1) Philodemus' allegiance to his teacher and (2) his allegiance to the founder of the school who in his view is represented correctly only in Zeno's teachings. Against this background and with several examples from Philodemus' writings, he discusses the issues of "originality" and "orthodoxy" in the last part of his contribution.

With Philodemus' relocation to Campania, we have arrived in Italy. In his new environment, Philodemus was active in Herculaneum and influenced many Roman authors, not least because he adapted the teachings of Epicurus to the Roman market. In the contributions up to this point, we have seen that Philodemus continuously insists on his orthodox stand while admitting argumentative and methodological innovations. This seems to be the case on the field of poetry, too, which is of importance for the next article:

Michael Erler approaches Lucretius, probably the best-known Roman Epicurean. First, he treats the question of how far the literary form of the didactic poem *On the Nature of Things* is compatible with the teachings of Epicurus, who is not only an authority for Lucretius, but even a god (see above). An especially interesting part of his poetry are the literary strategies that he learned in his rhetorical training, that is, from a discipline supposedly largely rejected by Epicurus.

To demonstrate how Lucretius acted as an innovative author, Erler analyses how the poet uses the technique of description (ἐκφρασις) known from the rhetorical schools to teach Roman readers about Epicurean epistemology with the help of a new approach, visualization. In this way, he succeeds in presenting evidence and poetic imagery as equally authoritative and capable of conveying true knowledge. Erler shows how Lucretius uses the concept of clarity (ἐνάργεια) to provide “ekphrastic therapy” in that the images evoked can be used to evaluate and regulate emotions and actions. This Epicurean *interpretatio medicans* is explained using related text passages from Philodemus’ ethical writings.

Another new approach, which also comes from the field of rhetoric, is pursued by David Konstan. Initially, he discusses Aristotle’s recommendation in the *Rhetoric* (I.15) that speakers in court should refer to authorities, including Homer, to increase their credibility. Subsequently, he presents the methods put forward in Plutarch’s *How a Youth Should Listen to Poems* for challenging and criticizing highly esteemed authorities like poets and their characters. Lastly, Konstan explains how Plutarch uses these techniques to draw even on Epicurus as an authority to polemicize against Colotes—a surprising fact in view of Plutarch’s anti-Epicurean stance.

The anti-Epicurean writings just mentioned are taken into account by Marion Schneider who suggests a new perspective: at first glance, Plutarch criticizes both the whole Epicurean school for being a misguided sect that strictly observes orthodox principles and Colotes for deviating from that authoritative doctrine. A thorough analysis shows that (1) the traditional anti-Epicurean polemics known from the Academic tradition are an important reason for Plutarch’s criticism, and (2) that in other writings Plutarch displays a more positive attitude towards the Epicureans, specifically because of their loyalty towards the master. According to Plutarch, the latter is a quality that Colotes is lacking, as can be seen in his criticism of Democritus, and therefore he is reprehensible. So, Plutarch’s multifaceted account of Epicurean orthodoxy and his stance on the issue depend to a high degree on the literary genre Plutarch is working in and represent more than simple polemic.

To conclude the volume, Jürgen Hammerstaedt treats Diogenes of Oenoanda, the last Epicurean of whom we have large portions of text. Diogenes, a wealthy inhabitant of Oenoanda in Lycia in the 2nd century AD put up a monumental inscription with a variety of Epicurean texts to publicise their healing effect to his fellow citizens. As expected, he refers to Epicurus as his authority and publishes several texts by the school founder, some of which are only preserved here. Methodologically, too, he goes back to Epicurus’ literary practices (epitome, letter, maxim, protreptic) and “true politics”. However, besides traditional Epicurean teaching, he presents ideas that might not have been present in the texts of the master, i.e. on old age, the significance of dreams and divination, and the concern for all inhabitants of the world. Hammerstaedt discusses *inter alia* Dio-

genes' "Golden Age" fragment and Epicurus' *Letter to his Mother* (Diog. Oen. *Frr.* 125–6 Smith) and shows how he succeeds in treating new topics and at the same time respecting the master's guidelines regarding literary form and argumentative approach.

6. Reassessing Epicurean Authority

As this diachronic walkthrough shows, the Epicurean school was quite different from rival schools. Most remarkable are the facts that Epicurus is venerated as a god (much more than Plato and others, and even in his own lifetime), that his words were regarded as holy (like Pythagoras', but recorded in writing), and that he was worshipped in a cult (more vigorously than Empedocles who called himself "immortal"). But paradoxically, he was simultaneously the founder and leader of a school in which he was also a very approachable teacher and—although he had the final say—open to discussion and quite flexible. All this continued to have an effect in the 1st century BC, when a self-declared orthodox Epicurean left Athens, because an allegedly non-orthodox Epicurean became scholarch of the Garden. The godlike founder and saviour was still the authoritative point of reference in the 2nd century AD, when a wealthy Lycian erected an enormous protreptic inscription to propagate Epicurus' true politics for therapeutic purposes—an enterprise hardly imaginable for a follower of Academy, Peripatos or Stoa.

In all of this, loyalty towards the master's authority does not necessarily entail rigidity, hostility toward innovation, or blind obedience. Rather, it results in genuine admiration and endeavouring to preserve Epicurus' exceptional position which was put into practice in very different ways (prose/poetry, rhetoric, commentaries, anthologies, etc.), thematic areas (physics, mathematics, ethics, canonic, etc.), places of activity (Greece, Italy, Asia Minor), and media (letter, treatise, didactic poem, inscription, etc.). All these facets, together with the interference caused by "dissidents" and "apostates", result in a variety that is not tarnished by over-scrupulous dogmatism. On the contrary: it is exciting to see how different agents try—for the most part successfully—to reconcile their creativity and intellectual capacity with praise and loyalty towards the master. The contributions in this volume present a panorama of this phenomenon in its miscellaneous manifestations.

If the later Epicureans always acted "as if Epicurus were watching" (Sen. *epist.* III.25.5), then they did so with the attitude that the master himself described to Idomeneus: an "affection towards me and my philosophy" (Epic. *Fr.* 138 Usener = *Fr.* 52 Arrighetti² = Idom. *Fr.* 3 Angeli = D.L. X.22)—everything else was already negotiable at least to a certain degree during Epicurus' lifetime. Therefore, it is one of the great accomplishments of the Epicureans that

still today they are regarded as probably the most homogeneous philosophical community of all antiquity.

Orthodox Enhancement vs. Orthodox Misconception: Epicurean Allegiance from the Inside Perspective

Jan Erik Heßler

Here in the first chapter, I would like to make a few general remarks about how Epicurus' followers in his school, the *Kēpos*, tried to reconcile the authority of the master (invoked by reference to the canonical texts) and the development of their own thoughts. Before specific topics and authors are treated in the other chapters, I would like to provide an overview of the authority-related phenomena that occurred over the course of the school's history. As mentioned in the introduction, researchers in the past assumed that the Epicureans, in treating philosophical issues, followed the texts of the founders in strict obedience and that no other opinions were permitted.¹ This assessment has been quite persistent and can be found in recent literature,² where scholars refer to statements like Seneca's: "With them ... whatever Hermarchus says, or Metrodorus, is ascribed to one source"³ or Numenius' "the Epicurean school is like a true republic, completely free of political friction, a single mind shared by all, a single policy".⁴ Consequently, many scholars, when reconstructing the teachings of Epicurus himself, are happy to resort to the writings of his followers with few concerns, because later Epicureans are supposed to have continued philosophizing in strict accordance to the guidelines of the founder. This assumption of strict orthodoxy fundamentally results from the school's cult towards the founder, which I would like to describe shortly because of its consequences for the exegesis of Epicurus.

1 Arrighetti 1973², 673, 678, and 703; Schmid 1984, 113.

2 Roskam 2007a, 42. 52. 93 etc.; Fish 2011, 86; Bakker 2016, 266.

3 Sen. *epist.* IV.33.4: *apud istos quicquid Hermarchus dixit, quicquid Metrodorus, ad unum refertur*. Trans. Gummere.

4 Numen. *Fr.* 24 Des Places = Eus. *PE* XIV.5.4: *ἔοικέ τε ἡ Ἐπικούρου διατριβὴ πολιτεία τινὶ ἀληθεῖ, ἀσταςιαστοτάτῃ, κοινὸν ἓνα νοῦν, μίαν γνώμην ἔχούσῃ*. Trans. Boys Stones; also see the contribution of Vincenzo Damiani in this volume.

1. Godlike Epicurus and his Texts

In the writings of Epicurus, the ideal Epicurean sage is clearly distinguished from the masses, the πολλοί. By strictly following Epicurus' guidelines, the wise man can live like a god among humans, as promised at the end of the *Letter to Menoeceus*:⁵

Meditate therefore on these things and things akin to them night and day by yourself, and with a companion like to yourself, and never shall you be disturbed waking or asleep, but you shall live like a god among men. For a man who lives among immortal blessings is not like to a mortal being.

Followers of the *Kēpos* can reach this state of wisdom themselves and live in *ataraxiā*, imperturbability, i.e. freedom from pain, including bodily pain. Epicurus himself is assumed to have maintained this condition of pleasure even when facing his own death, as we see in his *Letter to Idomeneus* a.k.a the *Letter of the Last Days*:⁶

When I spent the happy and, at the same time, last day of my life, I wrote this letter to you: the pain I feel in my bladder and my intestines could not be more severe. All that was outweighed, however, by the joy I felt in my soul at the remembrance of the conversations we had had in the past.

Epicurus lived his own life according to his principles, and this is why he was worshipped like a god already during his own lifetime. In his will, he not only provided for several disciples and their descendants, but also established commemorative ceremonies to honour himself, his family, and selected philosophers of the first generation of the *Kēpos*.⁷ The Epicureans came together on special holidays to enjoy communal meals and remember the deceased members of the community—a practice which thus formed part of the landscape of the numerous cultic associations of Athens in the Hellenistic period.⁸ As we have seen in

5 Epic. *Ep. Men.* 135.2–3: ταῦτα οὖν καὶ τὰ τούτοις συγγενῇ μελέτα πρὸς σεαυτὸν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς πρὸς <τε> τὸν ὅμοιον σεαυτῷ, καὶ οὐδέποτε οὐθ' ὕπαρ οὐθ' ὄναρ διαταραχθήσῃ. ζήσῃ δὲ ὡς θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποις. οὐθὲν γὰρ ἔοικε θνητῷ ζῶντι ἄνθρωπος ἐν ἀθανάτοις ἀγαθοῖς. Trans. Bailey. The following introduction is closely oriented on my remarks in Heßler 2018b, 158–61.

6 Epic. *Ep. Idom.* = D.L. X.22 = Epic. *Fr.* 52 Arrighetti² = *Fr.* 138 Usener = *Idom. Fr.* 23 Angeli: τὴν μακαρίαν ἀγοντες καὶ ἅμα τελευτῶντες ἡμέραν τοῦ βίου ἐγράφομεν ὑμῖν ταυτί-στραγγουρικά τε παρηκολούθει καὶ δυσεντερικά πάθη ὑπερβολὴν οὐκ ἀπολείποντα τοῦ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς μεγέθους· ἀντιπαρετάττετο δὲ πᾶσι τούτοις τὸ κατὰ ψυχὴν χαῖρον ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν γεγονότων ἡμῖν διαλογισμῶν μνήμῃ. My translation; cf. Angeli 1981, 91–2; now 29 F Erbi with commentary Erbi 2020, 143–5.

7 On the testament of Epicurus see D.L. X.16–20.

8 See Heßler 2018a.

the *Letter to Menoeceus*, the Epicurean sage was a kind of god on earth and thus can serve as role model for the Epicureans to worship and emulate. According to Epicurean doctrine, even these godlike sages died, and therefore in the first century BC Lucretius proclaimed “he was a god, noble Memmius, a god he was”.⁹ When followers of the *Kēpos* venerated a deceased philosopher, they did not expect any favour in return, because “the veneration of the wise man is a great blessing to those who venerate him”.¹⁰ The adherents of the cult simply took the Epicurean sage as a paragon for the extent of happiness that a human being can achieve. Epicurus and his followers modified Plato’s notion of ‘assimilation to god’ (*homoiōsis theō*) and transformed it into an ‘assimilation to the sage’ (*homoiōsis sophō*), which does not have the elements of transcendency present in Plato’s conception.¹¹ The enormous respect given to the founder and the philosophers of the school’s first generation can be recognized not only in direct acts of worship, but also in the way the community deals with texts: the Epicureans wrote biographies about their ‘mortal gods’, i.e. the *kathēgēmones* (‘leaders’ or ‘teachers’) and *andres* (‘men’), and put considerable effort into preserving their authoritative writings, as can be seen from their summaries (*epitomai*) and collections of letters.¹² Many fragments, testimonia, and excerpts have survived in the carbonized papyri from Herculaneum and in the monumental inscription of Diogenes in Oenoanda in Lycia.¹³ In addition to these acts of preservation, the Epicureans memorized the words of the founder and master, as continuous repetition and practice can help them reach the state of *ataraxiā* and bliss.¹⁴ In the view of his followers, Epicurus was capable of healing and bringing salvation, and therefore it was of crucial importance that his therapeutic words, which were considered holy writings, were available anytime and anywhere and remained unchanged.¹⁵ With respect to Epicurus’ status as godlike figure and indisputable authority and to the literally conservative Epicurean attitude towards his texts, scholars have often regarded the school as having an unchanging set of views and (at least implicitly) assumed that a change in doctrine cannot be identified in the texts of later Epicureans.¹⁶ This, of course, also affected their

⁹ Lucr. V.8: *deus ille fuit, deus, inclute Memmi*. Trans. Rouse/Smith.

¹⁰ Epic. GV 32: ὁ τοῦ σοφοῦ σεβασμὸς ἀγαθὸν μέγα τῷ σεβομένῳ ἐστὶ. Trans. Bailey.

¹¹ Heßler 2014, 116. 327–33 with passages in Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, and further literature; see esp. Erler 2002 and now Heßler 2022.

¹² Angeli 1986; Damiani 2015; on Philonides, see Koch Piettre 2010.

¹³ On Epicurus’ doctrines in the Herculaneum papyri, see Leone 2000; see also the introductions and texts in Angeli 1988; Capasso 1988a; Tepedino Guerra 1994; Militello 1997; Gallo 2002. On Diogenes of Oenoanda, see Gordon 1996 and the contribution of Hammerstaedt in this volume. On citations of letters in anti-Epicurean writings, see Gordon 2013.

¹⁴ Erler 1998.

¹⁵ See Angeli 1986; Capasso 1987; Erler 1993.

¹⁶ But see Erler 1992.

general interpretative approach, and thus lost doctrines of the master are frequently reconstructed from the writings of his followers, even of those active in Rome ca. 200 years after the death of Epicurus or in Lycia ca. 400 years afterwards. However, in the following pages, I would like to present examples of innovations and heresies, and then I will discuss the questions if and in what respect the Epicureans can be regarded as totally faithful to the teachings of Epicurus.

2. Defection and Discrepancy

If we follow—as most scholars do—the testimony of Philodemus, the death of Hermarchus ca. 250 BC means a caesura. Until then, the followers of the *Kēpos* had advocated the same opinions as the founder, whereas after this date, deviations from the original teachings started to occur. This can be seen from *PHerc.* 1005, a treatise for which Gianluca Del Mastro recently suggested the title *Against the So-Called Experts in the Writings*¹⁷:

... but it will be possible, if—in respect of this and of what all those did who joined the school after Hermarchus did—someone shows that they (*scil.* the first Epicureans) thought and acted in a similar way—which I don't believe (*scil.* will happen) before all humans turn black and small and twisted.¹⁸

In addition to this testimonium, other Herculaneum papyri prove that, already during Epicurus' own lifetime, there were dissidents who renounced the school and its teachings and that, even in the early years of the school, there were discussions about which opinion on a specific topic was the correct one. The most famous example of an Epicurean dissident is Timocrates, the brother of Metrodorus.¹⁹ Epicurus got to know him in Lampsacus where he initially joined the school. Later, however, disagreements between disciple and master arose, especially about the concept of pleasure and the attitude towards political engagement. And thus, Timocrates dissociated from the school around 290 BC. Subsequently, he authored the polemic *Pleasant Things* (Εὐφραντά) against

17 Del Mastro 2014a, 185–7. On this treatise, see the contributions of Margherita Erbi and Dino De Sanctis in this volume.

18 Phld. *Adversus Fr.* 117.1 col. III.5–17 Angeli: ἀλλ' ἔ[στα]ι δυν[ατὸν ἐὰν τοῦτ]ο καὶ ἂ μ[ὲν εἰρ]γάσαι[το πάντες οἱ μεθ']Ἑ[ρ]μαρχοῦ [ἐ]μβάντες εἰς [τ]ὴν αἵρεσιν, ὁμοιότρο[π]ά τις παρ[α]στῆσθαι καὶ βε[βο]ύλη[μ]ένους καὶ πεπραχότας, ὅπερ οὐ πρότερον οἶμαι τοῦ πάντας ἀνθρώπους μέλανα[ς] εἶναι καὶ μικροὺς καὶ δι[εσ]τραμμένους. My translation.

19 Verde 2010b.

Epicurus,²⁰ to which the latter reacted with the books *Theories of the Feelings: Against Timocrates* and *Timocrates*.²¹ The intense polemic between Timocrates and Epicurus very likely had further impact on later anti-Epicurean writings, like those of Cicero and Plutarch.²² Another apostate is Metrodorus of Stratonicea who defected to the Academy in the second century BC.²³ But ancient sources do not only inform us about cases of renegades, but even report dissent between prominent Epicureans of the first generation:

... he will be [frank] with [the one who has] erred and even with him who responds with [bitter]ness. Therefore, Epicurus too, when Le[ont]eus because of Pythocles did not admit [belief] in gods, reproached Pythocles in moderation, and wrote to him [*scil.* Leonteus] the so-called “famous letter,” ...²⁴

Though Epicurus is moderate (μετρίως) in his criticism, the fragment shows that also the first disciples of Epicurus were susceptible to holding erroneous opinions and sometimes deviated from the thoughts or decisions of the master. Leonteus is mentioned again in the following lacunose section of Philodemus’ *On Epicurus*.²⁵

... he (*scil.* Epicurus) makes clear to Arcephon and the group around Idomeneus and Leonteus who went too far in respect of the suspension of Apollonides ...

Obviously, Arcephon, Leonteus, and Idomeneus, at least on this one occasion, departed from the school’s stance and Epicurus had to take corrective action.²⁶ Even one of the most prominent disciples ‘went too far’ in his studies, namely

²⁰ Recently, the alternate Εὐφαντ[ά] has been suggested based on a reading in *Fr.* 2, line 6 of *PHerc.* 1112 (Metrodorus, *Against the Sophists*), which is currently edited by Michael McOsker and Nathan Gilbert. I thank Michael McOsker for this information.

²¹ Diogenes Laertius also cites an *Against Timocrates* by Metrodorus, see D.L. X.24. 28.

²² Sedley 1976b, 127–32.

²³ D.L. X.9.

²⁴ Phld. *Lib. PHerc.* 1471 *Fr.* 6 Konstan et. al.: [τῷ] μὲν ἁμαρτή[σαντι παρρη]σίασ[ε]ται, τῷ δὲ καὶ [πικρ]ότητας ἀποδίδοντι. διὸ καὶ Ἐπίκουρος, Λε[οντ]έως διὰ Πυθοκλέα πίσ[τιν] θεῶ[ν] ὃν παρέγτος, Πυθοκλεῖ μὲν [ἐ]πιτιμᾷ μετρίως, πρὸς δὲ τὸν γράφει [τ]ῇ λαμπρὰν καλουμένην ἐπισ[τολ]ήν ... Trans. Konstan/Clay et al.

²⁵ Phld. *Epic.* II, *PHerc.* 1289 β col. XX Barbieri: ... παρίστησιν [Α]ρκεφῶντι (*scil.* Ἐπίκουρος) καὶ τοῖς περ[ὶ] τὸν Ἰδομενέα καὶ [Λ]ε[ο]ντέα πορρωτέρω προβαίνουσι περὶ [τῇ]ς Ἀπολ[λ]ων[ι]δου[ς]. . . . My translation; cf. Angeli 1981, 77–8. In Tepedino Guerra’s edition (col. XXV), the end of the extant sentence is printed as ἀναίρεσως τῆς ἀπογ[ί]ας, i.e. subject of the discussion would be not the suspension of Apollonides, but the freedom of pain.

²⁶ Angeli 1981, 50: “Cases of disagreement ... were generally addressed and resolved by Epicurus himself”. Angeli (ib. 47–55) argues against other scholars’ assumption that these two fragments have to be seen as proof of profound dissent.

Metrodorus, whom Cicero labelled as “almost another Epicurus”:²⁷ the founder of the *Kēpos* reports in the 28th book of *On Nature* that Metrodorus had taken a strongly conventionalist view of how to use terminology and corrected his approach only after being criticised by the founder himself.²⁸ As we can see, already at an early stage of the school, the disciples of Epicurus did not always think only in terms of their master’s doctrines, but sometimes went beyond his views. Some followers could be guided into the right direction by the scholarch;²⁹ others left the school. But, as mentioned above, especially later, after the deaths of Epicurus and Hermarchus, disagreement occurred between different parties of followers who regard themselves as the only genuine Epicureans. The treatises of Philodemus from the first century BC are an especially important source for this phenomenon, as the following selection of examples will show:

In his *On Rhetoric*, Philodemus discusses whether rhetoric is a *technē*.³⁰ He argues for the view that forensic and political speaking cannot be regarded as arts, but that only sophistic rhetoric can be so regarded—i. e. the genus directed to the writing of performative speeches (better known as *epideiktikos*):³¹

Since Epicurus and his followers reveal that sophistic is an art of writing speeches and composing display pieces, and is not an art of pleading cases and addressing the people, [these] state that sophistic is an art.

The terminological discussion is polemical and complicated in its details.³² To summarize, Philodemus reports an opinion contrary to school doctrine: the Epicureans on Cos and Rhodes assume that for Epicurus rhetoric in general cannot be regarded as *technē* (see below with n. 68). According to Philodemus’ report of Epicurus, however, only sophistic rhetoric can be considered to be a *technē*, because the stylistic features used in display speeches can be taught, whereas successful performances in court and in the political arena require talent and expe-

²⁷ Cic. *fin.* II.28 = Metrod. *Fr.* 33 Körte.

²⁸ Sedley 1973, 22–3.

²⁹ Cf. the different types of students and the degrees of coercion required from the teacher in Epic. *Fr.* 192 Usener = Sen. *epist.* V.52.3–4; Michael McOskey kindly pointed out to me Philod. *Lib. Fr.* 7 as well as coll. IVb, XXIIb, and XXIVa Konstan et al.

³⁰ On this topic, well-known from Plato, and Philodemus’ approach, see Arrighetti 2016; Nicolardi 2018, 31–48.

³¹ Philod. *Rh.* II, *PHerc.* 1674 col. XXIII.33–XXIV.9 Longo: τῶν τε περὶ τὸν Ἐπίκουρον ἀποφ[αι]γομένων τέχνην [εἶν]αι τὴν σοφιστικὴν τ[οῦ] λόγου ὅς συγγράφειν καὶ ἐπ[ιδε]ίξει ποιεῖσθαι, [τοῦ δὲ] δίκας λέγειν καὶ δη[μη]γορεῖν οὐκ εἶναι τέ[χνη]ν, τὴν σοφιστικὴν οὐ τοι τέχνην φασὶν εἶ[να]ν. Trans. Chandler.

³² See Arrighetti 2016.

rience instead. Consequently, Philodemus criticizes the Coan and Rhodian Epicureans for their deviation from the founder's teachings.³³

In *On Anger*, Philodemus tells us about Nicasicrates—presumably also located in Rhodes—who refused any kind of anger as detrimental *pathos*, whereas Epicurus conceded a modest form of anger even to the Epicurean sage³⁴ analogously to his allowing for modest grief.³⁵

In *PHerc.* 1005, Philodemus gives a report about Epicureans who are not capable of understanding the treatises of the masters correctly:³⁶

Yet I agree ... that some of those who call themselves Epicureans say and write many collections and many other things that represent their own opinions and are not in accordance with the treatises, but were in part ripped from them superficially and hastily.

After a lacuna, the text continues:³⁷

... of those who call themselves Epicureans. He, whom we got to know or whom we analysed at length, who says he is a true reader of selected writings and a large number of treatises, even though he understands them incorrectly, had in his hands many selections of texts and yet he is completely clueless regarding certain details.

To all those who he regards as pseudo-Epicureans he opposes the true Epicureans, among whom he includes himself, i.e. those who philosophize from early on and meticulously compose their treatises. These genuine followers are qualified to do so because of their truly Greek upbringing and their education in the liberal arts (παι[δευθέ]γτες ἐν μ[α]θήμασι).³⁸ This reference to *paideia* and *mathēmata* appears unusual, because Epicurus is infamous for his refusal of tra-

33 Longo Auricchio/Tepedino Guerra 1981, 29–32.

34 Phld. *Ira PHerc.* 182 coll. XXXVI–XXXVIII Armstrong/McOsler.

35 Epic. *Fr.* 120 Usener = Plu. *Non posse* 1101a.

36 Phld. *Adversus Fr.* 117.1 col. II.6–17 Angeli: ὁμολογῶ τοῖς[ν]ν ... τὸ τῶν χρηματιζόντων τινὰς Ἐπικουρείων πολλὰ μὲν συμφορητὰ καὶ λέγειν καὶ γράφειν, πολλὰ δ' αὐτῶν ἴδια τοῖς κατὰ τὴν πραγματείαν ἀσύμφωνα, τινὰ δ' ἐκείθεν ἐσπαργμένα φλοιωδῶς καὶ ταχέως. My translation.

37 Phld. *Adversus Fr.* 117.2 col. IV.1–13 Angeli: [τῶν Ἐπικουρείων] προσαγο[ρευ]ομένων· ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐγνωσμένος ἢ καὶ διωτορημένος ὑφ' ἡμῶν, δς καὶ φησι εἶν[α] ὁ γνήσιος ἀναγνώ[σ]-της ἐπὶ γραφὰς [ἐγλεκ]τὰς κα[ὶ] πλ[η]θὴ συγγρα[μ][μ]άτων, κὰν βάλη[ι] [γ]ε [φαύ]λως, ἀνείληφε πολ[λ]ὰς ἐγλογὰς καὶ τῶν μ[ε]ν ἐπὶ μέρους διανο[η]μάτων ἀπειρότατός ἐστιν. My translation. On the title of the treatise, see p. 24 with n. 17.

38 Phld. *Adversus Fr.* 117.6 col. XVI.1–15 Angeli: δ[ύ]να[ν]ται μ[ε]ν τοῖς [β]ιβλίοις παρακολουθεῖν οἱ καὶ τετυ[χ]ότες ἀγωγῆς Ἑλλήσι καὶ [ο]ῦ [Πέρσαις] πρεπούσης καὶ παι[δευ-θέ]γτες ἐν μ[α]θήμασι, δι[δ]άσκουσι καὶ [τ]ὰ τῶν ἐπιτετηδευκόντων ἀσάφειαν ἐξευρίσκουσι καὶ ὁμοειδῆ γ', εἰ μὴδὲν ἕτερον, ἐκ παιδίου μέχρι γήρως φ[ι]λοσοφῆσαντες καὶ τοσαῦτα καὶ τοιαῦτα ταῖς ἀκριβείαις συντεθεικότες.

ditional Greek education including literature and rhetoric.³⁹ In this case, Philodemus wants to set himself apart from his opponents by stressing the superior state of true Epicureans and therefore points to their profound knowledge of what in Roman times would be called *enkyklios paideia*.⁴⁰ Several other Epicureans even engage in specific *mathēmata*, and Epicurus himself makes use of contents and techniques that form part of traditional *paideia* to make his writings more ‘user-friendly’ and memorable.⁴¹ We will see soon, how this approach can be compatible with Epicurean doctrine.

So, the texts give reports about the whole period from the founding of the school in 306 BC until the first century BC. They describe cases of followers who expressed divergent views and testify that the one true orthodoxy did not exist. Instead, we hear of dissidents, temporary deviations, and intense controversies within the school.

3. Interpretation and Innovation

In addition to the evidence for apostasy and discussions within the school just mentioned above we find examples of innovation and own interpretations especially in later Epicureans who are not suspected of being dissidents. While constantly emphasizing that they are acting in the service of Epicurus’ healing philosophy, the Epicureans utilize what Michael Erler has labelled *philologia medicans*.⁴² Zeno critically reviews the writings of Epicurus and sorts out *spuria* that he considers incompatible with the teachings of the master:⁴³

... approaching with accuracy the writings of the masters, he valued their doctrines highly; from the beginning, he had some suspicion, e.g. about certain letters and the *Epitome* to *Pythocles* about *Meteorology* and *On Virtues* and the *Instructions* attributed to Metro-

39 Ath. 588a = Epic. *Fr.* 43 Arrighetti² = *Fr.* 117 Usener; D.L. X.6 = Epic. *Fr.* 89 Arrighetti² = *Fr.* 163 Usener; Heßler 2014, 15–6; McOskey 2020a, 349–52; Chandler 2020, 334–6.

40 Morgan 1998, 33–9.

41 Epic. *Ep. Hdt.* 35–7. 83; *Ep. Pyth.* 84–5. 116 on the purpose of his *epitomai* (summaries); see De Sanctis 2012; Damiani 2015; 2021.

42 Erler 1993.

43 Zeno Sid. *Fr.* 25 Angeli/Colaizzo = Phld. *Adversus* col. XI.1–19 Angeli: [ἐρχόμενον ἀκριβεί]αι πρὸς τὰ τῶν ἀνδρῶν, [πε]ρὶ πολλῶν ἢ γ[ε]ῖσθαι [τὰ] κε[ι]νοὶς ἀρέ[σ]κοντ’, [ἐκ] τῆς ἀ[ρ]χῆς ὑποψ[ι]α νινὰ [λ]αμβάν[ει]ν ὅς περὶ τινῶν ἐπιστολῶν καὶ τῆς [Πρὸς Πυ]θοκλέα περὶ μ[ε]τεώρων ἐπιτομῆς καὶ τοῦ Περί ἀρ[ε]τ[ῆ]ς, καὶ τῶν εἰς Μητρόδωρον ἀναφερομένων Ὑποθηκῶν καὶ τῶν Μαρτυριῶν καὶ μᾶλλον [δ]ὲ τοῦ Πρὸς τὸν Πλάτωνος Γοργίαν δευτέρου, καὶ τῶν εἰς Πολύαινον τοῦ Πρὸς τοὺς ῥήτορας καὶ τοῦ Περί σελήνης καὶ τῶν εἰς Ἑρμαρχον. My translation. Also see Zeno Sid. *Fr.* 13 Angeli/Colaizzo = Dem. *Lac. Text. Probl. PHerc.* 1012 col. XLIV.8–9 Puglia: ἀμάρτημα [τοῦ γρ]α[φ]έ[ω]ς; *Fr.* 14 Angeli/Colaizzo = Dem. *Lac. Text. Probl. PHerc.* 1012 col. I Puglia; Sedley 1989, 106–7.

dorus and the *Testimonia* and even more about the second book of *Against the Gorgias of Plato* and the writings attributed to Polyaeus, the *Against the Orators* and *On the Moon* and the ones attributed to Hermarchus.

Likewise, Philodemus in his *On Rhetoric* tries to prove that the *On Rhetoric* transmitted under the name of Polyaeus stems from a different author.⁴⁴ Demetrius Laco analyses the writings of Epicurus with a view towards eliminating their inconsistencies with the help of textual criticism and interpretative comments.⁴⁵ We find similar techniques in Zeno and in Philonides, who undertook a collection of the letters of Epicurus.⁴⁶ The underlying premise is that Epicurean philologists know best what the master intended—which is hard to verify.⁴⁷ There are also some surprises about the fields of research that some Epicureans worked in: while Epicurus himself is said to have regarded geometry as useless activity,⁴⁸ we know that his direct disciple Polyaeus and later Epicureans had an intense interest in mathematical studies, i.e. Zeno, Philonides, and Demetrius Laco.⁴⁹ In this case, we cannot speak of ‘Epicurean mathematics’ in the sense of doing constructive research and building a system. Rather, these studies can be regarded as a kind of ‘anti-Euclidean mathematics’, i.e. as polemical writings.⁵⁰ But the fact that they, as Epicureans, engage in mathematics shows that a certain degree of freedom seems to be legit, even for devoted Epicureans.

In the case of Philodemus, larger portions of several texts are extant. Even though scholars have often stated that he is not the most original thinker,⁵¹ he provides important information about the life in the school and the teachings of the *Kēpos*, and many passages show that a true follower of Epicurus—and of course Philodemus considered himself one—can incorporate innovations into his work. His interpretations of, and additions to, the known doctrines of Epicurus contain innovations that are in part quite surprising, e.g. his positive statements about the value of liberal education or his concessions to those striving for fame.⁵² The open-mindedness of Philodemus in these cases may be surprising,

44 Phld. *Rh.* II, *PHerc.* 1674 col. XXIII.7–11 Longo: τὸ δὲ Πολυαῖνο[υ] λεγόμενο[ν] Περὶ ῥητορικῆς οὐ[κ] ὑπ’ ἄρχον Πολυαῖγου, καθάπερ ἐνεφανίσαμεν. — “... Polyaeus’ treatise called *On Rhetoric* that is not written by Polyaeus, as we indicated”. My translation.

45 Zeno Sid. *Fr.* 13 Angeli/Colaizzo = Dem. Lac. *Text. Probl. PHerc.* 1012 col. XLIV.8–9 Puglia: ἀμάρτημα [τοῦ γρα]φέ[ω]ς; *Fr.* 14 Angeli/Colaizzo = Dem. Lac. *Text. Probl. PHerc.* 1012 col. I Puglia; also see the contribution of Michael McOsker in this volume.

46 Koch Piettre 2010.

47 Erler 1993, 290–2.

48 Bénatouil 2010.

49 See the contribution of Francesco Verde in this volume with bibliography.

50 Netz 2015, 295–302; also see Sedley 1976a; Verde 2016b.

51 Erler 1994, 343; Fitzgerald 2004, 5.

52 On education, see Phld. *Adversus Fr.* 117.6 col. XVI.1–15 Angeli (cited in n. 38); on fame see Phld. *Adul. PHerc.* 222 col. IV.5ff. Gargiulo: [ῆ] δόξα τοίνυν χάριν ἀσφαλείας ἐδιώχθη

and several of these alterations have been explained as adjustments or concessions to his Roman environment.⁵³ But also here, as Cicero shows, the Epicureans are convinced that the *auctoritas* of the founder has to be preserved.⁵⁴

Moving north from Naples to Rome, we find Lucretius who presents Epicurean physics in the first extant didactic poem in Latin, *On the Nature of Things*.⁵⁵ Content-wise, he follows his master, as he tells us at the beginning of the third book:⁵⁶

you I follow, O glory of the Grecian race, and now on the marks you have left I plant my own footsteps firm.

A comparison with Epicurus' *On Nature* shows the extent to which Lucretius adheres to the ideas of the master, and he has even been regarded as 'fundamentalist'.⁵⁷ With his poem, he wants to banish darkness and fear through the contemplation of nature,⁵⁸ as we can learn from Epicurus' letters and the *Principal Doctrines*.⁵⁹ In his literary and philosophical strategies he also imitates the founder of the school: when Lucretius declares that he will make the indigestible philosophy of Epicurus more lucid through the euphony of his verses (I.933: *obscura de re tam lucida pango / carmina*), which he refers to as the 'honey on

κατὰ φύσιν, ἣν ἔξεστιν ἔχειν καὶ ἰδιώτῃ καὶ φιλοσόφῳ, κακία[ς] [δ'] οὐ πάσης. — "... fame is moreover pursued for sake of safety according to nature, which it is possible for the common man and the philosopher to have, but not for sake of any possible vice." My translation.

53 Erler 1992, 195.

54 Cic. *fam.* XIII.4: *quamquam Patronis et orationem et causam tibi cognitam esse certo scio; honorem, officium, testamentorum ius, Epicuri auctoritatem, Phaedri obtestationem, sedem, domicilium, vestigia summorum hominum sibi tuenda esse dicit.* — "However, I am sure you know Patro's case and how he puts it. He pleads that he owes a responsibility to his office and duty, to the sanctity of testaments, to the prestige of Epicurus' name, to Phaedrus' adjuration, to the abode, domicile, and memorials of great men." Trans. Shackleton Bailey.

55 See the contribution of Michael Erler in this volume with further bibliography. On early Latin didactic poetry, see von Albrecht 1997, 270–2; Kruschwitz/Schumacher 2005; on early Epicurean literature in Latin, see Erler 1994, 363–73.

56 Lucr. III.3–4: *te sequor, o Graiae gentis decus, inque tuis nunc / ficta pedum pono pressis vestigia signis.* Trans. Rouse/Smith.

57 Sedley 1998, 71.

58 Lucr. I.146–8: *hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessest / non radii solis neque lucida tela diei / discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.* — "This terror of the mind, therefore, and this gloom must be dispelled, not by the sun's rays nor the bright shafts of day, but by the aspect and law of nature". Trans. Rouse/Smith.

59 Epic. *KD* 11: εἰ μὴθὲν ἡμᾶς αἱ τῶν μετεώρων ὑποψίαι ἠνώχλουν καὶ αἱ περὶ θανάτου, μήποτε πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἦ τι, ἔτι τε τὸ μὴ κατανοεῖν τοὺς ὄρους τῶν ἀληθδόνων καὶ τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν, οὐκ ἂν προσεδόμεθα φυσιολογίας. — "If we were not troubled by our suspicions of the phenomena of the sky and about death, fearing that it concerns us, and also by our failure to grasp the limits of pains and desires, we should have no need of natural science". Trans. Bailey.