

Giulio Colesanti, Laura Lulli (Eds.)

**Submerged Literature in Ancient Greek Culture**

Case Studies



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Edited by Giulio Colesanti  
and Laura Lulli

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Alla cara memoria di Luigi Enrico Rossi



# Acknowledgements

This volume is dedicated to Luigi Enrico (Chico) Rossi (1933–2009), inspiring and devoted teacher, who taught Greek literature at the University of Rome ‘La Sapienza’ with relentless enthusiasm and founded a thriving forty year tradition of seminars.

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G. C. and L. L.

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Giulio Colesanti, Laura Lulli

## Introductory Notes

The concept of the ‘submerged’ is a fundamental insight of Luigi Enrico Rossi,<sup>1</sup> which goes back to at least 1995. Rossi had been inspired by the work *La Littérature latine inconnue* by Bardon 1952–1956, but only by its title: Bardon had carried out a *recensio* of the Latin literature that had emerged at an editorial level, but which had subsequently been lost, for reasons either intentional or mechanical. Rossi, to the contrary, was not interested so much in the loss of Greek literature, though he thought it would be useful to carry out a *recensio* of it; his primary interest was rather in surveying all the Greek literature that had failed to emerge at an editorial level because it was not protected either by the author or by any authority (for example the *polis*). That which had not reached publication at all Rossi called the ‘submerged’, to distinguish it from the ‘lost’, which in contrast had been lost after having once ‘emerged’ into a phase of publication.

In February 1995 Rossi prepared a single printed page which he circulated among his pupils and collaborators at that time at a tightly restricted and personal level; in it, referring to Bardon, he pitched the idea of compiling a *recensio* of the Greek ‘submerged’:

To initiate a *recensio* of that part of Greek literature which never received publication (although this description is inaccurate for anything pre-dating the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE: ‘which never received polycentric distribution’, we may better say). Literature of this kind never enjoyed the protection of either the *polis* or any other authority with institutionalized – let us say – literary credentials.<sup>2</sup>

Rossi went on to give some examples of the submerged: the Aristotelian σατυρικόν, sympotic poetry not protected by subsequent re-use, fable, pre-Simonidean epinician (e.g. Ps.-Archil. fr. 324 W.), oracles, letters, magical formulae, interpretations of dreams. He considered writing a methodological article in which he would draw attention to this issue, and which he would then follow up with a large project *d’équipe* with his pupils in the various fields of Greek culture. He did not shelve Bardon’s idea of a *recensio* of what had been lost: to the contrary, that project was to have followed the one on the sub-

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<sup>1</sup> On Rossi see Napolitano 2010 and Nicolai 2013.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Fare una *recensio* della letteratura greca mai emersa a livello editoriale (termine improprio per tutto quello che precede il IV sec. a.C.: sarebbe meglio dire “a livello di diffusione policentrica”). Tale letteratura non era stata protetta dalla *polis* o da una qualsiasi autorità – per così dire – istituzionale dal punto di vista letterario’.

merged, to demonstrate how thin the line is between the submerged and the lost.

Rossi's idea was new and interesting and it generated discussions among his pupils, though for various reasons none of them in fact attempted a *recensio* of any scope; Rossi himself, involved in the work for his manual *Letteratura greca* (published in April 1995), never wrote the methodological article that was to launch the research programme. However, he picked up the idea of the submerged again five years later, in part of an article devoted to control of the text in the ancient world; in § 5, with the title 'La letteratura non protetta ovvero sommersa' (Literature that was not protected, that is, submerged), he notes that he was inspired by the title of Bardon's book and states:

By 'submerged' literature I mean [...] texts which were mistreated from the very beginning of their transmission, and even texts which were not transmitted at all. These texts benefited from neither control nor protection, either because no community had any interest in their preservation, or because it was in the interest of a community that they be concealed, and even suppressed (as in the instance of everything that had to do with the mysteries). It is the case, however, that while a good deal of these texts have engaged us in a game of hide-and-seek, their part in shaping Greek culture as we know it was in fact considerable: there would be a great deal to gain if we could bring them back to light, although only parts of the whole may be recovered. For some time I have been thinking about the advantages of arranging these texts into a collection, which should display the (very few) fully preserved texts first, then the fragments, and finally the *testimonia*. The task would not be easy to accomplish, but deserves to be attempted.<sup>3</sup>

This time, too, the projected research programme did not have an outcome, neither among his direct pupils nor by Rossi himself, who did not address the topic again. After Rossi's premature death in September 2009, Andrea Ercolani

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<sup>3</sup> Rossi 2000, 170: 'Con letteratura 'sommersa' io intendo [...] testi maltrattati fin dal primissimo inizio della trasmissione, o anche testi che non hanno avuto alcuna trasmissione affatto. Questi testi non hanno goduto di alcun controllo e di alcuna protezione sia perché le varie comunità non avevano alcun interesse a conservarli sia perché avevano, piuttosto, interesse a nascondersi o addirittura a sopprimerli: quest'ultima categoria è rappresentata da quanto era legato ai misteri. Ma molti di questi testi, che dal nostro punto di osservazione giocano a nascondino, hanno avuto grande importanza nel configurare i vari momenti della cultura greca così come ci si presentano, ed è ovviamente nostro interesse cercare di rimetterli in luce, sia pure di necessità parzialmente. È per questo che da qualche tempo penso che sarebbe utile farne una raccolta, che dovrebbe configurarsi per testi integri (rari), per frammenti e infine per testimonianze. Non sarebbe un compito facile: ma varrebbe la pena affrontarlo'.

then had the idea of proposing once again to the group of Rossi's pupils<sup>4</sup> their teacher's idea about the submerged, and so finally to develop it as had not been done before then. The group therefore organized a cycle of seminar presentations on Greek submerged literature over three years (2012–2014), in order to investigate the submerged not only in literature but more generally in Greek culture (addressing not just the literary sphere but also areas such as music and dance), and to take the methodological instruments of the submerged which had been developed through the analysis of Greek culture and apply them also to other cultures.<sup>5</sup>

The group decided, finally, to publish the results of the three-year research programme and first of all to complete an initial volume containing just the ten papers by Rossi's pupils presented in the year 2012, which were published with a single overall bibliography as if the volume were a monograph;<sup>6</sup> as a further demonstration of the book's coherence as a unified work, the final conclusions were written jointly by all ten members of the group.<sup>7</sup> The first volume was thus intended to constitute an introduction to the submerged, providing both the solid methodological presentation which Rossi had proposed but never achieved,<sup>8</sup> and an examination of specific individual case studies: on the basis

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4 Namely, Roberto Nicolai, who has succeeded Rossi in his chair, Maria Broggiato, Giulio Colesanti, Andrea Ercolani, Manuela Giordano, Laura Lulli, Michele Napolitano, Riccardo Palmisciano, Livio Sbardella, Maurizio Sonnino.

5 'Fuori dal canone. La Letteratura greca sommersa' [Outside the canon. Submerged Greek literature] (2012): 26/1/2012 (A. Ercolani, R. Palmisciano, R. Nicolai), 22/2/2012 (L. Sbardella, L. Lulli, G. Colesanti), 21/3/2012 (R. Palmisciano, M. Sonnino, M. Giordano), 26/4/2012 (E. Tagliaferro, P. Vannicelli, G. Ecce), 14/5/2012 (H.-G. Nesselrath, S. Douglas Olson, S. Jedrkiewicz, A. Roselli, M. Broggiato, A. Stramaglia, F. De Romanis, G. Traina). 'Letteratura greca sommersa. Spazi, codici, occasioni' [Submerged Greek Literature. Spaces, codes, occasions] (2013): 24/1/2013 (S. Ribichini, M. D'Acunto, E. Lippolis), 15/2/2013 (M. L. Catoni, L. Cerchiai, B. D'Agostino), 14/3/2013 (L. Del Corso, R. Luiselli), 17/4/2013 (L. M. Segoloni, F. Ferrari, G. Cerri), 9/5/2013 (M. Napolitano, A. Meriani, E. Rocconi). 'Letteratura greca sommersa. La prospettiva comparativa' [Submerged Greek Literature. The comparative perspective] (2014): 20/1/2014 (J. Ben Dov, G. G. Stroumsa), 17/2/2014 (S. Graziani, R. Denaro, P. De Laurentis), 10/3/2014 (S. Monda, R. Torella), 7/4/2014 (R. Fowler, M. Giordano, L. Pucci), 9/5/2014 (M. Finkelberg, M. Carastro, A. Taddei).

6 Colesanti and Giordano 2014.

7 Broggiato, Colesanti, Ercolani, Giordano, Lulli, Napolitano, Nicolai, Palmisciano, Sbardella, and Sonnino 2014.

8 Constituted by the first four essays in the volume: Ercolani 2014, Palmisciano 2014a, Nicolai 2014 and Broggiato 2014.

of some of the pupils' personal interests, the case studies addressed were epic, monodic lyric, the *σάρτυκόν*, mime, and tragedy.<sup>9</sup>

The first phase of research on submerged literature thus had the goal of specifying the methodological limits of the concept of the 'submerged',<sup>10</sup> and of bringing into focus its specific characteristics both in relation to the creation of literary canons<sup>11</sup> and in specific case studies involving the evolution of some of the more important genres, such as epic, lyric, and drama, with attention also to aspects related to iconography.<sup>12</sup> This line of research belongs to a well established tradition of studies, but within this tradition it makes a contribution of notable originality: even just by quickly surveying all the innumerable studies that have been produced on the individual literary genres,<sup>13</sup> on the dynamics of canon formation,<sup>14</sup> on the mechanisms of the loss of a text or of an entire genre,<sup>15</sup> one does in fact notice at once the lack of any specific attention to the 'submerged'. Among the most innovative aspects of the present research is the decision to adopt a methodology that closely combines philological-literary analysis with the historical-cultural perspective, two indispensable instruments with which one may construct a grid into which to insert and try to interpret the

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**9** Respectively Sbardella 2014 and Lulli 2014, Colesanti 2014, Palmisciano 2014b, Sonnino 2014, Giordano 2014.

**10** See in particular the contribution of Ercolani 2014.

**11** See Broggiato 2014 and Nicolai 2014.

**12** For an investigation of the submerged in relation to the Trojan mythical material, treated in rhapsodic epic and in the lyric poetry, see Sbardella 2014; cyclic epic and archaic epic poems with strong local connotations are examined through the lens of the submerged by Lulli 2014. Reflections specifically on the impact of the submerged in the genres of archaic Greek lyric are provided by Palmisciano 2014a and Colesanti 2014. The theatre is the topic of the contributions of Sonnino 2014, with specific attention to the genre of mime, and Palmisciano 2014b, in which both literary and iconographical components are explored from the perspective of the submerged in pursuit of the *σάρτυκόν*; the submerged texts of the ritual performances linked to tragedy and to precise spaces in the *polis* are the subject of the investigation by Giordano 2014.

**13** Within the endless bibliography on this topic see at the least Rossi 1971, one of the most important critical points of reference in the evaluation of occasion as a foundational aspect of literary genres. A comprehensive vision of the problems posed by ancient Greek literary genres has now been presented in Depew and Obbink 2000, with earlier bibliography.

**14** On the dynamics of canon formation see at the least the general considerations of Nicolai 2007 and the recent treatment by Finkelberg and Stroumsa 2003, with earlier bibliography. For the role of the Homeridae in the canonization of the Trojan epic cycle in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE see Sbardella 2012, pp. 38 ff. On the canon of the orators and historians see Nicolai 1992, pp. 262 ff., 297 ff.

**15** See e.g. Cavallo 1986 and Canfora 1995.

traces, elusive though they be, of complex literary and paraliterary phenomena without a continuous tradition of their own.<sup>16</sup>

The advantages of an approach like this, which aims to understand the existence and characteristics of submerged literature along both a synchronic and a diachronic axis, include a further gain: the possibility of better elucidating some aspects not only of submerged texts, but also of well known texts in the canonical Greek literary tradition. This is what can occur, just to take one example, in the exploration of types of ‘popular’ song, such as laments, wedding songs, or songs devoted more generically to themes of love, which represent literary forms that are contiguous or even identical, even though ‘submerged’, to the lyric works of Sappho or other lyric poets.<sup>17</sup> To give an example, such contiguity between ‘submerged’ and ‘emerged’ lyric production, even though it is difficult to grasp fully due to the fragmentary character of the surviving texts, is visible through a number of ancient testimonies, outstanding among them Book 14 of Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistae*:<sup>18</sup> here, in the 85 chapters dedicated to salient aspects of the symposium, such as wine, food, music, dance, and poetry suited to convivial occasions, we find a continuous play of parallels and comparisons between poetic and musical genres that are ‘popular’, and which for the most part remained submerged, and the archaic monodic poetry present in the ancient canon and transmitted, directly or indirectly, in the manuscript tradition.<sup>19</sup>

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**16** The centrality of an approach to submerged texts that is both philological and historical is stressed first of all by Rossi himself: Rossi 2000, 165.

**17** Palmisciano 2003, esp. 165–168, has provided a first, decisive *mise en point* of the relation between traditional poetry and archaic monodic lyric.

**18** An overall analysis of Book 14 of the *Deipnosophistae* has been provided most recently by Ceccarelli 2000, with earlier bibliography.

**19** It is worth noting in relation to this that another trace of the contiguity and osmosis between the two worlds, submerged and emerged, of Greek poetry can be seen in a passage in which Athenaeus relates how, according to what Clearchus said in the second volume of his treatise on *Questions of Love*, τὰ ἐρωτικά ἄσματα and τὰ Λοκρικά καλούμενα in no way differ from the works of Sappho and Anacreon. Cf Athen. 14. 639 a (iii 410 Kaibel) Κλέαρχος δὲ ἐν δευτέρῳ Ἐρωτικῶν τὰ ἐρωτικά φησιν ἄσματα καὶ τὰ Λοκρικά καλούμενα οὐδὲν τῶν Σαπφούς καὶ Ἀνακρέοντος διαφέρειν. On this testimonium see also Palmisciano 2003, 167 and n. 44, according to whom the texts mentioned by Clearchus can be understood as ‘testi, paralleli alla produzione d’autore e talvolta coincidenti con essa, che per la loro semplicità tecnica si configurarono, sin dalla nascita o durante la loro storia, come testi “aperti”, cioè testi di cui il fruitore si poteva appropriare integralmente, al punto da poterli modificare e adattare a nuovi contesti di comunicazione’ (‘texts, parallel to literature *d’autore* and at times coinciding with it, which through their technical simplicity appear, right from their birth or during their history, as “open” texts, that is, texts that can be wholly appropriated by those who enjoy them, to the point that they may modify and adapt them to new contexts of communication’). In the per-

The need to open up the research on the submerged to different aspects of the Greek world in an optic that would take into account an ensemble of cultural elements that are complex and often closely interconnected, such as the literary material, the religious dimension, and the anthropological component, is clearly expressed in the conclusion to the first volume of the series.<sup>20</sup> This requirement gave rise to the work of the seminar in the second year of the triennial cycle (2013), which was articulated via a number of different topics, with the ambitious goal of testing the aptness and utility of applying the category of the submerged also in other specific fields of research in ancient Greek culture beyond the strictly literary sphere, though part of the research was still committed to the latter.

The second volume of *Submerged Literature* is hence closely correlated to the first volume, for which it offers specific case studies; it gathers the remaining contributions to the first year of the seminar (2012) and the contributions of the year 2013.<sup>21</sup>

A first section of the volume centres on the analysis of the submerged in different literary genres, including some especially forgotten chapters of Greek literature. This approach passes through a series of stages dedicated to elusive figures such as Leucippus and Sopater of Paphos, for whom, respectively, Giovanni Cerri and Heinz-Günther Nesselrath provide an analytical framework, exploring the reasons that led to these authors first being forgotten and then for their work to be occasionally rediscovered. The complex fates that have befallen literary and epigraphic texts relating to the events of the Persian Wars, and especially the Battle of Marathon, are studied in the contribution by S. Douglas Olson, which lays special emphasis on the Athenian contribution to the cultural

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spective of the investigation proposed here, at any rate, the passage of Athenaeus offers the opportunity to observe how love songs and the so-called Locrian songs represent the transient sign of a submerged literary experience, thanks to which it is possible to trace the profile of the as yet unwritten chapters of Greek literature and to reconstruct processes and moments in Greek cultural history that are otherwise obscure or entirely forgotten.

**20** See Broggiato, Colesanti, Ercolani, Giordano, Lulli, Napolitano, Nicolai, Palmisciano, Sbardella, and Sonnino 2014, 187.

**21** Some papers presented at the seminars have found a different place of publication: Stramaglia 2015; Tagliaferro, E., 'Letterature oracolari'; Vannicelli, P., 'Λόγος ἐπιχώριος: Erodoto e le tradizioni locali'; Ecce, G., 'Prescrizioni deontologiche nel nome di Ippocrate: ai margini del *Corpus Hippocraticum*'; Catoni, M. L., 'Schema, mimesi, movimento: qualche cenno'; Segoloni, L. M., 'Fuerunt ante Talen philosophi ...'. The article of Sbardella, L., 'The Muse Looks down: Theocritus and the Hellenistic Aesthetic of the 'Submerged'', is a paper specifically realized for the second volume.

memory of this, one of the crucial moments in Greek history. The investigation proceeds with an excursion into the work of Plato, carried out by Stefano Jedrkiewicz, who shows how the adoption of the Aesopic fable by Socrates in the *Phaedo* is to be understood, on the one hand, as part of the dialectic between *mythos* and *logos*, yet, on the other hand, represents an interesting case of a 'submerged' literary genre tucked away inside the Platonic dialogue. The particular inflection of the submerged in Hellenistic book culture is then addressed in the reflections of Livio Sbardella on the poetic work of Theocritus. The long journey along the paths of submerged literature also includes an excursion to more distant lands which the Greeks visited and represented in geographical and historiographical works, whose tradition has often been subject to downright karstic phenomena of disappearance and reappearance of literary streams: contributions that illuminate this perspective are that of Federico De Romanis on the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* and that of Giusto Traina on Greek historiographical work on Armenia.

The dimension of the sacred and of the ritual texts connected to it forms a further stage in the progress of research on the submerged. The interaction between writing and ritual and the uncertain fates of the different texts linked to the world of Greek cult are the object of the contribution of Enzo Lippolis, while the incidence of the phenomenon of the submerged in the variegated world of texts used in mystery rites and Orphic ritual is investigated by Sergio Ribichini and Franco Ferrari.

The category of submerged literature, finally, is applied also to the literature of a particular type of medical text, the gynaecological treatises of the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, in which Amneris Roselli identifies the traces of an interaction between practice and medical theory, the result of using multiple works of different and complex character.

The possibility that it may better illuminate these incomplete or even unwritten chapters in Greek literature has prompted the attempt to apply an analogous method of investigation also to other aspects of Greek culture. This challenge is met by the contributions of Matteo D'Acunto and Bruno D'Agostino who, beginning from a collection of iconographic testimonia, reconstruct the imagery and contexts of an art that is one of the most elusive yet at the same time often one of the most representative of the Greeks' way of life: the dance. And, again assisted by analysis of the iconographic evidence, Luca Cerchiai elucidates the functions of myth in the objects used at the symposium.

The breadth and complexity of the Greek world in the long chronological span from the early archaic period to the Roman empire made it necessary then to include a stage in Graeco-Roman Egypt, where the mechanisms of submer-

sion can be grasped by reading the multifaceted evidence of the papyri. In this perspective Lucio Del Corso presents an analysis of disparate literary and paraliterary types, from the sympotic anthology to the ritual calendar, observing the dynamics of transmission of texts that were denied authorial control and the protection of a canon. Further, the environment of the production and circulation of the *Acta Alexandrinorum* is reconstructed in the contribution by Raffaele Luiselli, who underlines the possible mechanisms of submersion in the case of a text type at the borders of pagan and Christian literary experience.

The research trajectory concludes with a section dedicated to music. Luigi Enrico Rossi maintained that Horace was a “Greek lyricist without music”, meaning by this now famous phrase to point out, not without regret, how much of archaic Greek lyric had been lost already by one of its most accomplished connoisseurs and one of its most direct continuators in the Roman world.<sup>22</sup> The loss of ancient Greek music probably constitutes one of the weightiest obstacles to our current comprehension of the phenomenon of Greek literature, and more generally of Greek culture, and so it is one of the elements worth investigating from the perspective of the submerged. The contribution of Michele Napolitano draws our attention to the impact of writing in the phenomenon of the disappearance of ancient Greek music, while Angelo Meriani presents an investigation of erudite reflection on music in Greek handbook literature. An analysis of the possible influences of ‘popular song’ on the tradition of classical drama, finally, is the topic of the contribution by Eleonora Rocconi.

This type of research methodology, therefore, with all its facets and inflections and above all with the many shadowy zones which it is able to illuminate, cannot but offer a laboratory open to the analysis of other texts, literary genres, contexts, and cultures. A supple instrument like that of the submerged is not a category exclusive to Greek culture, but constitutes a hermeneutic key to open up spaces for research in many other civilizations that have entered into dialogue with the Greek world, even centuries apart and in far distant places.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See Rossi 1998.

<sup>23</sup> This was the topic of the year of seminars in 2014 and of the third volume of *Submerged Literature* (Ercolani and Giordano 2016).

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Giovanni Cerri

## A Scholarch Denied: Leucippus, Founder of Ancient Atomism

A report, widely diffused in the ancient world, but, as we shall see, little credited since, records that Leucippus was the teacher of Democritus. Diogenes Laertius, while narrating the life of Epicurus, made the following remark in passing:<sup>1</sup>

... ὃν [scil. Λεύκιππον] ἔνιοί φασιν, καὶ Ἀπολλόδωρος ὁ Ἐπικούρειος, διδάσκαλον Δημοκρίτου γεγενῆσθαι.

The expression is very cautious, as conditioned by its particular context, to which we shall return below; nonetheless, among those cited as supporting this claim is an entirely respectable source, given the cultural setting to which he belonged: Apollodorus of Athens – not the chronographer, but the scholarch of the Epicurean school, who lived in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. In roughly the same period as Diogenes Laertius, Clement of Alexandria stated the same thing: Democritus was an ἀκουστής, that is ‘hearer’ or ‘disciple’, of Leucippus.<sup>2</sup> However, we have a much older and more authoritative source in the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle:<sup>3</sup>

... Λεύκιππος δὲ καὶ ὁ ἐταῖρος αὐτοῦ Δημοκρίτος ...<sup>4</sup>

In these and in other testimonia it is said that Leucippus and Democritus professed the same physical theory, and so in the tradition as a whole Leucippus appears as the master of Democritus specifically in the atomic doctrine. That he, and not Democritus, was the first to conceive of this idea is explicitly stated by Diogenes Laertius, in his ‘Life’ of Leucippus,<sup>5</sup> and by Galen, who as well as being a doctor was also a formidable bibliophile and expert in the history of philosophy.<sup>6</sup> Leucippus should therefore be regarded by us as a philosophical

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1 Diog. Laert. 10. 13 = Leuc. test. 2 D.-K.

2 Clem. *Strom.* 1. 64 = Leuc. test. 4 D.-K.

3 Aristot. *met.* 1. 4. 985 b4 = Leuc. test. 6 D.-K.

4 Evidently this is the source of the phrase used by Simpl. in *Aristot. Phys.* 28. 4 = Leuc. test. 8 D.-K.: ... ὁ ἐταῖρος αὐτοῦ Δημοκρίτος ὁ Ἀβδηρίτης ...

5 Diog. Laert. 9. 30 = Leuc. test. 1 D.-K.: πρῶτός τε ἀτόμους ἀρχὰς ὑπεστήσατο.

6 Galen. *Hist. philos.* 3 (Diels 1879, 601) = Leuc. test. 5 D.-K.: Λεύκιππος ὁ Ἀβδηρίτης ... τὴν τῶν ἀτόμων εὗρεσιν ἐπινενόηκε πρῶτος.

figure of the first importance,<sup>7</sup> and he must also have been regarded as such by the ancients. Yet at the same time, already close to his own era, Leucippus seems to be a figure that is faint to the point of vanishing: compared to the testimonia about all the other major Presocratics, the records of him are few indeed. Only one, from Aetius, cites the title of one of his works, a mysterious *περὶ νοῦ*:<sup>8</sup>

Λεύκιππος πάντα κατ' ἀνάγκην, τὴν δ' αὐτὴν ὑπάρχειν εἰμαρμένην. λέγει γὰρ ἐν τῷ περὶ νοῦ· «οὐδέν ἄλλο μᾶλλον γίνεται, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἐκ λόγου τε καὶ ὑπ' ἀνάγκης».

And this is the only fragment in the strict sense, surviving in its original phrasing. We should note that a *περὶ νοῦ* also appears as the third work in the fourth tetralogy of Democritus in Diogenes Laertius,<sup>9</sup> a fact that would merit closer attention in the light of what we shall have to say about the *Great Cosmology* of Democritus, which was actually written by Leucippus. On his life we have only a little information about his homeland, his Eleatic studies, on the instruction he gave to Democritus. Nothing else! And, moreover, most of these reports contradict each other.

On his homeland the sources vary between Elea, Miletus, and Abdera: the *Philosophical History* attributed to Galen says Abdera,<sup>10</sup> Aetius says Miletus,<sup>11</sup> Epiphanius and Simplicius say that they are uncertain whether it is Elea or Miletus,<sup>12</sup> Diogenes Laertius whether Elea, Abdera or Miletus.<sup>13</sup> In this situation, it is not useful at all for us moderns to hazard a guess and pick one of the three on the basis of purely conjectural biographical hypotheses, a choice that will al-

<sup>7</sup> Thus it is in fact how he is seen by Burnet 1920<sup>3</sup>, 246–260, who dedicates to him almost the whole last chapter of his treatment, making him the last of the great Presocratics and the first of the great atomists.

<sup>8</sup> Aet. 1. 25. 4 (Diels 1879, 321) = Leuc. fr. 2 D.-K.

<sup>9</sup> Diog. Laert. 9. 46 = Democr. test. 33 D.-K.

<sup>10</sup> Galen. *Hist. philos.* 3, l. 50 (Diels 1879, 601, l. 9) = Leuc. test. 5 D.-K.

<sup>11</sup> Aet. 1. 3. 15 (Diels 1879, 285) = Leuc. test. 12 D.-K.

<sup>12</sup> Epiphani. *Expositio fidei* 9 (PG vol. 42 Migne, 792 A–B = Holl 1985, 506. 5–8) = Leuc. test. 33 D.-K.; Simplicius in *Aristot. Phys.* 28. 15 Diels = Leuc. test. 7 D.-K.

<sup>13</sup> Diog. Laert. 9. 30 = Leuc. test. 1 D.-K.: Ἐλεάτης, ὡς δέ τινες Ἀβδηρίτης, κατ' ἐνίους δὲ Μιλήσιος. In fact, the manuscript tradition gives Μήλιος in place of Μιλήσιος. However, given that all the other authors who cite Leucippus' homeland name Elea, Abdera, and Miletus, or one or two of these three cities, and no one other than Diogenes mentions Melos, it is rightly assumed that in the latter's text Μήλιος is a scribal error for Μιλήσιος. It is easy to suppose that Μιλήσιος could have been transcribed as Μηλήσιος, an error prompted by iotacism, and that Μηλήσιος had then been corrected into Μήλιος because it seemed to a later copyist to be a grammatical error in the formation of the ethnic of Μῆλος.

ways be fatally open to dispute. However, we may take it as securely based on the whole set of testimonia about Leucippus' studies, teaching, and doctrines that he had something to do with all three cities at different times in his life, that he attended the school of Elea while he was still fairly young, and that he later transferred to Abdera and ran a school there in his turn.

As regards his Eleatic studies, too, there are divergences between the sources over the identity of Leucippus' teacher: most say he was Zeno,<sup>14</sup> some that he was Melissus,<sup>15</sup> one says he was Parmenides directly<sup>16</sup> – not to mention Iamblichus, who makes him a disciple of Pythagoras.<sup>17</sup>

The huge majority of the testimonia on his doctrine do no more than set his name beside that of Democritus, turning him into a kind of double, an almost pleonastic counterpart of the latter. In addition, a phrase of Epicurus has seemed to present the thesis that he never existed at all, that is, that he is a figure completely invented on the whim of some pseudo-scholar. The following is the comment that Diogenes Laertius attributes to Epicurus:<sup>18</sup>

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ Λεύκιππόν τινα γεγενῆσθαι φησι [scil. Ἐπίκουρος] φιλόσοφον.

All these details of the ancient tradition, and above all this view attributed to Epicurus by Diogenes Laertius, have given rise to the modern 'Leukippfrage,' raised already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Leucippus' historicity has been categorically denied by numerous scholars,<sup>19</sup> including some of the first rank, such as Rohde,<sup>20</sup> Natorp,<sup>21</sup> Tannery,<sup>22</sup> Brieger,<sup>23</sup> and Nestle.<sup>24</sup> In the course of my life I have been able to confirm in person that often colleagues in Classics are unaware even of his name or existence, just as Don Abbondio – who, however, was not a Classicist – did not know of the name or existence of Carneades.<sup>25</sup> In

<sup>14</sup> Diog. Laert. 9. 30 = Leuc. test. 1 D.-K.; Clem. *Strom.* 1. 64 = Leuc. test. 4 D.-K.; Galen. *Hist. philos.* 3 (Diels 1879, 601) = Leuc. test. 5 D.-K.; Hippol. *Ref.* 1. 12 = Leuc. test. 10 D.-K.

<sup>15</sup> Tzetz. *Chil.* 2. 980 = Leuc. test. 5 D.-K.

<sup>16</sup> Simpl. in *Aristot. Phys.* 28. 4 = Leuc. test. 7 D.-K. (κοινωνήσας Παρμενίδῃ τῆς φιλοσοφίας).

<sup>17</sup> Iambl. *Vita Pyth.* 104 = Leuc. test. 5 D.-K.

<sup>18</sup> Diog. Laert. 10. 13 = Epic. fr. 232 Usener.

<sup>19</sup> See the dissertation of Bokornew 1911.

<sup>20</sup> Rohde 1881a and 1881b.

<sup>21</sup> Natorp 1886 and 1887.

<sup>22</sup> Tannery 1897.

<sup>23</sup> Brieger 1884, 1888 and 1901.

<sup>24</sup> Nestle 1920.

<sup>25</sup> The chapter 8 of the novel *I Promessi Sposi* by Alessandro Manzoni (Milan, 1840–1842), which holds a place in Italian literature similar to that of *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo in

reality, the submersion of his memory was due in large measure to a very specific case of pseudepigraphic attribution. We shall see how!

A page of the *De generatione et corruptione* of Aristotle says very explicitly that the idea of atomism was conceived first by Leucippus before it was thought by Democritus, and also illuminates very well how Leucippus' thought grew from the beating heart of the Eleatic environment (325 a. 23–33). Let us read it sentence by sentence, following each sentence with some observations. After mentioning in the preceding lines the fact that Leucippus and Democritus professed roughly the same doctrine, and delineating the substance of the Parmenidean doctrine (without naming Parmenides), Aristotle continues:

Λεύκιππος δ' ἔχειν ψήθη λόγους οἱ τινες πρὸς τὴν αἴσθησιν ὁμολογούμενα λέγοντες οὐκ ἀναιρήσουσιν οὔτε γένεσιν οὔτε φθορὰν οὔτε κίνησιν καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ὄντων.

Leucippus, on the other hand [i.e. as opposed to Parmenides], believed that it was possible to make arguments which, while speaking in accordance with sensation, did not eliminate either generation or corruption or motion or the multiplicity of the things that are.

Note that:

1. after pairing Leucippus with Democritus in the preceding lines, here Aristotle isolates Leucippus as the first inventor of the atomic theory;
2. already here, as also in the next part of the passage, he presents the doctrine of Leucippus as a direct and specific response to that of Parmenides.

ὁμολογήσας δὲ ταῦτα μὲν τοῖς φαινόμενοις, τοῖς δὲ τὸ ἐν κατασκευάζουσιν ὡς οὐκ ἂν κίνησιν οὔσαν ἄνευ κενοῦ, τό τε κενὸν μὴ ὄν, καὶ τοῦ ὄντος οὐθὲν μὴ ὄν φησιν εἶναι.

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French literature, begins with the words ‘Carneades! Who was he?’: they are spoken to himself by Don Abbondio, a 17<sup>th</sup> century country priest, who finds the name Carneades mentioned in a speech he is reading – a panegyric of St Charles Borromeo delivered in 1626 in Milan cathedral by Father Vincenzo Tasca – but he has no notion who that is (the idea of a question about Carneades may have been suggested to Manzoni by Augustine, *contra Academicos* 1. 3. 7 *nescio Carneades iste qui fuerit*). This chapter-opening, unexpected in relation to the story being told and very striking (not least because the curate’s ignorance of Carneades will certainly have been shared by the great majority of the novel’s Italian readers both in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in subsequent ones), has become famous in Italian culture (like most other passages of the novel), to the point that *carneade* (uncapitalized, as it is no longer perceived as a personal name) henceforth became a synonym in Italian for ‘unknown’ (see e.g. Zingarelli 2015, s.v. ‘Carneade’) [ed.].

But, after thus agreeing both with the phenomena and with those who postulate the One in such a way that there could be no motion without void, he says that void is [εἶναι at the end of the sentence] non-being and that nothing of being is [the εἶναι at the end of the sentence still applies] non-being.

Aristotle perfectly captures the ideological and terminological continuity between Eleatic philosophy and Leucippus. He states that Leucippus ‘agrees’ (ὁμολογήσας) with the Eleatics that there cannot be motion without void and that being does not admit any void within itself, it being hence absolutely compact, but then he dissents from the notion that void/‘non-being’ does not exist, proclaiming instead its absolute existence. The same mix of agreement and disagreement is picked out by Aristotle in *Phys.* 1. 3. 187 a1–3: the ὁμολογήσας here corresponds precisely to the ἐνέδοσαν of the *Physics* passage and both refer to the same doctrinal points. This presents a decisive confirmation that in the *Physics* the ‘some people’ who ‘made concessions’ to the Eleatics were the atomists, as the majority of Aristotle’s commentators indeed understand it.

τὸ γὰρ κυρίως ὃν παμπλήρες ὄν· ἄλλ’ εἶναι τὸ τοιοῦτον οὐχ ἓν, ἀλλ’ ἄπειρα τὸ πλῆθος καὶ ἀόρατα διὰ μικρότητα τῶν ὄγκων. ταῦτα δ’ ἐν τῷ κενῷ φέρεσθαι, κενὸν γὰρ εἶναι, καὶ συνιστάμενα μὲν γένεσιν ποιεῖν, διαλυόμενα δὲ φθοράν.

(He states that) that which is, in the strict sense, is absolutely full; (that), however, the latter is not one, but infinite in number and invisible, given the smallness of the masses. And (that) these entities travel through the void – given that the void exists – and, when they meet, they produce generation, when they separate they produce corruption.

He then continues the exposition of the atomistic doctrine on the encounter between atoms and the formation of substances and composite bodies.

But where did Aristotle get all this precise information about Leucippus’ thinking? Diogenes Laertius provides us with the important and famous report that Thrasyllus (1<sup>st</sup> cent. CE) produced a complete edition subdivided into tetralogies not only of the works of the *corpus Platonicum*, but also of those of the *corpus Democriteum*.<sup>26</sup> He goes on to list the titles of the individual works, grouping them by topic. The group of works on physical topics begins with the two following titles: *Great Cosmology* (Μέγας διάκοσμος) and *Little Cosmology* (Μικρὸς διάκοσμος),<sup>27</sup> but the title of the first is accompanied by the following notice: ὃν οἱ περὶ Θεόφραστον Λευκίππου φασὶν εἶναι, ‘Theophrastus says that it

<sup>26</sup> Diog. Laert. 9. 45 = Democr. test. 33 D.-K.

<sup>27</sup> Diog. Laert. 9. 46.

is by Leucippus'.<sup>28</sup> Theophrastus knew that the most famous work of Democritus was actually by Leucippus! So there we have the answer to where Aristotle got all the notices he provides about the doctrine of Leucippus: he took them from the Μέγας διάκοσμος of Democritus, which he too must thus have known was a work specifically by Leucippus.<sup>29</sup>

We know that the ancients were in the habit of inserting among the books of great authors (be they poets, philosophers or historians) not only those that they knew had in fact been composed by them, but also those that they knew to have come from the pen of the author's students, followers or imitators, because they continued and completed the work of the main author. In this way large corpora were formed in which the works that are authentic were all mixed together with those that are not: sometimes the real author's name was noted at the start or end of a work, other times not. If it was noted, it could easily get lost thereafter in the course of the manuscript transmission. Thus, almost by tacit convention, the entire corpus came to be considered the work of the principal author. And this was the main source of the phenomenon of pseudepigraphy, which was so widespread in ancient literature.<sup>30</sup>

Following the same mental pattern, Democritus would have included the book of his teacher among his own works, since it had laid out many of the premises of the doctrine that he himself maintained. He did not intend to rewrite what had already been done. It may be that he had collaborated in drafting it, in his youth when he was Leucippus' disciple. Certainly he would not have failed to attach the name of Leucippus to it, but the name would soon have got lost in later copies. It must have vanished from many copies already in the time of Theophrastus, if the latter felt the need to record that the book was by Leucippus and not by Democritus.

The original title of Leucippus' book must have been Διάκοσμος, not Μέγας διάκοσμος, as the latter can be explained only within the Democritean corpus in opposition to Μικρὸς διάκοσμος. Perhaps it was Democritus himself who classified the two Διάκοσμοι in this way, respectively that of his teacher and of himself: he would have called his own one Μικρὸς διάκοσμος either because it was

<sup>28</sup> That in ancient Greek an expression like οἱ περὶ Θεόφραστον often means simply Θεόφραστος has been shown by Radt 1980, 1988 and 2002.

<sup>29</sup> The Leucippean authorship of the *Great Cosmology* is noted again in Campanian Epicurean circles between the 1<sup>st</sup> cent. BCE and the 1<sup>st</sup> cent. CE: see P. Herc. 1788 (coll. alt. VIII, 58–62), fr. 1 = Leucipp. fr. 1a D.-K. = Democr. fr. 4b D.-K.

<sup>30</sup> I permit myself here to refer to the volume which I edited, Cerri 2000.

shorter or of more limited scope, or perhaps simply through a disciple's *pietas*. However that may be, Leucippus called his cosmological work Διάκοσμος.

Let us now re-read the whole passage in which Diogenes Laertius reports what Epicurus thought about Leucippus, to which we have already referred above (10. 13):

τοῦτον Ἀπολλόδωρος ἐν χρονικοῖς Ναυσιφάνους ἀκοῦσαί φησι καὶ Πραξιφάνους· αὐτὸς δὲ οὐ φησιν, ἀλλ' ἐαυτοῦ, ἐν τῇ πρὸς Εὐρύλοχον ἐπιστολῇ ...

Apollodorus says in the *Chronicles*<sup>31</sup> that he attended the lectures of Nausiphanes and of Praxiphanes, whereas Epicurus himself denies this, but says instead that he was a student of himself, in the *Letter to Eurylochus*...<sup>32</sup>

This is not very surprising: in many passages of his works Epicurus displays total disdain for Nausiphanes, who was nonetheless his teacher in atomism, and maintained that he had learned practically nothing at the courses he delivered, as he was more an empty rhetorician than a scientist or philosopher; Epicurus consequently maintained that he was essentially an autodidact. But let us continue our reading of Diogenes:

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ Λεύκιππὸν τίνα γεγενῆσθαι φησι<sup>33</sup> φιλόσοφον, οὔτε αὐτὸς οὔτε Ἑρμαρχος, ὃν ἔνιοί φασι, καὶ Ἀπολλόδωρος ὁ Ἐπικούρειος, διδάσκαλον Δημοκρίτου γεγενῆσθαι.

What did Epicurus say, with the agreement of Hermarchus, about Leucippus? Here, if we go by the phrasing of the Greek itself, two interpretations are objectively possible and, still basing our interpretation on the phrasing itself, neither is more entitled than the other to be considered correct or incorrect. The first interpretation, which is the more widespread among modern critics, is as follows:

But he says that no philosopher Leucippus existed, he says it himself and so does Hermarchus, the Leucippus who some people, including Apollodorus the Epicurean, say was the teacher of Democritus.

If we interpret the passage in this way, according to Diogenes Laertius Epicurus would have maintained, in some passage of his work, perhaps in the *Letter to Eurylochus* itself, cited just before, that Leucippus had in reality never existed

<sup>31</sup> *FGrHist* 244 F 41.

<sup>32</sup> Epic. fr. 123 Usener.

<sup>33</sup> Epic. fr. 232 Usener.

and that Leucippus, teacher of Democritus, was just a legend, a result of invention. He would have maintained this in a, so to speak, historical-philological mood. This is how it is interpreted by almost all the modern critics who deny the historicity of Leucippus, who consider this belief of Epicurus to be indeed decisive for the purpose of their thesis, since the latter lived between the fourth and third century BCE, an era in which historical and philological studies were flourishing.

Some too who, in contrast, believe that Leucippus really did exist have in the past taken this reading of the passage of Diogenes to be self-evident, but with the difference that they maintain either that Epicurus was here voicing an opinion or doubt that was unfounded, or that Diogenes has misinterpreted the argument made by Epicurus: the explicit testimonia of Aristotle and Theophrastus are available to counter irrefutably any such denial of Leucippus' existence, so either Epicurus made some mistake when interpreting the documentary evidence in his possession, or Diogenes Laertius (or some source prior to him) made a mistake when reading Epicurus. Among the modern supporters of Leucippus, others have instead rejected this first interpretation of the passage of Diogenes, proposing a second interpretation of it which, as I have already said, is equally possible from a grammatical and syntactical point of view:<sup>34</sup>

But (Epicurus) says that Leucippus was no philosopher, he said it himself as did Hermarchus, the Leucippus who some people, including Apollodorus the Epicurean, say was the teacher of Democritus.

Why, according to those critics who accept Leucippus' historicity, should we interpret the passage like this rather than in the first way? For three fundamental reasons:

1. It would eliminate a statement by Epicurus that is indeed strange, isolated in the picture given by the whole ancient tradition, and countered by the contrary testimony of Aristotle and Theophrastus.
2. It would eliminate a curious contradiction in the work of Epicurus himself, given that, according to a fragment of papyrus from Herculaneum, which is quite damaged but reconstructible in the essence of its argument, Epicurus

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<sup>34</sup> DeWitt 1944–1945 believes himself to be the discoverer of this, with much clamour and derision towards all previous scholars, who he claimed had made a banal 'translation error', one after the other, including the most distinguished. In reality the interpretation had already been proposed e.g. by Burnet 1920, 257 n. 2 and 1930, 330 n. 2 (and so from at latest the third edition of his treatise), and, in a more detailed way, by Alfieri 1936, 8 with n. 27 (the note continues to p. 9).

himself in a different context had taken for granted the existence of Leucippus alongside Democritus, when he narrated how Nausiphanes would read and comment upon the texts of both of them in front of his students.<sup>35</sup>

3. It would eliminate the disagreement between the opinion of Apollodorus the Epicurean, mentioned in the same passage of Diogenes, and that of Epicurus, of whom Apollodorus was without doubt a loyal follower, given his cognomen.

These three arguments certainly add some weight in favour of the second interpretation of the passage of Diogenes, but they are not decisive. At the end of the day, it is always possible to suppose that Epicurus was indeed the only person in antiquity to deny the historicity of Leucippus, and to maintain that Aristotle and Theophrastus, when attributing to Leucippus the *Great Cosmology* of Democritus, were making a very debatable philological conjecture, rather than being witnesses who were directly informed about the facts. When he recalled the lectures of Nausiphanes, Epicurus could very well have listed among the readings, alongside those of Anaxagoras and Empedocles, those of Democritus and Leucippus, without feeling the need, in this autobiographical narrative, to cast doubt on the authenticity of the work read by Nausiphanes and the historical reality of Leucippus. He might equally just have changed his mind on the subject and could hence have contradicted in more recent works what he had written in the past. Finally, it is not totally absurd that Apollodorus the Epicurean might have disagreed with Epicurus on the particular historical problem of the existence of Leucippus.

There is however a truly decisive argument against the first interpretation of Diogenes' phrase, and it concerns not the phrase in itself but its contextualization. Diogenes was relating how Epicurus had scorned the instruction he had received from his own teacher Nausiphanes: why on earth would he have needed to squeeze in the information, which is not at all relevant, that Epicurus denied the historicity of Leucippus? And why would he have linked it to the previous material with the adversative conjunction ἀλλά? It is true that in many of his pages Diogenes often tacks together unconnected notices to use up the information he possessed on a given philosopher and which he had not yet managed to insert into the systematic treatment. But this page does not belong to this category. It is illustrating Epicurus' philosophical formation in a very linear way: Diogenes lists, one after the other, the past philosophers who had

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<sup>35</sup> P. Herc. 1005, fr. 24 (coll. alt. I, 132ff.) = Epic. fr. 104 Arrighetti.

caught Epicurus' interest or just attracted his attention; and he lists those contemporaries whose lectures Epicurus attended in his youth. In this way Diogenes has arrived at the person commonly known as the direct teacher of Epicurus, namely Nausiphanes, and has noted that, however, Epicurus himself did not express any acknowledgement of this and claimed to the contrary that he was an autodidact.

There would be no sense in saying at this point, 'You know what? Epicurus denied the historical existence of Leucippus, the teacher of Democritus.' It would, on the other hand, make excellent sense to say, 'But Epicurus talked down not only his own teacher, but also the teacher of Democritus, denying him the standing of philosopher, just as he denied it to Nausiphanes, and so he made Democritus essentially an autodidact, just as he claimed to be an autodidact himself.' We may, then, paraphrase the whole notice of Diogenes, making explicit what he has left to be read between the lines: 'The chronographer Apollodorus of Athens, an authority of great standing, states that Epicurus was the disciple of Nausiphanes. Epicurus himself, however, denied this: it was not that he denied attending his teaching, but he maintained that he had not gained anything from his lectures. But Epicurus thought the same about the didactic relation between Leucippus and Democritus: he maintained that Democritus had not discovered atomism thanks to Leucippus, who was of rather little worth and could not be considered a philosopher, but rather he had discovered it by himself, despite the purely biographical information transmitted by the sources.' I would therefore translate Diogenes' second phrase with a slight modification of the start, in the light of what has just gone before:

*But he said that not even Leucippus was a philosopher, he said it himself as did Hermarchus, the Leucippus who some people, including Apollodorus the Epicurean, say was the teacher of Democritus.*

Why does he begin with 'but' (ἀλλά)? The line of thought is as follows: 'Notwithstanding the objective biographical fact (recognized by Epicurus himself in various passages of his work) that from his youth he had attended the lectures of the atomist Nausiphanes, he stated that he had learned nothing from him and that he had become a true atomist by his own efforts alone. That may seem strange! *But* it is a fact that he made the exact same argument about Leucippus and Democritus.'

We could go further and suppose that Diogenes (or his source) found both the downplaying of Nausiphanes' teaching and the downplaying of Leucippus' teaching in Epicurus' *Letter to Eurylochus*, along the following lines: 'Dear Eurylochus, ... when I was young I attended some lectures of Nausiphanes, who was

a professed atomist, but he was only a rhetorician inclined to empty talk. From him I learned practically nothing. All that I have learned and spoken about atoms I learned myself later. The same thing happened to Democritus: from his youth he attended the lectures of Leucippus, who passed himself off as an atomist, but in reality he was of little worth, to the point that we can't consider him a real philosopher; Democritus too, like me, had to do everything himself. It may seem that this is a reconstruction that is vainglorious and unfair to my teacher. But it is a fact that, at least as regards Leucippus and Democritus, my dear and worthy friend Hermarchus thought the same thing.'

But why did Epicurus think that Leucippus had not been a philosopher? Probably because in Leucippus, just as already in Parmenides and Zeno, the ethical dimension was totally absent, which Epicurus regarded as the principal motor, continuous heartbeat, and ultimate goal of philosophy.<sup>36</sup>

In conclusion, what led to the memory of Leucippus being obscured, and so also to the submersion of the authorship of his work Διάκοσμος and consequently the submersion of the fact that he discovered the atom, was no more and no less than the entry of his work into the *corpus Democriteum* and the ancient propensity to make pseudepigraphic attributions.

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<sup>36</sup> In this philological contribution I have refrained from giving any kind of detailed report of the bibliography, with the aim of not interrupting the flow of the argument by digressing at every turn on the various positions taken by this or that scholar on this or that point. As far as I know, I believe (without of course being able to be absolutely certain) that the final part of the analysis of Diogenes' phrase (from the point at which I write, 'There is however a truly decisive argument against the first interpretation of Diogenes' phrase,' onwards) has not previously been argued by anyone before me.

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Heinz-Günther Nesselrath

## Sopater of Paphus and the Phlyax Plays

At first sight the remains of the comic plays of Sopater of Paphos<sup>1</sup> might not seem a very promising subject for detailed treatment. Sopater does not seem to have been one of the more prolific comic poets of his age: no more than 14 play titles have been preserved – a paltry number, compared to the productivity of Diphilus, Philemon and Menander, not to mention Antiphanes and Alexis –, and some of these 14 titles may even be doublets for the same play.<sup>2</sup> Apart from the titles, 54 verses and three single words are all that is left of Sopater's texts; still, a closer look at these meagre remains may allow us to get at least a glimpse of some remarkable peculiarities in the production of this poet.

Of Sopater's life, times and background not much can be told. According to *PCG* test. 1 and 2,<sup>3</sup> he hailed from Paphos on Cyprus and, according to *PCG* test. 1,<sup>4</sup> he lived in the times of Alexander the Great and his successors – as regents / kings of Egypt – Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II. Some of the fragments of his plays provide further echos of Sopater's times: in fr. 1 a speaker mentions the mighty colossus of Rhodes, which was erected in the 290s BC;<sup>5</sup> fr. 6 describes a gruesome custom of the Celtic Γαλάται, who had only recently burst into the world of the Eastern Mediterranean, when they attacked the oracle at Delphi in 279

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1 On which see also the recent study by Sofia 2009.

2 See below pp. 28–29.

3 *PCG* test. 3 (= Athen. 4. 158 d) Σώπατρος ὁ Φάκιος is probably a humorous distortion of Σώπατρος ὁ Πάφιος, as already Casaubonus 1621, p. 289. 17 noted.

4 Athenaeus *epit.* 2. 71 ab (= test. 1 K.-A.): Σώπατρος ὁ Πάφιος γεγωνῶς τοῖς χρόνοις κατ' Ἀλέξανδρον τὸν Φιλίππου, ἐπιβιούς δὲ καὶ ἔως τοῦ δευτέρου τῆς Αἰγύπτου βασιλέως, ὡς αὐτὸς ἐμφανίζει ἐν τινὶ τῶν συγγραμμάτων αὐτοῦ. The last remark may hint at some allusion to Ptolemy II in one of Sopater's plays.

5 This reference has been doubted by Hadjistephanou 1991, who proposes to combine the words κολοσσὸν φάκινον (instead of φάκινον ἄρτον, which has been the usual interpretation until now), contending that 'lentil bread' (φάκινος ἄρτος) is not attested anywhere near the times of Sopater and translating the fragment as 'I could not, having before my eyes a dark huge colossus of lentil food, eat bread.' There are, however, serious obstacles to his interpretation, the biggest of which may be how to explain the attribute χαλκήλατον connected with κολοσσόν; Hadjistephanou's own translation 'a dark huge colossus of lentil food' does not seem to do justice to χαλκήλατον. Moreover, Eduard Fraenkel on Aesch. *Agam.* 416 has pointed out (taking up a line of thought already voiced by Wilamowitz) that 'it was only the reputation of the gigantic statue of Helios by Chares of Lindos which ... brought about the particular meaning of "colossus".' Thus, to detect a rather specific allusion to the Rhodian Colossus in Sopater's words remains the most plausible way to read this fragment.

BC.<sup>6</sup> These two fragments, then, would date the poet's activity mainly to the first decades of the third century BC; but we are apparently taken a bit further back in time by fr. 18, which mentions a 'Thibron, son of Tantalus'; this was a leader of mercenaries who killed Harpalus, the fugitive treasurer of Alexander the Great, in 324 and was himself defeated by Ptolemy's general Ophellas and killed in 322 BC.<sup>7</sup> As Thibron will not have remained a widely known person long after his death, Sopater's play mentioning him should have been written rather soon after these events.

The evidence adduced so far seems to lead to the conclusion that Sopater wrote comedies between at least 315 and 275, i.e. over a period of forty years. In about the same amount of time Aristophanes produced about forty plays a century earlier, and Menander wrote considerably more in just three decades. For Sopater, we have the titles of only 14 plays at most. Either, then, there is some mistake in the chronological data, or Sopater may have written many more plays of which no trace has been preserved. We shall consider later why this may in fact have been the case.

As for the whereabouts of his life – apart from the already mentioned fact that he was born in Cypriote Paphos –, some fragments display knowledge of things Alexandrian (frr. 1, 11, 22, 24), while a few also point to Rhodes (frr. 1, 9). Certainly both Rhodes and Alexandria would lie within the 'natural' geographical sphere of a poet hailing from Cyprus. On the other hand there is no evidence at all that Sopater ever made it to Athens, which was still the most important centre of Greek Comedy during these times. Could the rivalry of such giants as Menander, Diphilus and Philemon have seemed too intimidating to him? In any case he seems to have been attracted to the recently founded Alexandria, which was rapidly becoming the most important Greek city and cultural centre of the Hellenistic world. It seems to be no accident that it was in Alexandria that all of Sopater's poetic production – for some time at least – was probably preserved; a consequence of this is that all his fragments are found exclusively in the *Deipnosophists* of Athenaeus of Naucratis.<sup>8</sup> It is a reasonable assumption that the vast treasures of the libraries of Alexandria were responsible for at least some of

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<sup>6</sup> Koerte 1927, 1002. 1–5, wants to push the date even later, claiming that Sopater could only have heard about the Galatians' customs after some of them had come to Egypt as mercenaries in 274/2 BCE (cf *schol. Call. Hymn.* 4. 175–187; Paus. 1. 7. 2); against this, see Fraser 1972, 875 n. 19.

<sup>7</sup> Cf Arrian, *FGrHist* 156 F 9. 16–18.

<sup>8</sup> Even the two *Suda* articles on Sopater (σ 846 and 847 = test. 5 K.-A.) state explicitly that they are dependent on Athenaeus.

Athenaeus' more recondite 'Lese Früchte';<sup>9</sup> so he probably read (and excerpted) Sopater – either directly or via some intermediate source – in Alexandria.

Before, however, taking a closer look at the remains of Sopater's plays themselves, we have to deal with a rather curious fact: our extant sources – i.e. mainly Athenaeus – seven times<sup>10</sup> call him a παρωιδός and five times<sup>11</sup> a φλυακογράφος; only one of the apparently two articles on him in the *Suda* Lexicon<sup>12</sup> applies to him the label κωμικός ('comic poet'), and if we had just the extant fragments without any labels for their author, we should surely think that Sopater really was a comic poet not much different from other comic poets of the later fourth and early third century BC.

There are, then, three genres (we might say) contending for Sopater's 'identity': parodia, the Phlyax farce and comedy. Only one of these genres, comedy, is reasonably well known, while the other two, parodia and Phlyax farce, are much more shadowy to us, due to the fact that only a few fragments of them have survived, and it is not easy to reconcile their characteristics (as far as we know them) with the remains of Sopater's production, as was already pointed out by Alfred Koerte.<sup>13</sup>

First, parodia. We can still trace an outline of the history of this genre from the later fifth century, when its most prominent exponent was Hegemon of Thasos, into the fourth century with Matron of Pitane, Archestratus of Gela, Euboeus of Paros and Boeotus of Syracuse; as a late-comer to the genre we may consider the famous *Batrachomyomachia*. Now all these poets and texts have two things in common: they parody Homeric epic, and they are therefore written in hexameters. Neither epic parody, however, nor even one single hexameter can be found in Sopater's remains – so why was he called παρωιδός?

<sup>9</sup> On Athenaeus' sources, see Nesselrath 1990, 65–79.

<sup>10</sup> Athen. 4. 158 d, 175 c, 183 b, 6. 230 e, 8. 341 e, 11. 784 b = test. 3 K.-A.; *Suda* σ 847 = test. 5 K.-A.

<sup>11</sup> Athen. 3. 86 a, 14. 644 c, 649 a, 656 f, 15. 702 b = test. 4 K.-A.

<sup>12</sup> *Suda* σ 846 = test. 5 K.-A. The two contiguous *Suda* articles (*Suda* σ 846. 847) apparently deal with the same author (the first calling him κωμικός, the second παρωιδός); the first gives the titles of eight plays, the second adds a ninth. One might, of course, suspect that there were two poets of the same name, one a comic poet, the other a phlyacographer or παρωιδός; but the one play mentioned in the latter article shows no notable differences from the eight mentioned in the former.

<sup>13</sup> Koerte 1927, 1001–1002: Koerte wondered how an author of whom nothing is left in Doric dialect came to be called φλυακογράφος and, likewise, how one could call him παρωιδός, when there is not one hexameter (the usual metre employed by other παρωιδοί, such as Hegemon, Matron, Boeotus) in the surviving remains of Sopater's production.

Second, Phylax farce. All remains of poets connected with this genre have been collected in volume I of Kassel and Austin's *Poetae Comici Graeci* in less than thirty pages (259–288); apart from one very uncertain case<sup>14</sup> and two very little-known authors,<sup>15</sup> the only other poet (apart from our Sopater) explicitly linked to φλυακογραφία of whom something more is known is Rhinton of Tarentum, a contemporary of Sopater's.<sup>16</sup> Of Rhinton's production, we still have 25 fragments (17 of which are only single words, while the remaining eight provide a grand total of eight and a half verses) and nine play titles, all of which seem to show that those plays were parodistic distortions of tragedies by Sophocles or Euripides (*Amphitryon*, *Dulomeleager*, *Heracles*, *Iobatas*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, *Medea*, *Orestes*, *Telephus*). Several of these titles – and some of the verse fragments as well – exhibit clear signs of Doric dialect, as we would expect from a poet hailing from Doric Tarentum; moreover, the Hellenistic scholar Sosibius Lacon<sup>17</sup> explicitly states that φλύακες is an 'Italic' (i.e. Western Greek and presumably Doric) form of comic drama. Again, however, there is not a single Doricism to be found in the remains of Sopater's comic production – so why was he called a φλυακογράφος?

Before trying to answer this question, a closer look at what remains from Sopater's plays is necessary, so that we can get an idea of what his work was really like.

The fourteen extant play titles suggest a whole range of different types of plays, some of them rather typical for his age, but others of a more mysterious nature. Four titles – Βακχίς, Βακχίδος μνηστῆρες, Βακχίδος γάμος and Κνιδία – seem to indicate plays revolving around a girl, who in the case of Bacchis was probably a hetaera,<sup>18</sup> while the 'girl from Knidos' may have been a young woman in the clutches of a brothel-keeper (a πορνοβοσκός), but who later

<sup>14</sup> A Heraclides, who owes his connection to Phylaxes only to a conjecture by Wilamowitz (PCG I, 288).

<sup>15</sup> Sciras of Tarentum, of whom only two lines of a play with the title 'Meleager' are extant (PCG I, 271–272), and Blaesus of Capri, of whom we still have four words and one verse (if it is a verse) from a play entitled 'Saturnus' (PCG I, 273–274).

<sup>16</sup> The only other poet to be identified as a writer of φλύακες is Sotades, in whose case φλύακες seem to be a synonym for κίναδοι (see *Suda* σ 871 and φ 547).

<sup>17</sup> Sosibius, *FGrHist* 595 F 7 = Athen. 14. 621 f.

<sup>18</sup> Hetaerae called Bacchis are found in Plautus' *Bacchides* (which is the Latin adaptation of Menander's *Dis Exapatôn*), in Lucian's *Dial. meretr.* 4, in the *Letters of Courtesans* by Alciphron (4. 2–5, 11, 14); a historical one is mentioned in Athen. 13. 594 b–c (see also Plut. *Amat.* 9. 753 d); there was a play with the title Βακχίς by Epigenes. See also PCG VIII adesp. 724 and Kassel and Austin *ad Men. test.* 20. 1 ff.

turned out to be the long-lost daughter of some honourable citizen. As these four titles, however, are connected with a grand total of only seven verses, we cannot even begin to speculate about the plot of these plays. Especially intriguing, of course, are the three titles exhibiting the same name, i.e. Bacchis. Did these titles designate a single play? Or do the second and the third title indicate reworkings (ἀνασκευαί) of the original Βακχίς? Both explanations seem possible, as Βακχίδος μνηστήρες and Βακχίδος γάμος could easily just denote different stages within the same plot. Kaibel<sup>19</sup> considered yet another solution: namely that the three titles indicated subsequent episodes within the eventful life of the same hetaera.<sup>20</sup> As supporting parallels Kaibel cited three plays by the great Sophocles concerning the famous mythical beauty Helen of Sparta (Ἑλένης ἀπαίτησις, Ἑλένης ἀρπαγή, Ἑλένης γάμος<sup>21</sup>) and three others involving the same Helen by the comic playwright Alexis (Ἑλένη, Ἑλένης ἀρπαγή, Ἑλένης μνηστήρες).<sup>22</sup> Especially the last-mentioned triad seems quite close to the triad of titles preserved for Sopater; nevertheless, it must be pointed out that ‘demanding back,’ ‘abduction’ and ‘marriage’, on the one hand, and ‘abduction’ and ‘suitors’, on the other, surely point to more distinct episodes than ‘suitors’ and ‘marriage’. Still, the title parallels adduced by Kaibel may indicate yet another possibility of interpretation, especially in the case of Βακχίδος μνηστήρες: could the Bacchis of this play have been depicted as a latter-day Helen or Penelope? And if so, might this play be regarded as a deliberate travesty of the events surrounding those mythic heroines? Some of Sopater’s titles in fact show that he presented such mythic themes in comic guise.

In the case of Βακχίδος μνηστήρες, we may also possibly tease out some more information from the two verses preserved under this title. The first of them is fr. 3, consisting of the iambic line: Ἐρέτριαν ὠρμήθημεν εἰς λευκάλφιτον (‘We set out for Eretria, city of white barley-meal’<sup>23</sup>), which sounds like it comes from a narrative someone delivered at some point in the play. Who could have been the speaker? Possibly he was one of the ‘suitors’ of Bacchis mentioned in the title, and as suitors of hetaerae often are mercenary soldiers in Attic Com-

<sup>19</sup> Cited in *PCG* I, 276.

<sup>20</sup> Similarly Sofia 2009, 225 n. 21 toys with the idea that the three titles denote ‘una sorta di “trilogia” parodica incentrata sui “pretendenti” di questa Bacchide’; we have, however, no parallel for such a ‘comic trilogy’.

<sup>21</sup> On these titles, see Radt *TrGF* IV p. 177–178, 181.

<sup>22</sup> On these titles, see *PCG* II p. 58 and 59.

<sup>23</sup> Olson (in his Athenaeus edition) translates, ‘We set off to Eretria of the white barley groats’. In the following, all other translations of Sopater’s verses are usually taken from Olson (unless otherwise specified).

edy, our speaker, too, could have been such a mercenary bragging about one of his exploits in foreign places;<sup>24</sup> but there is also another – and perhaps more attractive – possibility: the speaker chooses to describe Eretria by a detail belonging to the realm of food and drink; perhaps he is especially interested in such matters, and thus he may have been a parasite who more than once is a typical companion of a soldier in New Comedy (compare e.g. Struthias/Gnathon in Menander's *Colax* and Artotrogus in Plautus' *Miles gloriosus*). We may conjecture a similar situation for fr. 4, the second verse preserved with this play title: here someone mentions the island 'Samos, whose name is flat-cake maker'<sup>25</sup> (πλακουντοποιόν ὠνομασμένην Σάμον), and this might be another leg of the journey referred to in fr. 3; and, as we have the same emphasis on an item of food, we might also have the same speaker.

With his title Γαλάται Sopater seems to refer to a rather recent phenomenon which already gave us some hints about his chronology: since 279 BCE, the invading Celts, often called 'Galatians' in Greek sources, were a disruptive presence especially in Asia Minor, and as such they also found their way into comic plays. Sopater's contemporary Poseidippus wrote a play entitled *The Galatian* (Γαλάτης); but it is easier to conceive how a single representative of this non-Greek people might have a role in a comic plot (one might compare Alexis' Καρχηδόνιος or Plautus' *Persa*) than to imagine how a whole bunch of those unruly barbarians might figure in such a play.<sup>26</sup> It is quite curious, too, that in the one fragment (fr. 6) preserved from this play (Sopater's longest with 12 iambic lines), the unknown speaker takes a gruesome custom of the Galatians (namely their sacrificing of prisoners of war to their gods) as starting-point for a vitriolic attack on intellectuals against whom he has – for reasons unclear to us – developed a mighty grudge: we see him gleefully revelling in the thought that he would like to burn three 'fake philosophers' to death. With those διαλεκτικοὶ παρεγγεγραμμένοι (v. 5) he apparently means Stoics (who were famous for their subtle dialectic quibbles); v. 11 confirms this by referring to a Ζηνωνικὸς κύριος. As Zeno founded the Stoic school in Athens around 300 BC, the situation in which our speaker considers his drastic action against the Stoics could be lo-

<sup>24</sup> Compare Eriphus fr. 6 K.-A., Antiphan. fr. 200 K.-A., Alexis fr. 63 K.-A. See also the boasting Pyrgopolinices at the beginning of Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus*, 1–78, and Thraso in Terence's *Eunuchus*, 391–433.

<sup>25</sup> This is Gulick's translation (in the earlier Loeb Athenaeus edition); Olson translates, 'Samos, known as cake-maker'.

<sup>26</sup> Antiphanes wrote a play Σκῦθαι ἢ Ταῦροι, (fr. 199 K.-A., while fr. 197 and 198 are ascribed to a play entitled Σκύθης). One might also think of the (rather brief) stage presence of the Thracian Odomantai at the beginning of Aristophanes' *Acharnians*.

cated in a contemporary Athenian context. In the second half of his tirade, the speaker envisions a brutal way of putting the vaunted endurance of the Stoics to the test: ‘I’ve certainly heard the group of you earnestly opting / to philosophize, philologize and practise endurance; / so I’m going to test the health of your doctrines / [corrupt] by smoking. Then while you’re roasting, / if I see that one of you drew his leg back, / he’ll be sold to a Zenonian master / for export, since he’s ignorant of true thought.’<sup>27</sup> Apparently, then, the play (or at least a considerable part of it) dealt with the violent anti-Stoic disposition of one of its characters. What role did the Galatians of the title play in all this? Did they serve as some kind of far-away bogeys, to be used to instil fear in certain participants of the play? And did perhaps some of them – possibly even as a kind of chorus – at some point turn really up to give the lie to those depicting them as ghoulish demons? This is a possible scenario, but it cannot, of course, be proved.

*Galatai* seems not to have been the only play by Sopater in which intellectuals were a target; in the play called Φυσιολόγος such a person is the title-figure and probably one of the main characters in the comic plot. Olson translates this title as *The Scientist*, and φυσιολόγοι is indeed a typical term for Presocratic philosophers,<sup>28</sup> because they composed λόγοι about φύσις, i.e. the nature of things and the cosmos in general. Ever since the famous Thales was laughed at by a servant-maid, because he had fallen into a pit while looking up into the sky,<sup>29</sup> such deep but not always worldly-wise thinkers were stock comic figures (compare Aristophanes’ presentation of the pupils of Socrates in *Clouds*). There is, however, also another way of making fun of such figures, i.e. by making them deliver high-flown sermons about grand philosophical principles and then showing their own ‘real’ behaviour, which usually exhibits all kinds of ‘normal’ human vices (such as gluttony, greed for money and lust). Possibly Sopater’s play went into this direction: in the two iambic lines preserved from it (fr. 20), someone holds forth about the wonderful qualities of ‘a slice of sow’s womb, well stewed, / with heart-biting vinegar sauce inside it’ (μήτρας υείας εὖ καθειψηθεὶς τόμος, / τὴν δηξίθυμον ἐντὸς ὀξάλμην ἔχων). In other plays such advanced gastronomic expertise is often presented by cooks, who, moreover, in several cases exhibit astonishing knowledge of many serious sciences: the

27 Vv. 6–12: καὶ μὴν φιλοσοφεῖν φιλολογεῖν τ’ ἀκηκῶς / ὑμᾶς ἐπιμελῶς καρτερεῖν θ’ αἰρου-  
μένους / τὴν πεῖραν ὑγιᾶ λήψομαι τῶν δογμάτων, / †προσθ τον† καπνίζων· εἴτ’ ἐὰν ὀπτωμέ-  
νων / ἴδω τιν’ ὑμῶν συσπᾶσαντα τὸ σκέλος, / Ζηνωνικῶι πραθήσεθ’ οὗτος κυρίωι / ἐπ’  
ἐξαγωγῇ, τὴν φρόνησιν ἀγνοῶν.

28 Cf. e.g., Aristotle about Empedocles (*Poet.* 1. 1447 b 17).

29 Plat. *Theaet.* 174 a.