



Jürgen Hammerstaedt, Pierre-Marie Morel, Refik Güremen
(eds.), *Diogenes of Oinoanda: Epicureanism and Philosophical
Debates / Diogène d'Énoanda: Épicurisme et controverses*

by

FREDERIK BAKKER

On the publisher's website this book is commended as the «first collection of essays entirely devoted to the inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda». Indeed, this book can be said to represent a new stage in the research into this very important document.

The inscription, which was set up in the early second century AD in Oinoanda in Southern Turkey, provides an elaborate exposition of the philosophy of Epicurus (341-270 BC). It was discovered in 1884, and so far 299 fragments have been brought to light, in various states of preservation and readability.

For the last half century the study of Diogenes' inscription has been dominated by the towering figure of Martin Ferguson Smith (Durham University), whose editions with translations and commentary – both philological and philosophical – still provide the best if not the only ways of access to the fragments. Most of the results of his research have been brought together in two volumes: M. F. Smith, *Diogenes of Oinoanda. The Epicurean Inscription*, Bibliopolis, Naples 1993; and M. F. Smith, *Supplement to Diogenes of Oinoanda. The Epicurean Inscription*, Bibliopolis, Naples 2003. From 2007 onwards Smith has been working together with Jürgen Hammerstaedt (University of Cologne). The results of their investigations have been conveniently collected in J. Hammerstaedt-M. F. Smith, *The Epicurean Inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda. Ten Years of New Discoveries and Research*, Rudolf Habelt Verlag, Bonn 2014.

Besides these two scholars, over the years many others have involved

RECENSIONI

Syzthesis V/1 (2018) 113-122

ISSN 1974-5044 - <http://www.syzthesis.it>

113

themselves with the inscription or portions of it, offering new interpretations of its philosophical content, and sometimes proposing alternative readings. In recent times, the inscription has been the subject of a monograph by P. Gordon, *Epicurus in Lycia. The Second-Century World of Diogenes of Oenoanda*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 1996, while specific parts have been dealt with by, for instance, D. Clay, *Diogenes and his Gods*, in M. Erler (ed.), *Epikureismus in der späten Republik und der Kaiserzeit*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 2000, pp. 76-92; D. N. Sedley, *Diogenes of Oenoanda on Cyrenaic Hedonism*, «Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society» 48 (2002), pp. 159-174; N. Pace, *Religione ed etica nel NF 126 Smith di Diogene di Enoanda*, «Cronache Ercolanesi» 35 (2005), pp. 201-209; and F. G. Corsi, *Il metodo delle molteplici spiegazioni in Diogene di Enoanda*, «Syzetesis» IV/2 (2017), pp. 253-284.

However, although scholarly engagement with Diogenes' inscription is not new, the present volume is exceptional in enlisting so many scholars to its study at the same time. The volume emerged from an international colloquium on Diogenes of Oinoanda held in 2014 at the universities of Istanbul and Muğla in Turkey. The focus of the book is on Diogenes' polemics against philosophical opponents, with special attention to the question of Diogenes' orthodoxy and originality with respect to Epicurus and the Epicurean tradition. The volume comprises twelve contributions in either English or French. The articles are preceded by a table of contents (pp. vii-viii), a list of illustrations (pp. ix-x), a *Foreword* (pp. xi-xvii), written by Martin Ferguson Smith, and a *Preface* (pp. xix-xxv), written by two of the editors, Pierre-Marie Morel and Jürgen Hammerstaedt. The articles are followed by a list of abbreviations (p. 271), a *Bibliography* (pp. 273-290), biographical information about the authors (pp. 291-293), and five indices, viz. of *Places* (pp. 295-296), of *Gods and Mythological Figures or Concepts* (p. 296), of *Ancient Persons, Philosophical Schools and Concepts* (pp. 297-300), of *Persons of Modern Times* (pp. 301-303), and of *Ancient Texts* (pp. 304-321). The book is dedicated to the memory of Martin Bachmann, the Deputy Director of the Istanbul Department of the German Archaeological Institute, who led the investigations at Oinoanda in 2007-2012 and 2015, and one of the contributors to the volume, who died unexpectedly in August 2016, just months before the book was due to appear.

The first two articles are not philosophical in content, but provide some background information that is indispensable for anyone dealing with the inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda. Both articles are provided with beautiful photographs, maps and other illustrations. In the

first article, *Oinoanda: Research in the City of Diogenes* (pp. 1-28), Martin Bachmann provides an overview of the archaeological research conducted at Oinoanda from its rediscovery in 1841 till the present. In the second article, *The Philosophical Inscription of Diogenes in the Epigraphic Context of Oinoanda* (pp. 29-50), Jürgen Hammerstaedt sketches the original structure, the historical and epigraphic context, and the subsequent vicissitudes of the inscription, as well as the current state of the research. The next ten articles all address the philosophical content of the inscription.

In the third article, *Diogenes against Plato: Diogenes' Critique and the Tradition of Epicurean Antiplatonism* (pp. 51-65), Michael Erler discusses two passages: NF 155 and *Theol.* III 7-IV 5, both of which critically engage with Plato – the first passage overtly, the other (or so Erler believes) implicitly. In NF 155 Diogenes criticizes Plato's asymmetric thesis that the world had a beginning but will not have an end. Although this criticism – based on a literal reading of Plato's *Timaeus* (esp. 32c, 38b, 41a-b) – was traditional, Diogenes' choice of words is not: copying Plato's own terminology Diogenes suggests that Plato would have done better to use «nature as a craftsman» (φύσει δημιουργῶ). According to Erler this combination of words, which is rare in general, and unprecedented in Epicurean literature (but see Verde's useful suggestions on pp. 82-84 of the volume), is best understood in the context of an on-going debate about creation and providence conducted between Epicureans and Middle-Platonists such as Atticus. Erler next discusses a passage of the "Theological *Physics*-sequence" (henceforth *Theol.* = NF 167 + NF 126/127 + fr. 20 + NF 182: see J. Hammerstaedt-M.F. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-270). Here Diogenes refers to certain people (III 7-IV 5) who are righteous because they live according to Epicurean philosophy. These people are contrasted with ordinary people, who «are righteous, in so far they are righteous, on account of the laws and the penalties, imposed by the laws, hanging over them» (IV 5-10). According to Erler this disproves the oft-repeated claim that the Epicureans were legalists, for on this account a community of Epicureans would not need laws to be just. In this respect, Erler argues, an Epicurean community would be similar to Plato's Kallipolis in the *Republic*, where laws are not necessary to ensure justice either. However, although Erler's account certainly opens up some interesting new points of view, a few critical observations are in order. In the first place, the passage under discussion does not describe an Epicurean ideal city, but a mixed society in which different motivations for being righteous exist alongside each other. For a description

of an Epicurean utopia Erler would have done better to turn to fr. 56 of Diogenes' inscription (discussed by Morel on pp. 233-237 of the volume). Secondly, Erler does not make it quite clear what he means with "law" or νόμος. According to *Theol.* IV 5-10, an important aspect of laws is that they are enforced *by penalties* (see Morel pp. 226 and 231-232 of the volume). When the Epicureans say that sages don't need laws, it is this external enforcement they must have in mind. It is still a matter of debate whether a community of Epicurean sages could do without rules altogether (see e.g. E. Brown, *Politics and society*, in J. Warren (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2009, pp. 179-196, esp. 189-195; and J. Thrasher, *Reconciling Justice and Pleasure in Epicurean Contractarianism*, «Ethical Theory and Moral Practice» 16.2 (2013), pp. 423-436), but they certainly don't need penalties to remain righteous. Thirdly, I don't think Plato's Kallipolis provides a good parallel for the Epicurean ideal city. In contrast to what Erler says (p. 64) Plato's Kallipolis *does* have laws (e.g. *Resp.* III 415e *et passim*) as well as penalties for those who break them (e.g. *Resp.* III 389d; III 415e; V 465a). In fact, the Epicurean ideal city, as described in fr. 56, in which there is «no need of fortifications or laws», and where tasks are divided equally, is much more like Plato's "city of pigs" (*Resp.* II 372d), to which Kallipolis is only second best (cfr. B. Farrington, *The faith of Epicurus*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1967, pp. 16-18).

In the fourth article, *Plato's Demiurge (NF 155 = YF 200) and Aristotle's Flux (fr. 5 Smith): Diogenes of Oinoanda on the History of Philosophy* (pp. 67-87), Francesco Verde discusses two fragments, fr. 5 and NF 155. In both fragments Diogenes presents and critically engages with the views of earlier philosophers. In fr. 5, Diogenes criticizes Aristotle and the Peripatetics for denying the possibility of scientific knowledge on account of the rapidity of the flux, a view that in reality cannot possibly be identified with any known Aristotelian theory. The criticism is part of a longer passage, already started in fr. 4, in which several philosophers, possibly including Pyrrhonian and Academic sceptics, are attacked for rejecting natural philosophy. Verde argues persuasively that the source of the entire passage, including the reference to the presumed Aristotelian flux theory, must be an Epicurean doxographical reconstruction that bears witness to a specifically Epicurean way of using the past, which «does not aim to be historically objective, but often adopts a hostile approach» (p. 78). Next, Verde deals with NF 155, already discussed by Erler in the previous article (see above). Assuming, with J. Hammerstaedt-M. F. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 25, that NF 155

may have immediately followed fr. 100, which dealt with a Stoic theory, Verde suggests that NF 155 implicitly criticizes the Stoics as well. I must admit I am not convinced by this part of Verde's argument. In the first place, fr. 100 is so badly preserved that we cannot be sure what it was about or even whether it mentioned the Stoics at all (see *app. crit.* in M. F. Smith, *Diogenes of Oinoanda*, *cit.*, p. 289); in the second place, it is not certain that fr. 100 and NF 155 were contiguous; and, finally, since both fragments belong to the *Maxims*, which are self-contained units, there is no reason to connect the two, even if they were contiguous. Still, the suggestion that NF 155 might be read as an implicit criticism of an alleged Stoic theory is attractive. Possible parallels are Pseudo-Plutarch *Placita* II 4, 1, where the asymmetric thesis is attributed to the Stoics, and – in an Epicurean context – Cic., *ND*, I 20, where this thesis is first attributed to Plato, and then hypothetically extended to the Stoics («*Pronoea vero si vestra est, Lucili, eadem, requiro, quae paulo ante*»). That Diogenes did sometimes ascribe Platonic views to the Stoics we can see in *Theol.* XI 11–XIII 10, where the Stoics are (wrongly) charged with the view that the gods were idle during the infinity of time before they created the world. For an Epicurean parallel see Cic., *ND*, I 21–22, where this view is attributed to Plato and the Stoics together (see D. N. Sedley, *Creationism and its Critics in Antiquity*, University of California Press, Berkeley 2007, p. 143, with nn. 21–22). It is not unlikely, therefore, that NF 155, while explicitly criticizing Plato, was meant to apply to the Stoics as well. At any rate, as Verde observes, the fragment shows the same hostility towards Plato that we find in other Epicurean texts, such as Cic. *ND* I, where criticism of Plato and the Stoics went hand in hand, and with which it may well share a common Epicurean source.

In the fifth article, *Diogène d'Énoanda et la polémique sur les meteora* (pp. 89–110), Giuliana Leone discusses a number of fragments (*viz.* frs. 4, 13, 14, and *Theol.* XIV 13–XVI 7) which deal with τὰ μετέωρα, i.e. astronomical and atmospheric phenomena. Leone argues that in all these fragments Diogenes' treatment of the subject is very close to Epicurus', not just from a lexical and stylistic point of view but also conceptually, showing the same ethical and theological concerns. Especially interesting, if not problematic, in this respect, is fr. 13 III 1–13. Here Diogenes introduces the method of multiple explanations, which is also known from Epicurus' *Letter to Pythocles* and the corresponding sections of Lucretius' *De rerum natura*. However, while Diogenes' treatment is otherwise very close to Epicurus' in the *Letter to Pythocles*, it differs from Epicurus' method in one respect: while Epicurus (just like Lucretius)

never expresses epistemic distinctions between the various alternative explanations, Diogenes explicitly allows for different degrees of plausibility. In F. A. Bakker, *Epicurean Meteorology: Sources, Method, Scope and Organization*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2016, pp. 37-42, I have argued that this “probabilism” was an innovation with respect to Epicurus’ method, that may have been introduced as a way to conform to the accepted astronomical views of the time without rejecting Epicurus’ method of multiple explanations altogether. Dismissing this interpretation, Leone instead endorses the view of F. Verde, *Cause epicuree*, «Antiquorum Philosophia» 7 (2013), pp. 127-142 (esp. pp. 136-137 and 141-142), who proposed two alternative interpretations that would both safeguard Diogenes’ orthodoxy: Diogenes’ probabilism would reflect a later stage in the development of the method of multiple explanations – possibly instigated by attacks on the part of Academic sceptics – that was either (1) already present in works that Epicurus himself composed after the *Letter to Pythocles*, e.g. in the later books of the *On nature*, or (2) developed by subsequent generations of Epicureans – perhaps already by Epicurus’ direct disciples. Leone favours the first option, which she supports with quotations from Epicurus’ *Letters to Pythocles* and *to Herodotus*, as well as from his *On nature* (from books XI and XIV), in which Epicurus seems to admit different degrees of probability. This is not the place to enter into a detailed response to Leone’s arguments, for which the reader is referred to F. Corsi, *art. cit.*, pp. 259-263 and 278-282. However, I would like to add a few general remarks of my own. Firstly, while attempting to safeguard Diogenes’ orthodoxy, Leone seems to lose sight of the undeniable doctrinal difference between Epicurus’ method of multiple explanations and Diogenes’ probabilism. Secondly, even if Epicurus himself did occasionally admit degrees of probability, as Leone argues, this is still a long way from adopting a wholly probabilistic version of the method of multiple explanations. Thirdly, if there is any truth to Sedley’s claim about Lucretius’ “fundamentalism” (D. N. Sedley, *Lucretius and the Transformation of Greek Wisdom*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998, pp. 62-93), the absence of references to probabilism in Lucretius’ version of the method of multiple explanations suggests that probabilism did not figure in the sources that Lucretius considered authoritative. Hence it seems to me that the development of a probabilistic version of the method of multiple explanations probably postdates Epicurus himself. For a similar conclusion see F. Corsi, *art. cit.*, p. 282.

The next three articles all revisit the old controversy over whether

fr. 33 (including NF 128), which deals with the relation between virtue and pleasure, is aimed at the Stoics or the Cyrenaics. The first view was championed by Smith (M. F. Smith, *Diogenes of Oenoanda*, cit., pp. 482-483 and id., *Supplement*, cit., pp. 90-98), and supported by Hammerstaedt (in J. Hammerstaedt-M. F. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-252), the second by Sedley (D. N. Sedley, *Diogenes of Oenoanda*, cit.), both sides supporting their interpretations with their own reconstructions of the incomplete and damaged text of the fragment.

In the first of these three articles and the sixth of the volume, entitled *Virtue, Pleasure, and Cause: A case of multi-target polemic?* (pp. 111-141), Francesca Masi discusses this fragment together with fr. 32 and NF 192, which deal with the same subject and are believed to have preceded it. In my view, Masi's article presents one of the highlights of the volume. Preserving a critical distance with respect to either of the two interpretations and critically reviewing the various reconstructions, she concludes that not just fr. 33, but also fr. 32, are open to either interpretation: both could be directed against the Stoics, and both to the Cyrenaics. However, having reached this cautious conclusion, Masi goes on to present a more daring and yet very attractive proposal, to the effect that in fr. 32, NF 192 and fr. 33 Diogenes would have had two different targets in mind: the Stoics, who in all three fragments are addressed in the second person plural, and the Cyrenaics, who are consistently referred to in the third person plural, and whose notion of virtue as an antecedent cause of pleasure Diogenes wishes to dissociate himself from.

In the seventh article, *Diogenes of Oinoanda and the Cyrenaics* (pp. 143-164), Voula Tsouna discusses a number of fragments where she believes Diogenes is criticizing the Cyrenaics. The first fragment to be discussed is fr. 4, where «Socrates and his companions» are rebuked for denying the usefulness of natural philosophy. Tsouna observes (p. 144) that this criticism would apply not just to Plato's Socrates, but also to «two schools that sprang from his circle, namely the Cynics and the Cyrenaics». Next, Tsouna deals with fr. 49, the only fragment where a Cyrenaic philosopher, viz. Aristippus, is mentioned by name. In this fragment Aristippus' crude hedonism, which focuses on the immediate pleasures of the body, is contrasted to Epicurus' more subtle hedonism, which includes and even privileges pleasures of the soul regarding not just the present but also the past and the future. Tsouna argues that fr. 44, which may have stood not too far before fr. 49, was part of the same argument and may also have been aimed

at the Cyrenaics. Next Tsouna discusses fr. 33. In contrast to Masi's cautious approach, Tsouna openly sides with Sedley, whose interpretation and emendations she follows. Although there is a certain circularity to this approach, as Sedley's emendations are meant to support his interpretation, Tsouna's discussion is very insightful about the contrast between Cyrenaic and Epicurean hedonism. Tsouna concludes her article with a discussion of several other fragments, which she believes could also be read as criticizing the Cyrenaics.

In the eighth article, *La critique des stoïciens dans l'inscription d'Énoanda* (pp. 165-185), Jean-Baptiste Gourinat explores the ways in which Diogenes' dealt with the Stoics. Gourinat discusses a number of fragments where the Stoics are either explicitly targeted, or have been assumed to be the intended targets. The most interesting fragments in this study are fr. 10 and fr. 33. In fr. 10, Diogenes sets up a contrast between two equally mistaken extremes – the Stoics who deprive dreams of every power they might have, and Democritus who grants them a power they don't have. Gourinat argues that Diogenes' account of the Stoic position is a distortion constructed precisely in order to be better able to oppose the Stoics to Democritus and so create a schema in which the truth of the Epicurean position comes out most clearly. As regards fr. 33 Gourinat reopens the case for identifying Diogenes' opponents with the Stoics, offering several fresh arguments to the old debate. The most interesting conclusions to emerge from Gourinat's article are the following: (1) Diogenes is prone to distort his opponents' views for dialectical reasons, and (2) Diogenes' criticism of the Stoics often takes the form of a counter-attack against Stoic anti-Epicurean arguments.

In the ninth article, *Diogenes of Oinoanda and the Epicurean Epistemology of Dreams* (pp. 187-205), Refik Güremen analyses Diogenes' account of dreams as presented in frs. 9, 10 and 43. Güremen largely agrees with Gourinat, expanding upon, and occasionally correcting the latter's account, and supplementing it with a discussion of Diogenes' presentation of Democritus in these fragments. Güremen argues that Diogenes' criticism of Democritus serves the purpose of defending the Epicurean doctrine against a *reductio ad absurdum* argument, such as we find in Plutarch's *Against Colotes* 28-29. Curiously, Güremen (p. 196) seems to assume that Plutarch is actually responding to Lucretius (IV 500-506 and V 878-924). In the final portion of the article Güremen argues that Diogenes' criticism of Democritus corresponds to a traditional Epicurean defence against sceptical *reductio* arguments.

In the tenth article, *Diogène, Lucrèce et la théorie épicurienne de*

l'imaginaire: Fragment 9 - De rerum natura IV 971-993 (pp. 207-220), Alain Gigandet provides a thorough analysis of fr. 9, on perception and imagination, in the light of relevant passages from Epicurus and Lucretius. The first *simulacra* (εἰδωλα) to be received open up “pathways” (πόροι) of similar shape and size that facilitate the subsequent reception of similar *simulacra* even when the original objects are no longer present. However, although the process by which these pathways are opened up is largely mechanical, and predisposes us to have certain dreams and thoughts, the content of our thought is not entirely without our control, but can be purged and disciplined by right Epicurean doctrine. Gigandet’s article deviates from the other articles in the volume, in that it does not deal – as the volume’s subtitle suggests – with philosophical debates.

In the eleventh article, *La Terre entière, une seule patrie. Diogène d’Énoanda et la politique* (pp. 221-240), Pierre-Marie Morel explores Diogenes’ attitude towards politics and cosmopolitanism. The discussion consists of four parts, which, unfortunately, are not marked in the text. In the first part (pp. 222-226), Morel concludes, on the basis of frs. 3, 29 (+ NF 207), and 22, that Diogenes shared Epicurus’ ambivalent attitude towards politics, on the one hand, distancing himself from traditional politics and the exercise of power, but, on the other hand, explicitly extending his philosophical message to the general public, including foreigners and future generations. In the second part (pp. 226-232), Morel discusses the Theological *Physics*-sequence, where Diogenes refutes the Stoic view of divine providence as the foundation of justice, law and politics. In the third part (pp. 233-237), Morel deals with fr. 56, which depicts a utopian community of Epicurean sages, full of mutual love and justice without the need for fortifications and laws. This means, according to Morel, that in the ideal Epicurean community justice is realized *without a contract* (but see my comments on Erler above). Morel also argues convincingly that Diogenes’ description of an Epicurean utopia should not be viewed as a prediction about some future state, but as a hypothesis to be contrasted with utopias of other schools. Morel ends (pp. 237-240) with a discussion of fr. 30, arguing that Diogenes’ cosmopolitanism is compatible with Epicurus’ prescribed attitude towards politics, but very different from Lucretius’ more private enterprise.

In the twelfth and final article, *Diogenes’ Polemical Approach, or How to Refute a Philosophical Opponent in an Epigraphic Context* (pp. 241-269), Geert Roskam develops a theme that many of the earlier articles already touched upon: the rhetoric of Diogenes’ inscription. Going

over the various fragments, Roskam argues that Diogenes' polemics had the same therapeutic aim as those of Epicurus and his early followers, viz. to clear the way for "correct opinions". Also the targets of his polemics seem to have been mostly traditional rather than contemporary. Yet, Diogenes' polemics tend to be milder than Epicurus', and their style is dictated by the medium of the inscription as well as by the short attention span of its readers, favouring short and simplified versions of his opponents' views. Thereby Diogenes displays various approaches: Roskam distinguishes a schoolmasterly, a rhetorical and a commonsensical mode. These observations are then put to the test in a case study focusing on the "Theological *Physics*-sequence", the longest continuous passage of the inscription. Through a detailed survey of the text Roskam manages to identify nearly all the earlier observed aspects and techniques of Diogenes' polemical style in this passage too. In the concluding sections Roskam speculates on the question why Diogenes should want to bother his readers with polemics against thinkers who had been «dead for more than half a millennium» (p. 267). He offers two speculative answers: (1) Diogenes needed these polemics to provide a contrast with, and thereby to clarify and confirm his own Epicurean views, and (2) he wanted to take his readers seriously and acquaint them with the philosophical arguments that led him to adopt these views.

Together the articles in this volume develop many different, and often new, points of view on the inscription, sometimes confirming, sometimes contradicting each other, and thereby showing that the research into the inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda is still an on-going affair. The volume therefore presents an ideal point of access for those who want to familiarize themselves with the inscription and the current state of the research.

Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands
f.bakker@ftr.ru.nl

Hammerstaedt, Jürgen – Morel, Pierre-Marie – Güremen, Refik (eds.), *Diogenes of Oinoanda: Epicureanism and Philosophical Debates / Diogène d'Énoanda: Épicurisme et controverses*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2017, 321 pp., € 90,00.