

Zeitschrift: Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique
Herausgeber: Fondation Hardt pour l'étude de l'Antiquité classique
Band: 24 (1978)

Artikel: The philosophical polemics in Lucretius : a study in the history of Epicurean criticism
Autor: Kleve, Knut
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-660664>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 18.02.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

II

KNUT KLEVE

THE PHILOSOPHICAL POLEMICS IN LUCRETIVS

A Study in the History of Epicurean
Criticism

I. THE PROBLEM

The main problem in Lucretius' polemics has been who were his opponents. He names four of them, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Anaxagoras and Democritus, the others remain anonymous. For at least a hundred years the commentators have collected sources referring to thinkers who conceivably could have been attacked by him, and, at least since C. Bailey, it has seemed an established fact that the polemics covered the whole history of philosophy up to Lucretius' own time, and that his targets foremost and above all were the Stoics. Then there appeared the paper of Furley in 1966 contending that the polemics in Lucretius mainly reflect Epicurus' polemics and hardly go beyond his time¹. Furley tries to show that in no passage where the commentators find attacks against the Stoics, this need be the case; Lucretius' targets may as easily or even more probably be others, especially Plato and the young Aristotle, or perhaps nobody at all. Furley's thesis has not remained unchallenged. It has most vigorously been met by Schmidt in his dissertation

¹ D. J. FURLEY, "Lucretius and the Stoics", in *BICS* 13 (1966), 13-33.

from 1975¹. Schmidt goes through Furley point by point and believes he proves, often by digging even deeper in the sources, that in a number of cases the Stoics and only the Stoics can possibly have been Lucretius' opponents.

By now, then, every possible source regarding the opponents of Lucretius seems to have been explored. The material is scanty enough, relating as it does to such obscure topics as the young Aristotle and Old and Middle Stoicism. Final conclusions are therefore difficult to reach. Even if, for instance, it can be shown that the Stoics actually held a certain theory which is attacked by Lucretius, this does not exclude the possibility that the same theory also was held by earlier philosophers known to Epicurus.

We therefore seem to have come to way's end on this line of inquiry. There is a need of seeing the polemics in Lucretius from a new angle. Pinning down the opponents of Lucretius is only one part of the problem; in addition we have the contents of his arguments, his ways of arguing and above all his place in a polemical tradition which goes back more than two centuries before his own time. However, the history of Epicurean polemics still has to be written. The present paper can be regarded as a preliminary attempt.

2. DEFINITION OF POLEMICS

Against every dogmatic assertion in Lucretius it is possible to put a contrary assertion which can be shown to have been made by one or more of the ancient schools outside the Epicurean. If we do this and contend that Lucretius' assertions are criticisms of those others views, then almost every passage in him will become polemical. This is exactly what modern commentators have done, and sometimes one can wonder how even people in antiquity were able to read Lucretius without having, say, Bailey or Giussani at hand.

¹ J. SCHMIDT, *Lukrez und die Stoiker. Quellenuntersuchungen zu De rerum natura* (Diss. Marburg/Lahn 1975).

However, such a wide concept of polemics is a difficult starting-point for our investigation, which would then simply become endless. We will therefore make a limitation: Only if Lucretius expressly states that there exists a rival view and criticizes it, shall we speak of polemics. This limitation may lead to the exclusion of much that has hitherto been regarded as polemical in Lucretius, but, on the other hand, we will be able to concentrate on what Lucretius himself consciously wanted to present as polemics. The poem of Lucretius is a sort of introduction to Epicureanism, covering the physical part of it. It certainly is of interest to determine what kind of polemics *was* offered in a first course of Epicurean philosophy ¹.

Even with this restriction there remains a considerable bulk of polemics in the poem. Of a total of 7411 verses 1153 are openly devoted to criticism of rival views, which makes a good sixth, equivalent to an average Lucretian book. By comparison it may be mentioned that of the only other fully preserved introductions to physics, namely Epicurus' *Letters to Herodotus* and *Pythocles*, 10 paragraphs of a total of 80 are openly polemical, which makes an eighth. The need for polemics in introductions does not seem to have decreased in the course of history. In works like Epicurus' *On Nature* ([23] ff. Arrighetti) and Philodemus' *On the Gods* (ed. H. Diels) which also move in the realm of physics, it is difficult to estimate accurately the share of polemics because of their fragmentary state. But it has obviously been considerably higher even than in Lucretius. This was to be expected. These works were highly advanced studies containing accurate examinations of every attempted solution of current problems.

¹ Cf. Diog. Oen. NF 13, 8-12: M. F. SMITH, *Thirteen New Fragments of Diogenes of Oenoanda*, Öst. Akad. d. Wiss., Denkschr., Bd. 117 (Wien 1974), 45 f. with note *ad loc.* p. 47: "It seems clear that the physics treatise was written before the ethical treatise, and was intended to be read before it." Cf. also order of points in the τετραφάρμακος, [196] Arrighetti (= Epicuro. *Opere*. A cura di Graziano ARRIGHETTI. Nuova ediz. (Torino 1973)).

3. IMPORTANCE OF POLEMICS IN THE EPICUREAN SCHOOL

Polemics played a necessary part in Epicurean philosophy. The Epicurean compared himself to a physician whose task it was not only to cure everybody who sought his treatment, but also to keep him in health¹. One of his most powerful prophylactics was polemics. Epicurus calls his doctrine an antidote against false opinions of other schools². Lucretius, then, was not alone in feeling like a doctor giving the sick child a cup of loathsome medicine to swallow (IV 11 ff.).

This was certainly a realistic attitude. To be sure, the philosophy of Epicurus was the only one which could secure man's mental health (Lucr. III 41 ff.), but it belonged to the sad realities of life that even adherents of Right Philosophy did not always understand their own good³. It was bad enough that some were too prone to play with minor deviations from the right doctrine⁴, but it was really serious that some became regular deserters and behaved like madmen against their former friends and benefactors. Notorious names are Epicurus' pupil Timocrates who wrote a calumnious book against his Master, Colotes' pupil Menedemos who joined the Cynics, and Metrodorus of Stratonicia who went over to Carneades⁵. There was every reason to keep the remedies fresh and ready.

4. CICERO'S ACADEMIC HISTORY OF EPICUREAN POLEMICS

Cicero gives *Nat. deor.* I 33, 93 f. an historical survey of Epicurean polemics. Although his account is both incomplete

¹ [196] Arrighetti; Diog. Oen. Fr. 2 IV-V Chilton; Cic. *Fin.* I 21, 71; Lucr. V 82 ff. (= VI 58 ff.).

² [29.3] Arrighetti.

³ Lucr. IV 912 ff.; cf. 1150.

⁴ Phld. *Sign.* 31, 8 ff. De Lacy; Cic. *Fin.* I 17, 55; 20, 66; II 26, 82; R. PHILIPPSON, *Philodemos*, in *RE* XIX 2, 2452; 2461; 2464; 2477.

⁵ Diog. Laert. X 4 ff.; 9; W. CRÖNERT, *Kolotes und Menedemos* (Repr. Amsterdam 1965), 4; H. STECKEL, *Epikuros*, in *RE* Suppl.-Bd. XI 590.

and biased, it gives two essential pieces of information: the Epicureans took care that their polemics should be up to date, in the end crossing swords with the Stoics; and as time went on, also paid due attention to their Roman adherents¹. Cicero gives the impression that Epicurean polemics exclusively consisted of insults. Although the Epicureans really exhibit a wide choice of abusive words against their opponents (cf. *infra* pp. 60 f.), this is only part of the truth. The Academic intention of the survey becomes apparent in the conclusion: If so many wise men and enemies of Epicureanism have not managed to find the truth, it is to be feared that there is no truth to be found. We will try to fill in the gaps in Cicero.

5. EPICURUS' POLEMICS

According to Cicero (*loc. cit.*) the polemics of Epicurus were directed against Pythagoras, Plato and Empedocles (named in this curious order probably because Epicurus in *On Nature* gave a special criticism of Plato's use of the Empedoclean element theory (cf. *infra* pp. 46 f.)). Other targets were, still according to Cicero, Aristotle, Phaedo the Socratic, Timocrates, Democritus and Nausiphanes². These, however, are only a small selection of opponents known to us from other sources. Epicurus wrote several works which were exclusively polemical, both of a more general character as *Against the Physicists* (Diog. Laert. X 27) and more specialized ones directed against named schools and philosophers: *Anaximenes*, *Against Democritus*, *Against the Megarians* and *Against Theophrastus*³. Objects for his criticism were also Heraclitus, Protagoras, Prodicus,

¹ Cf. *loc. cit.*: *Zeno... Latino verbo utens...*

² For Aristotle cf. also [101]; [102]; [127] Arrighetti; Timocrates: [19.5]; [101] Arrighetti; Diog. Laert. X 28; Democritus: p. 97 Usener; Nausiphanes: [101] Arrighetti; Diog. Laert. X 8.

³ Anaximenes: Diog. Laert. X 28; the Megarians: *ibid.*, 27; Theophrastus: pp. 101 ff. Usener; [16] Arrighetti.

Diagoras, Critias, Antidorus, Crates, Aristippus, Pyrrho and Stilpo¹.

Epicurus' polemics can then hardly only have been anonymous. This is an impression we get if we restrict ourselves to his *Letters* and *Sayings*. But in these short works of introduction and memorizing Epicurus did not find it necessary to name anybody. His targets were probably easily recognizable for the readers, and their names played no important role for the lines of thought which were to be implanted in the souls of the pupils.

The *Letters* and *Sayings* are the only fully preserved works of Epicurus. For that reason one can most easily follow his polemics there. If we keep to our definition (cf. *supra* p. 41), we get the following instances:

Letter to Herodotus 49 f.: Rejection of a theory that objects can make impressions on us by means of the air between us and them, or by means of effluences passing from us. The theory of idols gives a better explanation of sense perception. (The opponents may be Parmenides, Empedocles, Democritus and Plato, cf. Bailey and Arrighetti *ad loc.*)

Ibid., 67: To say that the soul is incorporeal is wrong. In that case it would be like the only incorporeal existence, the void, which cannot act or be acted on. According to our experience the soul has both these capacities. (Plato or Aristotle may be the opponents.)

Letter to Pythocles 89 f.: Some views on the formation and destruction of worlds are rejected: A world cannot be formed in an empty space quite void, neither is it enough that a gathering of atoms takes place or that a whirl and nothing more is set in motion, and lastly the world cannot go on increasing until it collides with another world. This contradicts phenomena, which the more refined Epicurean

¹ Heraclitus and Protagoras: Diog. Laert. X 8; Prodicus, Diagoras and Critias: [27.2] Arrighetti; Antidorus: Diog. Laert. X 8; Crates and Aristippus: [127] Arrighetti; Pyrrho: Diog. Laert. X 8; Stilpo: pp. 153 f. Usener; [132] Arrighetti.

theories do not (cf. 88). (Leucippus or Democritus are the most likely opponents, cf. Bailey and Arrighetti *ad loc.*)

Ibid., 93; 97; 113; 114: Epicurus repeatedly returns to thinkers who only reckon with *one* cause for heavenly phenomena although experience on earth shows that several explanations are possible. These thinkers also introduce the divine nature into their astronomical considerations, thus drifting into the inconceivable, and then the gods can only be thought of as blessed and free from care. (The reference to astronomical instruments (τεχνιτεῖαι 93) used by the opponents makes it probable that the attacks are directed against the mathematical astronomy of the Academy. Cf. Arrighetti *ad loc.* and *infra* p. 46).

Letter to Menoecus 131: Rejection of the view that pleasure exclusively consists in sensuality. This would make us slaves of our immediate desires and hinder the necessary planning of life. (The main opponents are supposed to be the Cyrenaics, cf. Bailey *ad loc.*)

Ibid., 134: Rejection of physical determinism which would imply the slavery under a necessity even worse than the gods of popular religion. (Democritus is probably the target.)

Principal Doctrines XXIII-XXIV are warnings against Sceptical positions which reject all or one sensation as untrustworthy. The result will be that we are left without any standard to judge right and false.

Principal Doctrine XXV is a general warning against ethical theories which refer our actions to other standards than the ultimate standard of nature. Grave moral inconsistencies are supposed to follow.

Gnomologium Vaticanum 40 is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the view that everything happens of necessity. This view will make the rejection of the opposite view impossible, and then this too is uttered by necessity. (Probably against Democritus, cf. *infra* and Bailey *ad loc.*)

In *On Nature* Epicurus seems to have given a complete treatment of his philosophical views in connection with a criticism of other thinkers. Some opponents are mentioned by name,

others not, probably according to how well known their theories were to the readers. In Book 11-28 the succession of the problems debated seems to have been chronological¹. It is therefore possible that Epicurus has given what we may call a critical doxography in which he stated his agreement or disagreement with all previous and contemporary thinkers.

Among the ruins of this great work we can dimly make out debates on Presocratic theories about the stable position of the earth², the ramparts of the world³ and the movement of the heavenly bodies⁴. The view that everything can be regarded as either a condensation or a rarefaction of one single element is criticized and compared with the more advanced atomism⁵. Theories that postulate several basic elements with changable qualities are rejected as contradicting experience⁶. There is a criticism of the effluence-theory of vision, presumably that of Empedocles⁷; and the determinism, presumably that of Democritus, is regarded as incompatible with our experience of the reasonability of life⁸.

Plato and his followers are next in line. Their use of astronomical instruments (ὄργανα) is regarded as aimless; for the problems concerning the movements of the heavenly bodies are of empirical, not abstract, mathematical nature. The Platonists try to establish a regularity of causes that do not exist⁹.

A considerable part of the work was occupied with a discussion of Plato's use of the four element theory of Empedocles

¹ This ought to have consequences for the adjustment of the fragments from the *libri incerti*, cf. *infra* nn. 7 and 8.

² Book XI [26.22-23; 26.43] Arrighetti.

³ *Ibid.* [26.27; 26.33] Arrighetti.

⁴ *Ibid.* [26.30] Arrighetti.

⁵ Book XIV [29.16; 29.20] Arrighetti.

⁶ *Ibid.* [29.24] Arrighetti.

⁷ *Liber incertus* [36.23] Arrighetti.

⁸ *Liber incertus* [34.30] Arrighetti.

⁹ Book XI [26.38-41] Arrighetti.

in the *Timaeus*. The view that the elements ultimately consist of stereometric forms is proved impossible by their infinite divisibility, and the whole theory is regarded as a fanciful construction without empirical foundation¹. The doxography seems to have ended with a rejection of sophisms², the Aristotelian syllogism³ and the Megarian equivocation⁴.

The list of philosophers who were attacked and the theories which were criticized by Epicurus is of course scattered and fragmentary, but full enough to show that his polemics covered the whole history of philosophy up to his own time and that it included all parts of philosophy. He uses particularly two methods to defeat his opponents: he demonstrates inner contradictions in their views, and shows that they are not in accordance with experience⁵, or, to use an Epicurean term, he undertakes an ἀντιμαρτύρησις of the rival theories. This approach accords exactly with his criticism of religion as being partly inconsistent, partly contradicting experience (*Ep. ad Men.* 123 f.). This is not accidental. Epicurus was of the opinion that the other schools were not much more than sophisticated representatives of mythical speculation⁶.

6. POLEMICS OF EPICURUS' IMMEDIATE PUPILS

Epicurus had found the full truth. For his followers, then, there was not much to do. Theirs was but to keep to the right doctrine and deliver it unblemished to new generations. This

¹ Book XIV [29.22-26] Arrighetti. Cf. W. SCHMID, *Epikurs Kritik der platonischen Elementenlehre* (Leipzig 1936), and H. STECKEL, in *RE* Suppl.-Bd. XI 606 f.

² Book XXVIII Fr. 13 VI IX, ed. by D. SEDLEY, *CrErc* 3 (1973), 49 f.; 52.

³ *Ibid.* [31.11] Arrighetti.

⁴ *Ibid.* [31.11-22] Arrighetti. Cf. D. SEDLEY, in *CrErc* 3 (1973), 45 ff.

⁵ Cf. K. KLEVE, "Empiricism and Theology in Epicureanism", in *SO* 52 (1977), 39-51, on the expanded Epicurean conception of experience.

⁶ *Cic. Nat. deor.* I 16, 42 f.; *Phld. Sign.* 38, 8 ff. De Lacy. Cf. H. REICHE, "Myth and Magic in Cosmological Polemics", in *RbM* 114 (1971), 316; 320.

they could do confidently on the Master's authority. But his authority had no influence in other schools. He could not stop them from developing new theories and spreading them, nor from attacking the True Doctrine. The Epicureans had the feeling, to use an expression from Diogenes of Oenoanda, that the majority of people were, "as in a time of plague, sick with false opinions...their number growing steadily greater" ¹. It was a constant danger they had to meet, and what was left of originality and creativeness in the school found its outlet in polemics.

Cicero says in *Nat. deor.* I 33, 93 that Metrodorus and Hermarchus took part in the Master's criticism of Pythagoras, Plato and Empedocles. Their polemics, however, ranged wider than that. Metrodorus wrote works against the physicians, Timocrates, the dialecticians (i.e. the Megarians ²), the sophists, Democritus, Plato's *Euthyphro* and *Gorgias* ³. Hermarchus showed in *On Science* the uselessness of science and rhetorics, wrote *Against Plato* and *Against Aristotle* and above all the *Epistolika* in 22 books where he, apparently in great detail, discussed Empedocles' views on primitive history of man, metempsychosis and religion ⁴.

Cicero mentions as a piquancy the work *Against Theophrastus* by the *meretricula* Leontium, whom he reluctantly must praise for her good style. But he does not mention Polyaeus although we elsewhere can see that he knows his important work against geometry ⁵. Even more remarkable is his omission of Colotes

¹ Diog. Oen. Fr. 2 IV Chilton (whose translation is partly used).

² Ed. A. KÖRTE, in *Jahrb. f. Class. Philol.*, Suppl. 17 (Leipzig 1890), 539.

³ Diog. Laert. X 24; Plut. *Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* 7, 1091 A; A. KÖRTE, *op. cit.*, 546. See also R. WESTMAN, *Plutarch gegen Kolotes* (Helsingfors 1955), 34.

⁴ Diog. Laert. X 24 f.; K. KROHN (ed.), *Der Epikureer Hermarchos* (Diss. Berlin 1921), 11 ff.; 22 ff.; R. WESTMAN, *op. cit.*, 59.

⁵ Cic. *Ac.* II 33, 106 (= Fr. 229^a Usener).

whose polemics were of such standard that it gave resonance through the centuries and still was lively debated by Plutarch.

Epicurus had proved that every philosopher was wrong except himself. Colotes surpasses his Master by showing that not only are all other thinkers wrong, but that their theories simply make everyday life impossible¹. Colotes did this by a chronological examination of all philosophers up to his own time using the Master's doxographical method. Plutarch reproaches Colotes for not mentioning by name the contemporary thinkers he attacks and regards this as a sign of cowardice (1120 C), but Colotes may simply have found it superfluous to mention names when everybody must have known who the targets were², a feature already observed in Epicurus. According to Plutarch Colotes attacked at least Democritus, Parmenides, Empedocles, Socrates, Plato, Stilpo, the Cyrenaics and Arcesilaus³, but he does not leave us much of Colotes' actual argumentation⁴. His polemics had, however, a special satirical force. A satirical trait is by no means absent in Epicurus (cf. *infra* pp. 61 f.), but Colotes seems to have used laughter as his main weapon, taking advantage of the fact that one is less effectively fortified against ridicule than argument⁵. When all arguments are forgotten the pictures still linger of Socrates putting food in his ear, or Arcesilaus running to the mountain instead of to the bath (1108 B; 1122 E).

¹ Plut. *Adv. Col.* 1, 1107 E. Cf. Lucr. IV 507 ff. with R. WESTMAN's note, *op. cit.*, 97 f.

² It was hardly a form of courtesy as proposed in B. EINARSON-Ph. H. DE LACY's Loeb-edition, pp. 184 f.

³ Cf. B. EINARSON-Ph. H. DE LACY, Loeb-edition, pp. 166 ff.; R. WESTMAN, *op. cit.*, 44 ff.

⁴ Cf. R. WESTMAN, *op. cit.*, 89 f.

⁵ B. EINARSON-Ph. H. DE LACY, Loeb-edition, p. 165.

7. LATER EPICUREAN POLEMICS

Of polemicists after Epicurus' generation Cicero mentions only Zeno of Sidon, and from his own time Phaedrus and Albucius¹. Zeno, who Cicero introduces as the main figure, apparently continued the tradition of building out the criticism to cover contemporary philosophy, the Stoic school being one of his main targets.

Unmentioned by Cicero are Polystratus and Demetrius the Laconian whose works are rediscovered in Herculaneum in a rather fragmentary state. The fragments, however, are enough to show that also their polemics went right through the history of philosophy, ending up with the contemporary Stoic and Sceptical schools².

Philodemus is also omitted from Cicero's list, perhaps because he regarded him as philosophically too insignificant. Most of the Herculaneum papyri, however, are written by him and give us an extraordinary possibility of peeping into Epicurean polemics just in the time of Lucretius.

Without exaggeration one can say that the works of Philodemus are stuffed with polemics. The debate, mostly with contemporary schools, swings back and forth, and the discussion may be led into the most curious details. E.g. in *On the Gods* the questions are raised if the gods have furniture or use the lavatory³. There really had been abundant material for Lucretius if he had chosen to fulfill his promise to depict the life and nature of the gods (V 155).

The most remarkable work of polemics is perhaps *On Methods of Inference* where we are able to follow the discussion

¹ On Albucius cf. A. S. PEASE (ed.), M. Tulli Ciceronis *De natura deorum liber primus* (Cambridge, Mass., 1955), 452.

² Cf. the editions of C. WILKE (Leipzig 1905) and V. de FALCO, *L'Epicureo Demetrio Lacone* (Napoli 1923). Demetrius on Empedocles: V. de FALCO, pp. 35, 43, 46; on the Sceptics: pp. 43 f.; on Chrysippus: pp. 65 ff.

³ III 11, 35 ff.; III 14, 34 ff. Diels.

between the Epicureans and the Stoics step by step and see the care with which the Epicureans studied the thoughts of their opponents¹.

In *On Piety* and its Ciceronian counterpart in *Nat. deor.* I² it can be seen that the later Epicureans continued to cultivate polemical doxography. In Cicero, who is best preserved, 27 philosophers from Thales to Diogenes of Babylon are criticized in turn for deviating from men's common experience of the divine nature (10 sqq., 25-41). The section immediately before (8 sqq., 18-24) is of special interest in so far as it gives a brand new criticism of the eclectic Stoa and its use of Plato's Empedoclean element-theory.

Works like *On Poetry*, *On Music* and *On Rhetorics*, which are anticipated by Epicurus' own writings on the two last topics, give us an impression of the wide range of Epicurean polemics³. Even here, as it were at the very fringes of their philosophical system, the Epicureans were prepared to take up discussions with all philosophers who had expressed opinions on the topics: Plato, Aristotle, Panaetius and many others. The Epicureans felt it urgent to show that education in these fields so popular in the other schools was without importance for happiness.

Biographical works on other philosophers seem to be a new enterprise of later Epicureanism. There have been several of them, but best known to us are the *Index Academicorum* and

¹ Ph. H. and E. A. De LACY (edd.), *Philodemus: On Methods of Inference. A Study in Ancient Empiricism* (Philadelphia 1941). Cf. Ph. H. DE LACY, "Contributions of the Herculanean Papyri to our Knowledge of Epicurean Logic", in *TAPhA* 68 (1937), 325; R. PHILIPPSON, *Philodemos*, in *RE* XIX 2, 2451; K. KLEVE, in *SO* 52 (1977); J. MAU, "Über die Zuweisung zweier Epikur-Fragmente", in *Philologus* 99 (1955), 93 ff.

² Cf. H. DIELS (ed.), *Doxographi Graeci*, 531 ff.

³ Diog. Laert. X 28; pp. 109 ff. Usener. For a bibliography of Philodemus see Ph. H. and E. A. DE LACY's ed. of *On Methods of Inference*; for *On Music* add A. J. NEUBECKER, *Die Bewertung der Musik bei Stoikern und Epikureern. Eine Analyse von Philodems Schrift De musica* (Berlin 1956).

the *Index Stoicorum*¹. They give a presentation of the scholars, their lives and pupils, some anecdotal stuff and a little slander. The works were obviously meant to be up to date. The *Index Stoicorum* ends with Panaetius and his pupils. The works are an extension of the critical doxography. In the doxography one could find every false dogma together with its proper refutation, in the biography one could read about the pseudo-philosophers themselves. Nowhere was it necessary to go to other schools to satisfy one's curiosity, every piece of information was available in the Garden itself. Also Lucretius, then, might have been satisfied with the sources available within the Epicurean school. Every philosopher, old and new, was treated there, not only in a second hand fashion, citations from them were also ample².

"We must not pretend to study philosophy, but really study it, for it is not an appearance of health that we need, but real health." This maxim from the Master³ the Epicureans tried to live up to in their polemics. Their renderings of their opponents' views are generally fair; but then their interest lay in an effective elimination of the contagious dogmas. They wished to be up to date, and then their interest lay in being able to help where help was most needed, namely where the infection lay in wait that very day. Thus their criticism concentrated more and more on the Stoics, i.e. the eclectic Stoicism which appealed so deeply to many Romans. In the common opinion Stoicism and Epicureanism stood out as the two really important

¹ Cf. R. PHILIPPSON, *Philodemos*, in *RE* XIX 2, 2463 f.; *Academicorum philosophorum Index Herculaneensis*, ed. S. MEKLER (Berlin 1958, new ed.); *Index Stoicorum Herculaneensis*, ed. A. TRAVERSA (Genova 1952).

² Cf. e.g. the citations from Empedocles in Demetrius the Laconian (ed. V. de FALCO) and in Colotes, *ap.* Plut. *Adv. Col.*, from the Stoics in Philodemos, *Sign.* (ed. Ph. H. and E. A. DE LACY).

³ *Gnom. Vat.* 54 (Bailey's transl. partly used). Cf. Diog. Oen. Fr. 5 III Chilton: "We will polemize...not argue in a contentious spirit...wishing the truth to be preserved...".

philosophical rivals, the other schools being of (literally!) academic interest ¹.

This situation is also reflected in the history of Epicureanism after Philodemus, both in Diogenianus' attacks on Stoic fatalism ², and in Diogenes of Oenoanda. Diogenes naturally pays due attention to the criticism of earlier thinkers ³, but his polemics reach their summit in the rejection of Stoicism (cf. *infra* p. 65).

8. LUCRETIUS' RELEVANCE

What then is Lucretius' place in this picture? Does he follow the current trend in Epicurean polemics, meeting the philosophical challenge of his day, or does he only reflect the more than two hundred years old polemics of Epicurus? If the latter is so, Lucretius is an anomaly in the history of Epicureanism. This is of course possible and would fit in with a picture of him popular among scholars: the lone wolf, on the brink of insanity, dying at last by his own hand. The question, however, is if it is probable.

In some respects Lucretius surely wished to be up to date. In the introduction itself he pays homage to the Roman goddess Venus, and is deeply concerned about the days of trouble his country is going through (I 41 ff.). He gives his work a national touch with scenes from Roman life ⁴. His friend and reader Memmius was a nobleman with access to all the philosophical learning which the Greek world could offer, and before his long polemics against the immortality of the soul Lucretius expresses the wish to set forth verses worthy of his reader (III 420).

¹ Cf. B. FARRINGTON, *Science and Politics in the Ancient World* (London 1939), 187; Cic. *Fam.* XV 16, 3; for the situation in the 1st century A.D. cf. *Acts of the Apostles* 17, 18.

² Cf. Fr. UEBERWEG-K. PRÄCHTER, *Die Philosophie des Altertums*, 580.

³ Cf. Chilton's Index *s.vv.* Pythagoras, Empedocles, Democritus, sophistikos, Socrates, Aristoteles.

⁴ E.g. II 323 ff.; III 467 ff. (cf. Bailey and E. J. Kenney *ad loc.*); III 1060 ff.; IV 75 ff.

Would Lucretius have left him without a hint of the Epicurean reaction to what was actually going on in the philosophical world of the day ?

Of course, Lucretius *may* have been of the opinion that the polemics of the Master were sufficient for all times and that nothing really new could be added, False Philosophy somehow only being able to repeat itself¹. This, however, will only be speculation until we have examined the actual polemics of Lucretius.

9. THE POLEMICS OF LUCRETIVS

If we keep to our definition of polemics (pp. 40-41 *supra*) we have the following instances in Lucretius²:

I 370 ff.: The view that motion is possible without void must be rejected. That void does not exist is inconceivable, then when two bodies which have been pressed together, suddenly leap apart, the space between cannot be filled with air at once.

I 635 ff.: Criticism of the element theories of Heraclitus (635 ff.), Empedocles (716 ff.), Anaxagoras (830 ff.) and their followers. They all make two mistakes: they deny the existence of void, which makes motion impossible, and they believe that substances which are manifestly perishable, can serve as permanent foundation for things. Empedocles and Anaxagoras believe in infinite division, which leads to an annihilation of the elements.

I 1052 ff.: The theory that everything tends to a center and the world therefore can hold together without external blows, is to be rejected. It is inconceivable that there should be a center in infinity, or any place in the void where things lose their weight and come to a standstill.

¹ Cf. D. J. FURLEY, in *BICS* 13 (1966), 31 f.

² In my summary I have borrowed freely from the formulations of Bailey, Leonard-Smith and H. A. J. Munro.

II 80 ff.: It is false to believe that atoms can come to a standstill and yet produce motions in things. There can be no restingplace for the atoms in an infinite void. They may meet and clash, but never cease to move, even as components of things.

II 167 ff.: The thought that the course of nature is so suitable for men that it cannot be kept up without divine agency, is untenable. The imperfection of the world is too evident.

II 225 f.: It is a mistake to think that the heavier atoms fall more rapidly, overtake the lighter ones and thereby cause the blows which set up creative movements. Void must yield to light and heavy atoms alike, and only a swerve in their motion can account for their collisions. The swerve also breaks the chain of necessity and accounts for free will.

II 522 ff.; 541 ff.: The objection that there may exist some unique thing does not invalidate the doctrine that the number of atoms of each shape is infinite. Without infinite material even a unique thing could not be born nor grow.

II 600 ff.: The allegorical interpretation of Earth Mother and her cult is inconsistent with our conception of the gods as blessed and immortal beings who do not trouble themselves about men.

II 902 ff.; 931 ff.: The notion that sentient beings are created of sentient particles is impossible, for we can never see sensation associated with anything but soft, i.e. mortal material. If one should answer that sensation can be created from non-sentient material by some sort of internal change, the problem is that such a change can only take place within a compound, already living body.

III 94 ff.: The theory that the soul is a harmony or a certain state of the body is mistaken, then body and soul are seen to act independently.

III 350 ff.: It is wrong to think that only the soul, not the body has sense, for our immediate experience shows that our body and its parts have sensation.

III 370 ff.: Democritus' theory that the atoms of body and soul are placed alternately and thus are equal in number

does not conform to experience inasmuch as small objects can touch us without our feeling them. The soul, then, consists not only of smaller, but also fewer atoms than the body.

III 533 ff.: The view that the soul does not depart gradually from the dying, but collects into one place is wrong because that place ought to have acute sensation, which can not be seen to be the case.

III 754 ff.: The supposition that an immortal soul changes with its change of body is inconsistent, for what can change can also be broken up and therefore die. The reply that a human soul always passes into a human body and a horse's soul into a horse can be met with the question why the child then is not as wise as the man and the foal as trained as the horse. The last refuge that the soul grows young in a young body is equal to saying that the soul is mortal, since it loses its former properties.

IV 469 ff.: The sceptical position that nothing can be known is impossible, for how can one know that? Our concept of truth we evidently get from sensation, and life itself is endangered if sensation is not to be trusted (cf. *supra* p. 49 with note 1).

IV 777 ff.: Two questions from critics concerning the theory of idols have to be answered: Do the idols wait upon our will so that we can think of what we want? Are the idols trained to move and dance in our dreams? The answer is that idols move swiftly in great numbers from everywhere and therefore can be present in any place at any time, but that the mind because of their fineness only perceives those idols to which it especially attends.

IV 822 ff.: The view that our sense organs and other parts of our body have been created in order to be used cannot be right, for the concept of their usefulness could only have developed after their creation.

V 110 ff.: The supposition that the world and its parts are eternal and divine is to be rejected. The earth and the

heavenly bodies are evident examples of what is lifeless, and the gods cannot even dwell in our world according to the fineness of their bodies. To contend that the gods have created the world for the benefit of men or for their own sake is impossible: our thanks cannot give them anything, they could have no reason to abandon their previous life, there would be no pattern for making the world before the world actually existed. In addition all the imperfections in the world prove that it is not created for the sake of men (cf. II 167 ff.).

V 318 ff.: The notion that the sky is the creator and tomb of everything is impossible, for what can be diminished and replenished can also be mortal.

V 324 ff.: It is false to believe that the world has no beginning, for history commences with the wars of Thebes and Troy, and arts and sciences have only just begun to be developed. If one answers that everything has existed before, but has been destroyed by fire or earthquake or flood, this will be an argument that the world is perishable. A still greater shock, and the world will come to its end.

V 1028 ff.: The view that language was invented by some single person and that other men learnt to speak from him is to be rejected. It is unthinkable that only one person should have been capable of such an invention. Besides he could not possibly have had any conception of the use of speech unless he already had heard others speaking. Neither could he have had the power to compel others to learn it. Rather language originated in men's spontaneous reaction: they used the organs of voice to express internal emotions and reactions to external impressions as we now see the animals do.

VI 847 ff.: The theory that the spring of Hammon is cold by day and warm by night because the sun warms it from beneath during its nightly course below the earth is false. The right explanation is that the earth about the spring condenses at night and squeezes its seeds of heat into the water, and receives them back again by day.

10. LUCRETIUS AND EPICUREAN POLEMICS

A. *Methods of Argumentation*

If we wish to place Lucretius either with Epicurus or with the later Epicureans there seems to be little to go on with regard to their formal ways of arguing. The Epicureans do not seem to vary much in this respect among themselves, all of them probably trying to imitate the Master. But as Lucretius' methods of argumentation definitely show that he is firmly planted in the general trend of Epicurean polemics, it will be of importance to inspect them.

The two main methods used by Epicurus to defeat rival views, namely to show their discrepancy with phenomena and their inner inconsistencies, are adhered to by Epicurean writers of all times, and Lucretius makes no exception.

Lucretius uses the dilemma and even gives it a Latin name ¹, and he employs the *concessio* to drive an opponent to new impossibilities ². These two devices of polemics may link Lucretius to the later Epicureans. These tricks were extensively used by Carneades ³, and the Epicureans may have learnt them from him. We know that the later Epicureans readily took over ways of arguing from other schools, especially the Stoics ⁴. In the polemics of Epicurus there does not seem to be any trace of them. But both he and Colotes used the *percontatio* ⁵, which is not so far from the *concessio*; and the dilemma was clearly older than Carneades. It may have been among the sophisms attacked by Epicurus (cf. *supra* p. 47), i.e. known to him, and a

¹ III 525: *ancipitique refutatu convincere falsum*.

² I 803 ff. (*at . . . scilicet*); I 897 ff. (*at . . . scilicet*); II 541 ff.; IV 473 ff.

³ Cf. Cic. *Nat. deor.* I 24, 67 f.; I 38, 107; I 39, 109 f.; Sext. *Emp. Adv. math.*, *passim*.

⁴ Cf. Velleius using the *sorites* Cic. *Nat. deor.* I 18, 48. See J. MAU, *art. cit.* (p. 51 n. 1), 93 ff.

⁵ [73] 16 Arrighetti; Plut. *Adv. Col.* 18, 1117 D; stiffened to mannerism in Diog. Oen. Fr. 5 III 9 f. Chilton.

closer inspection of Epicurus' general methods of argumentation may well reveal that he mastered both techniques ¹ and so also could have made use of them. We ought therefore to be careful to make use of them to separate Lucretius from Epicurus.

It is common for Lucretius and later Epicureans to use critical doxography in works of introduction ². In Epicurus and his immediate pupils we only find doxographies in advanced writings. This trait alone, however, will hardly be enough to place Lucretius among the later Epicureans. He may have adopted what he found in Epicurus' *On Nature* for his own poem of introduction.

Generally Lucretius does not name his opponents. This is a feature well known from all Epicurean writers. The most probable reason is that it was superfluous to mention any names because the readers were supposed to know them. If Lucretius only reproduces polemics which could pass as anonymous in the time of Epicurus, i.e. more than two hundred years before, he must have run the risk of presenting outdated and incomprehensible material to his readers.

Lucretius' formulae for introducing rival theories do not place him in any special category. The Greek equivalents of his expressions are found in every Epicurean writer. To take the most common: *si quis putat* (IV 469), *si forte putas* (III 533) and *putant* (VI 851) correspond to ὡς τινες νομίζουσιν in Epicurus (*Ep. ad Men.* 131) or ὑπολαμβάνει and ὡς ἀξιοῦσιν in Diogenes ³, *si forte credis* (V 338) and *quidam credunt* (II 167 f.) to οἶεται in Philodemus ⁴ and ὡς δοκοῦσιν in Diogenes ⁵, and *si forte aliquis dicet* (II 931) and *quod dicunt* (I 1053) to καθάπερ φησί τις in Epicurus (*Ep. ad Pyth.* 90), τινές φασιν in Philodemus ⁶ and

¹ Cf. e.g. the argumentation in *Ep. ad Hdt.* 38 ff.

² *Lucr.* I 635 ff.; *Cic. Nat. deor.* I 10 ff., 25-41; *Diog. Oen. Fr.* 5 Chilton.

³ *NF* 12, 1 Smith (*op. cit.* (p. 41 n. 1), 46); *Fr.* 7 I 7 Chilton.

⁴ *Piet.* 3 d, 1 (ed. Th. GOMPERZ (Leipzig 1866), 65).

⁵ *NF* 13, 1 Smith (*op. cit.*, 45).

⁶ *Piet.* 52 a, 3 (Gomperz p. 24).

ὡς φασιν in Diogenes (Fr. 10 III 6 Chilton). These are, of course, just ordinary Latin and Greek expressions for introducing statements, and so too are their numerous equivalents¹.

Lucretius is not afraid of using derogatory language to characterize his opponents. They are stupid (*stolidi* I 641; 1068); and to believe in their theories is not only foolish (*desiperest* III 802; V 165; 1043), but a sign of insanity (*dementia* I 704) and raving madness (*perdelirum* I 692). Lucretius is here following an Epicurean tradition, but his choice of words cannot link him to any special period. His vocabulary, however, is curiously limited in comparison with the torrent of abuse which is flowing from the pens of his Greek colleagues. Perhaps it is his *patrii sermonis egestas* (III 260) which holds him back. To Epicurus and his Greek followers other philosophers were not only strange², naive³, idle⁴, ridiculous⁵, boorish⁶, ignorant⁷ and stupid⁸; they were also charlatans⁹, liars¹⁰, ruthless¹¹, slavish¹², treacherous¹³ and sacrilegious¹⁴—or, to put it even more

¹ More instances to be found in the indices of J. Paulson, Arrighetti, C. J. Vooyo and Chilton in addition to the words mentioned *s. vv.* *reor, fingo, repeto, facio, quaero, constituo, fero, pono, lubet, aio, refuto, ἀποδίδωμι, λέγω, φάσκω, μάχομαι, ἐκβάλλω, ὀρίζω.*

² Phld. *Po.* V 11, 26 Jensen; Diog. Oen. Fr. 35 III 8 Chilton.

³ Cic. *Nat. deor.* I 12, 34.

⁴ *Ep. ad Hdt.* 67; Diog. Oen. Fr. 10 III 8 Chilton.

⁵ [31.14] 5, 12; [31.18] 12, 23 Arrighetti; Phld. *Po.* V 23, 20 Jensen; Diog. Oen. Fr. 10 IV 3 Chilton.

⁶ *Pap. Herc.* 1251 col. 11, 13 f., ed. W. SCHMID, *Ethica Epicurea* (Leipzig 1939), 29.

⁷ Phld. *D.* III Fr. 65, 3 Diels.

⁸ Hermarchus Fr. 41, 24 Krohn; Phld. *Po.* V 12, 28 Jensen.

⁹ Plut. *Adv. Col.* 20, 1118 D.

¹⁰ Phld. *Piet.* 27, 23 f. (Gomperz p. 147); *Po.* V 25, 30 Jensen.

¹¹ Phld. *Piet.* 81, 4 (Gomperz p. 111).

¹² *Ep. ad Pyth.* 93.

¹³ [20.3] Arrighetti; Diog. Oen. Fr. 28 II 9 Chilton.

¹⁴ Phld. *Piet.* 27, 21 (Gomperz p. 147).

bluntly, deaf ¹, blind ², dreaming ³ and raving mad ⁴. (The list is not exhaustive.)

Besides his derogatory epithets Lucretius also has nicer ways of characterizing mistaken opinions. *Error* and *errare* are mostly used ⁵; but neither they nor their equivalents ⁶ can help us to put Lucretius in any certain category of Epicureans. It may, however, in passing be worth mentioning that the characteristic Lucretian expression *falsa ratio* and its equivalents, the negations of *vera ratio* ⁷, obviously are translations of the Greek term *ψευδοδοξία*, so popular in all Epicurean writers ⁸. It ought also be remembered that Lucretius can talk with approval of his philosophical opponents Empedocles (I 738 f.) and Democritus ⁹, a trait we also can find in other Epicureans ¹⁰. It is clear that already Epicurus, although we cannot find any direct approval of opponents in his extant writings, made some gradation of them ¹¹.

The famous satirical ring of Lucretius also has its parallels in other Epicureans. Colotes we have already mentioned (p. 49). Epicurus who has his doubts about weathersigns from animals

¹ Phld. *Po.* V 25, 29 Jensen.

² Phld. *Ir.* 5, 25 (ed. C. WILKE (Leipzig 1914), 22).

³ Cic. *Nat. deor.* I 8, 18.

⁴ [27.2] 9 ff. Arrighetti; *Ep. ad Pyth.* 113; Phld. *Po.* V 32, 27 Jensen; Cic. *Nat. deor.* I 14, 37.

⁵ I 393; 711; 846; III 105; IV 823. Cf. Phld. *Sign.* 16, 29; 17, 28 De Lacy; Diog. Oen. Fr. 6 II 2; Fr. 32 III 4 f. Chilton.

⁶ *Fecere ruinas* I 740; *manifesta res... repugnat* III 353; *mittam contendere causam* IV 471; *non est ut possis credere* V 146. Cf. *Ep. ad Hdt.* 67; *Ep. ad Pyth.* 97; 98; [26.37] 8 ff.; [29.25] 3 f., 15; [34.30] Arrighetti; Cic. *Nat. deor.* I 9, 21.

⁷ I 377; 711; II 82; 229; 645; III 754; VI 853.

⁸ [180] Arrighetti; Fr. 253 Usener; Polystratus 7 a, 6 (Wilke p. 14); Phld. *Ir.* 37, 30 (Wilke p. 76); *D.* I 14, 34 Diels; Diog. Oen. Fr. 2 IV 7 Chilton. Cf. *Ep. ad Pyth.* 86.

⁹ III 371; V 622. Cf. his position next to Epicurus in III 1039 ff.

¹⁰ Cf. Diog. Oen. Fr. 5 II 9 ff. Chilton, on Democritus.

¹¹ [26.44] 19 ff. Arrighetti. Cf. *Ep. ad Men.* 131.

wonders if the animals can exert any compulsion for winter to come to an end (*Ep. ad Pyth.* 115). He makes a pun on the name of the Peripatetics ("walking about and talking idly about the good", Fr. 423 Usener); but his pun on Δημόκριτος as Ληρόκριτος (Diog. Laert. X 8) is even better. Satire from the time of Zeno is reflected in Cic. *Nat. deor.* I 8, 19 f.: What kind of engineering did God employ when he created the world and why did he wait so long before he rose to activity, presumably he lay sleeping? The world-god is really not much to envy, looking like a ball, spinning around with a sickening velocity. In Diogenes of Oenoanda, Fr. 10 V 3 ff., we have a depiction of the inventor of language as a schoolmaster giving his first course in Greek for foreigners.

Lucretius lives, of course, more than well up to the average standard of Epicurean satire. His parody of Heraclitus (I 638-644), drawn by Heraclitean linguistic and stylistic means, as shown by Kollmann¹, is just masterly and clearly surpasses Epicurus whose puns seem petty in comparison. Lucretius' remark on the centripetal theory of the world, that some people then must walk head downwards (I 1061), has certainly been funny for his contemporaries, but not that much for us who are so fortunate as to know the law of gravity. Lucretius clearly has a good point in his caricature of the view that sentient beings are created of sentient particles, when he presents the particles as small doll men consisting in their turn of even smaller doll men who behave exactly the way usual men do (II 973 ff.; cf. I 915 ff.). In his criticism of the theory that it is the soul which sees, the eyes only functioning as doors, he makes the proposal that we shall remove our eyes so that we can see better (III 367 ff.). The doctrine that the world is a divine, living body fosters in Lucretius the notion of a petty soul abiding in crumbling sods of earth (V 142). Bordering on

¹ E. D. KOLLMANN, "Lucretius' Criticism of the Early Greek Philosophers", in *StudClas* 13 (1971), 81 ff.

the grotesque is the consequence which he draws from the theory of metempsychosis: thousands of bodyless souls fighting to take possession of the worms swarming over the putrid corpse (III 722 ff.). It may seem remarkable that Lucretius renders hostile witticisms about the Epicurean theory of idols, pertinently asking if the idols keep watch on our will or are trained to perform plays when we are dreaming (IV 777 ff.); but an exact parallel can be found in Philodemus' *On Methods of Inference* where a Stoic joke on the Epicurean theory of analogy is cited verbatim¹.

B. *Contents of Arguments*

Several points in Lucretius' polemics do only occur in him and cannot be traced in any other Epicurean source. In most cases, however, this need not disturb us as the criticism is based on well established Epicurean dogmas and so could have occurred at any time in the history of the school. This holds good for Lucretius' attacks on the views that atoms can come to a standstill (II 80 ff.), that sentient beings are composed of sentient particles (II 902 ff.), that the soul is a harmony of the body (III 94 ff.) and that the soul of the dying collects into one place (III 533 ff.). The same is, of course, the case with the rejection of Democritus' theory that the atoms of soul and body are placed alternately (III 370 ff.). It is also probable for the attack on the false theory concerning the change of temperature in the spring of Hammon (VI 847 ff.). This phenomenon may have caused wonder at any time in the Hellenistic period, and the theory rejected must in some way or other have contradicted Epicurean cosmology, although we cannot exactly say how.

Three points in this category deserve special attention. The two first are the attacks on the theory that sensation can be created by an internal change in a non-sentient material (II 931 ff.) and that the sky is the creator of all things (V 318 ff.). No thin-

¹ 7, 26 ff. De Lacy. Cf. K. KLEVE, in *SO* 52 (1977), 43.

kers before the Stoics are reported to have held these views¹; but as the Stoics took over Presocratic ideas of condensation and rarefaction of matter to explain change, we cannot exclude the possibility that the theories attacked may be older and may already have been criticized; e.g. in Epicurus' *On Nature*. V 338 f. one may see a reference to the Stoic theory of ἐκπύρωσις: everything has existed before, but has been destroyed by heat. But as this kind of destruction is mentioned together with other kinds such as earthquake and flood, Lucretius may refer to a theory which can at least go back to Plato's *Timaeus*.

Other points can be traced right back to Epicurus and his immediate pupils. The rejection of the theory that motion is possible without void (I 370 ff.) is a reflection of the criticism of the Parmenidean One which is found both in Colotes and Philodemus². Polemics against Heraclitus, Empedocles and Anaxagoras (I 635 ff.) have continuously gone on in the Epicurean school. Their element-theories have certainly been discussed in Epicurus' *On Nature*—Empedocles' also in connection with the criticism of Plato's *Timaeus* (cf. *supra* pp. 46-47)—and the same theories are still under debate in Diogenes of Oenoanda (Fr. 5 Chilton). Their names also figure in the critical doxographies of Philodemus' *On Piety* and Cicero's *De natura deorum* (cf. *supra* p. 51). Especially Empedocles seems to have attracted attention. Hermarchus criticized his religious views in the 22 books great *Epistolika* (cf. *supra* p. 48), his attacks on metempsychosis still being reflected in Diogenes of Oenoanda³. Colotes attacked Empedocles' mixture theory with ample use of citations⁴, and so did Demetrius the Laconian

¹ I. von ARNIM (ed.), *SVF* II 804 ff. (cf. Bailey *ad loc.*).

² Plut. *Adv. Col.* 13, 1113 F, 1114 B-D; Phld. *Rh.*, ed. S. SUDHAUS, II (Leipzig 1896), 169, 7 ff.

³ Fr. 34 Chilton; NF 2: M. F. SMITH, "Fragments of Diogenes of Oenoanda Discovered and Rediscovered", in *AJA* 74 (1970), 59.

⁴ Plut. *Adv. Col.* 10, 1111 F; 11, 1112 D; 11-12, 1113 A-D.

in his discussion of Empedoclean physiology¹. Lucretius' predilection for Empedocles, then, does not need to have solely poetical reasons; it seems also to be rooted in the very philosophical tradition.

In the doxographies of Epicurus, Philodemus and Cicero (cf. *supra* pp. 45 ff., 51), Heraclitus, Empedocles and Anaxagoras are obviously treated in a context in which the theories of *all* previous and contemporary philosophers are discussed and rejected in turn. Lucretius and Diogenes, however, do not aim at completeness: Heraclitus, Empedocles and Anaxagoras are singled out for discussion². That this is done quite consciously by Lucretius is clear from I 705 ff. where he gives a sort of abbreviated doxography and without naming any philosophers points out that there exist more false element theories than the three he presents by name. Why are the three singled out? Hardly by accident. Diogenes seems to offer a clue when he announces that he is going to treat the Stoic theory of matter and God in connection with selected Presocratic views (Fr. 5 I-II Chilton). Lucretius may have had a similar intention. The three philosophers were of current interest as their ideas probably were used by the Stoics in their physical theory³. It was, therefore, still of importance, especially in a course of introduction, to protect the pupils against these false views on nature. Lucretius does not name his real targets, but there may be nothing strange in that. It was, as we have seen, quite usual in Epicurean polemics not to mention contemporary opponents by name. A similar collective criticism of Stoics and of the older thoughts used by them (viz. from Plato) can be found in the Epicurean discussion in Cicero's *De natura deorum* (cf. *supra* p. 51).

¹ *Pap. Herc.* 1012, 25 (V. de FALCO, *L'Epicureo Demetrio Lacone*, p. 35); 37 (p. 43); 43 (p. 46).

² In Diogenes also in connection with Thales, Diogenes of Apollonia and Anaximenes, Fr. 5 I-II Chilton.

³ Cf. S. SAMBURSKY, *Physics of the Stoics* (London 1959), 16; 97.

Lucretius' attack on the view that the world is created for the sake of men (II 167 ff.; V 156 ff.) cannot be found in any extant writings from Epicurus and his time. His main arguments are, however, found in Philodemus and Cicero: the gods could not have had any conception of the world before it actually existed, no plausible account can be given for the gods' shift in life before and after the creation, and the faults of the world preclude any belief in a creation for men's sake¹. In these sources the arguments are without the slightest doubt directed against the Stoics, but it would be too hasty to conclude that they could only be directed against them. As the argument from the impossibility of a premundane conception of the world seems primarily to be directed against Plato (Cic. *Nat. deor.* I 8, 19) and we are informed by Xenophon (*Mem.* IV 3) that there existed an anthropocentric teleology before the time of the Stoics, we cannot exclude the possibility that the arguments may have already been used by Epicurus².

Lucretius' polemics against the theory of mechanical necessity (II 225 ff.; 251 ff.) are a stock criticism of Democritus and his followers which can be traced throughout the history of Epicureanism³. Also Lucretius' attacks on metempsychosis (III 417 ff.) seem to be standard polemics, beginning with Epicurus and still persisting in Diogenes of Oenoanda⁴. The

¹ Cic. *Nat. deor.* I 8, 18 ff.; W. CRÖNERT, *op. cit.* (p. 42 n. 5), 113 n. 512. On Philodemus' *On Providence* see R. PHILIPPSON, *Philodemos*, in *RE* XIX 2, 2463. Cf. Demetrius, *Pap. Herc.* 1055, 2 (ed. V. de FALCO, p. 69), and Diog. Oen. NF 39-40: M. F. SMITH, "More New Fragments of Diogenes of Oenoanda", in *Cahiers de Philologie* 1 (Lille 1976), 284 ff.

² Pace J. SCHMIDT, *op. cit.* (p. 40 n. 1), 80 ff.

³ See *supra* pp. 45 and 46; [14] Arrighetti; Diog. Oen. Fr. 32 II-III Chilton; NF 7 III: M. F. SMITH, "New Fragments of Diogenes of Oenoanda", in *AJA* 75 (1971), 367. Cf. Demetrius, *Pap. Herc.* 1012, 31 (ed. V. de FALCO, p. 40); Cic. *Fat.* 9, 17 ff.; 16, 37 f.

⁴ Fr. 17 Usener; Hermarchus Fr. 31 Krohn; on Philodemus, cf. R. PHILIPPSON, in *RE* XIX 2, 2474; Diog. Oen. Fr. 34-35 Chilton (last fragm. against the Stoics); id. NF 2: M. F. SMITH, in *AJA* 74 (1970), 59 (against Empedocles).

same may be said about Lucretius' refutation of scepticism (IV 469 ff.). Several forms of scepticism seem to have been discussed by the Epicurean polemicists in the course of time ¹, and Lucretius' argument is so broadly formed that it can more or less cover all of them.

With Lucretius' defense of the theory of idols (IV 777 ff.) we seem to be on firmer ground. Although the theory was an object of constant discussion with other philosophers from Epicurus to Diogenes of Oenoanda (in the last case especially with the Stoics) ², the ironical force of the hostile questions as reported by Lucretius, the contents and even the choice of words point rather clearly at Carneades ³. Here at least, we seem to have an instance of polemics which can not be ascribed to Epicurus but must belong to a later period.

The theory that language has a natural origin is known from Epicurus (*Ep. ad Hdt.* 75 f.), but criticism of a rival linguistic view is only extant in Lucretius (V 1028 ff.) and Diogenes of Oenoanda (Fr. 10 II-V Chilton). But as the discussion in both is part of a wider treatment of man's primitive history, it seems likely that also earlier treatments of this topic, e.g. in Hermarchus (cf. *supra* p. 48), also contained criticism of rival theories of language. His polemics on language, then, do not place Lucretius in any special category.

The theory that there is a finite world in an infinite void is refuted both in Lucretius (I 1052 ff.) and Diogenes of Oenoanda

¹ On Epicurus cf. *supra* pp. 43, 45 and 47 (against the Megarians); Colotes, *ap. Plut. Adv. Col.* 8, 1110 E (Democritus); 27, 1122 E; 1123 A; 29-30, 1124 B-D (Arcesilaus); on Polystratus cf. A. BARIGAZZI, "Epicure et le scepticisme", in *Actes du VIII^e Congrès, Ass. G. Budé* (Paris 1969), 288; Demetrius, *Pap. Herc.* 1012, 38 (ed. V. de FALCO, pp. 43 f.); *Phld. Rh.*, ed. S. SUDHAUS, II, 169 (Metrodorus of Chius, Parmenides); *Diog. Oen. Fr.* 4 I-II (Aristotle, mistaken for Aenesidemus? Cf. Chilton *ad loc.*); Fr. 6 II Chilton (Democritus).

² For Epicurus cf. *supra* pp. 44 and 46. *Diog. Oen. Fr.* 7 Chilton; NF 1: M. F. SMITH, in *AJA* 74 (1970), 57; NF 13: M. F. SMITH, *op. cit.* (p. 41 n. 1), 45.

³ See *Cic. Nat. deor.* I 37, 105 ff.; 38, 107 ff.; *Fam.* XV 16, 1-2. Cf. K. KLEVE, "Wie kann man an das Nicht-Existierende denken?", in *SO* 37 (1961), 46 ff.

(Fr. 20 Chilton). The views criticized are, however, not similar. The rival theory in Lucretius is that the world is spherical with everything tending to the center, in Diogenes that the earth is limited by the heaven above, but extending below without limitation. But we can see that Diogenes also presented other variants of the theory. There must, therefore, have existed a number of theories to be refuted under this heading. Lucretius has chosen one of them, and he must have had a reason. It is not unlikely that it was because the theory was of current interest. What interest might that be? Probably the Stoics held it.

Lucretius' discussion on unique occurrences in nature (II 522 ff.) may be regarded as an offshot of the polemics against unique explanations of natural phenomena so well known from Epicurus (cf. *supra* pp. 45 and 46). But it seems more reasonable to regard it as a counterpart to Philodemus' discussion about uniqueness with the Stoics in *On Methods of Inference* (cf. *supra* pp. 50-51). In Philodemus the question is whether uniqueness invalidates inference by analogy, in Lucretius whether it invalidates the theory of atomism: If the number of atoms of each shape is infinite, the number of possible combinations of atoms will also be infinite, but this is contradicted if one can point out unique things¹. The position both in Philodemus and Lucretius is, of course, that nothing in nature is really unique; it may only seem so (cf. *Lucr.* II 1077 ff.). Probably Philodemus and Lucretius mirror each their side of a greater discussion about uniqueness that was being carried on with the Stoics.

Lucretius' refutation of the allegorical interpretation of religious beliefs and cults (II 600 ff.) has no parallels before Philodemus and Cicero². In their works the targets are the Stoics; and the arguments are in fact, if not in form, the same as in Lucretius: the allegories contradict our concept of the

¹ Cf. K. KLEVE, in *SO* 52 (1977), 39 ff.; 48.

² *Phld. Piet.* 20, 7 ff. (Gomperz p. 87); *Cic. Nat. deor.* I 15, 39 ff.

divine and are morally irrelevant. But as allegory flourished long before the Stoics, nothing could have hindered Epicurus from having taken part in the discussion as well.

There is a difficulty with Lucretius' rejection of the theory that the world and its parts are eternal and divine (V 110 ff.). If we are looking for possible targets, the Stoics, on the one hand, believed that the world was divine, but not immortal, the Platonists and the Peripatetics, on the other hand, that the world was immortal, but only the stars divine¹. Epicurus, then, could only have attacked one part of the hostile view (cf. Fr. 342 ff. Usener), the later Epicureans another, and we also know that they actually did so (Cic. *Nat. deor.* I 8, 18 ff.; 10, 24 ff.). Perhaps Lucretius gives a combined attack on rival theories which were regarded as too similar to warrant botherings with nice distinctions (cf. *supra* p. 65). Demetrius the Laconian, at least, treats the Stoic and Peripatetic theory together².

Lucretius' description of Empedocles' homeland Sicily (I 716 ff.) matches the biographical interests of the later Epicureans, although more poetical models perhaps would suggest themselves more immediately.

A number of polemical themes debated in other Epicureans are absent in Lucretius. Some of them go without saying. Lucretius' poem is restricted to physics. Polemics in the ethical field, where Epicureans of all periods were energetically engaged, were naturally left aside by Lucretius. The same was the case for themes of logic, rhetoric, poetry and music.

There are, however, polemical topics whose absence in Lucretius calls for attention. Epicurus' criticism of the cosmogonical theories of Leucippus and Democritus has disappeared in Lucretius; and so has his rejection of certain rival views on perception (cf. *supra* pp. 44 f. and 46). It is perhaps not too hasty

¹ Cf. D. J. FURLEY, *art. cit.* (p. 39 n. 1), 27 ff.; J. SCHMIDT, *op. cit.* (p. 40 n. 1), 89 ff.; H. REICHE, *art. cit.* (p. 47 n. 6), 308.

² *Pap. Herc.* 1055, 16: W. SCOTT, *Fragmenta Herculanensia* (Oxford 1885), 250 (= *Pap. Herc.* 1055, 19, ed. V. de FALCO, p. 76).

to conclude that these theories did not represent a serious danger any more and therefore could be omitted from a work of introduction.

There are no polemics in Lucretius against the doctrine of divination, which seems to have been a central topic in other Epicurean writers of all periods¹. Together with other questions of theology it belonged to physics according to the Epicurean view, and so one should have expected a discussion of it. Probably Lucretius reserved it for the treatment of the gods which he promised, V 155, but never carried out. Another possibility is that Lucretius' chief opponent was the Stoicism of Panaetius, so popular among the Roman nobility. He seems to have rejected several doctrines which were held by older Stoics, among them the belief in divination².

Lucretius naturally demonstrates very thoroughly that the soul is corporeal (III 161 ff.); but we miss the pointed polemics of Epicurus against the Platonic theory of the immateriality of the soul (cf. *supra* p. 44). This may be a sign that one no longer had to communicate first and foremost with an idealistic form of philosophy.

Perhaps the most conspicuous example of missing polemics in Lucretius is the total absence of any discussion of the mathematical astronomy of Plato and Aristotle. Lucretius naturally stresses the principle of several possible explanation of natural phenomena (VI 703 ff.; V 526 ff.); but there is no mention of the mathematical implications of that rival theory which seemed so important for Epicurus to refute (cf. *supra* pp. 45 and 46). It is tempting to conclude that Lucretius felt this theory was out of date. We find the same attitude towards it in Diogenes of Oenoanda (Fr. 8 III Chilton). It was probably common in later Epicureanism.

¹ Fr. 395 Usener; Cic. *Nat. deor.* I 20, 55; Diog. Oen. Fr. 30-31 Chilton.

² Fr. 68; 73; 74 van Straaten. On Lucretius and Panaetius cf. J. SCHMIDT, *op. cit.* (p. 40 n. 1), 100 ff.

II. CONCLUSION

Lucretius is firmly rooted in the polemical tradition of Epicureanism. One of the most important characteristics of this tradition is the endeavour to be up to date and meet every new challenge to Right Philosophy. There is no compelling reason to make Lucretius an exception in this respect. On the contrary, it seems improbable that Lucretius should have felt himself bound exclusively to present the polemics from the time of Epicurus. Also here he could plant his footsteps on a path already trodden by the Master: not to pretend to study philosophy, but really to do it rejecting every dangerous pseudodoxy, old or new, for the health of oneself and the Friends in the Garden.

The conclusion also has a wider impact: we can confidently use Lucretius as a source for the general philosophical situation of his own time.

DISCUSSION

M. Gigon: Ich stimme vollständig dem zu, was Sie über den Stil und den Umfang der philosophischen Polemik Epikurs und seiner Schüler gesagt haben, auch dem Hinweis auf die doxographische Sorgfalt, mit der bei aller Gehässigkeit vorgegangen wird. Hier nur ein Detail: Cicero ignoriert in der Tat Philodemos, nicht aber Kolotes, auf den er in der Einleitung zum *Somnium Scipionis* eindeutig angespielt hat.

Was Lukrez angeht, so halte ich auch jetzt daran fest, dass er kaum gegen die Stoa polemisiert haben wird, so wenig wie Epikur selbst.

Dass die meisten Polemiken anonym sind, liegt daran, dass gepflegter, gehobener antiker Stil es grundsätzlich vermeidet, allzu genau zu zitieren. Exakte Zitate gelten als pedantisch und unfein; so sagte man « τινες » und *quidam*, *legunt* auch dort, wo man genau weiss, um wen es sich handelt (vgl. auch das Vermeiden genauer Zahlenangaben).

Dass Lukrez nicht gegen die Divination polemisiert, vermag man doch kaum als Rücksicht auf Panaitios, der die Divination bekanntlich ablehnte, zu verstehen; Panaitios ist wesentlich durch Cicero berühmt geworden, darüber hinaus dürfte sein Einfluss gering gewesen sein.

Endlich darf ich noch zwei Einzelheiten hervorheben.

1) Lucr. II 1077 ff. beweist die Vielheit der Welten damit, dass es von jedem Ding in der Welt immer viele Exemplare gibt — also wird es auch nicht bloss eine Welt, sondern viele geben. Diese Diskussion wird im Prinzip schon in Arist. *Cael.* 278 a 23 ff. vorausgesetzt — wo Aristoteles umgekehrt sich mit der Frage auseinandersetzen muss, warum es nur eine Welt gibt, da es ja von jeder Gattung und Art immer viele Exemplare gibt; jeder λόγος konkretisiert sich vielfach in der ὄλη.

2) Lucr. V 168 ff. betont unter Anderem, dass kein Grund einzusehen ist, der die Götter hätte veranlassen können, nach langen Zeiten der Ruhe sich plötzlich dazu zu entschliessen, einen Kosmos zu schaffen. Auch hier zeigt Arist. *Cael.* 281 b 25 ff. dass die Diskussion alt ist. Epikur-Lukrez benutzen Argumente, die Aristoteles gegen die Kosmogonie des platonischen *Timaios* angeführt hatte. In Cic. *Nat. deor.* I 6, 13 ff. sind die Argumente gegen die stoische Kosmologie aufgeboten.

M. Grimal: Je pense qu'il ne convient pas de minimiser l'influence de Panétius. Il a non seulement contribué à former la doctrine de Cicéron, mais, à travers ses disciples directs, il a agi sur le mouvement philosophique à Rome au milieu du I^{er} siècle av. J.-C. Son disciple Athénodore, fils de Sandon, qui fut l'un des maîtres du jeune Octave, et à qui Cicéron demande un témoignage sur l'enseignement de Panétius, contribue à maintenir une vie philosophique au cours des guerres civiles. Panétius avait été aussi le maître d'Hécaton, qui forma à la philosophie les épigones du siècle des Scipions et diffusa largement dans l'aristocratie romaine la doctrine épicurienne. Panétius, enfin, contribua à former Posidonius. Pour toutes ces raisons, il est au centre du stoïcisme romain au cours de cette période.

Or, Panétius est précisément ce philosophe que postulait M. Kleve: celui qui admettrait à la fois le caractère divin du monde et son éternité. Sur ce point, il me semble qu'il faut lui donner raison.

D'autre part, la distinction que M. Kleve établit entre polémique explicite et polémique impersonnelle repose sur un fait certain: tout exposé philosophique, à Rome aussi bien qu'en Grèce, procède par un mouvement de dialogue, implicite et explicite. Lucrèce n'échappe pas à cette règle. Certains adversaires, dans ces conditions, peuvent être imaginés, pour les besoins de la cause; certains sont réels. A nous de faire la différence, lorsque nous le pouvons.

M. Schrijvers: Si, dans une histoire des polémiques épicuriennes, on se limite aux mentions explicites des théories auxquelles Lucrèce s'oppose, on court le risque de négliger les cas de polémique implicite,

présentés sous la forme d'une simple dénégation (p. ex. II 1153-1155) ou d'une allusion (cf. la résonance du terme *nequiquam*, V 846; cf. l'adage téléologique ἡ φύσις οὐκ ἐργάζεται μάτην). Comme vous avez dit qu'il n'était pas nécessaire pour Lucrèce de nommer ses adversaires parce que son public pouvait les identifier, il faut admettre que ce même public de *lectores docti* était capable de comprendre les allusions polémiques. Toutefois, si, conformément à vos critères très stricts, on ne tient compte que des polémiques explicites, on constate qu'un de vos exemples les plus évidents ne répond pas à vos propres critères, à savoir les vers IV 777 sqq., relatifs aux simulacres et à la volonté. En effet, l'exemple des rêves a été déjà utilisé par Lucrèce aux vers IV 770 sqq., et la formule *multaque in his rebus quaeruntur* (777) n'est pas un indice certain du fait qu'il s'agit ici d'une polémique: il pourrait s'agir ici d'une simple formule de transition.

M. Kleve: There may be implicate polemics in Lucretius which it is hard to detect today, but I do not think this is the case in II 1153-1155 and V 846 where it would be more correct to speak of a negation than a criticism of an opposite view. You may be right when you say that my criterion for polemics does not fit so well with IV 777 ff., but I think *quaeruntur* (777) and *quaeritur* (779) ought to be enough to raise our suspicion, esp. when it is confirmed in other sources: Cic. *Nat. deor.* I 38, 107 ff.; *Fam.* XV 16, 1-2.

M. Furley: Your paper again raises the question of Lucretius' relation to the Stoic school, and offers some new arguments. They still seem to me rather unsubstantial. (I am very sorry that I have not yet seen the publication that you mention by J. Schmidt, *Lukrez und die Stoiker* (Diss. Marburg/Lahn 1975).)

You suggest that the selection of Presocratics for detailed criticism in Book I may be determined, in part at least, by the fact that those selected were already associated, in Epicurean polemics, with the stoic school; and in support you quote Diogenes of Oenoanda Fr. 5, where Heraclitus, Empedocles, and Anaxagoras are mentioned in a list which culminates with the Stoics. But could it not be that

the selection is determined more simply? Heraclitus represents material monism, Empedocles the four element theory, Anaxagoras the theory of infinite divisibility—these are the most important theories of matter which Epicurus himself had to criticize.

It is tempting to think that Lucretius' polemic against the theory that the cosmos was created by gods for the sake of man must be directed against the Stoics. Of course, his criticisms may well be valid against stoic positions. But the crucial question is this: is it impossible that such criticisms could have been framed by Epicurus himself with other targets in mind? Since the theory in question is given to Socrates by Xenophon (*Mem.* I 4 and IV 3), and may well have been developed in Aristotle's *De philosophia*, this does not yet seem to me to be proved.

You mention that Diogenes of Oenoanda seems to have criticized only the geocentric cosmology—perhaps because the Stoics had adopted geocentrism. Maybe; but since Plato and Aristotle (Epicurus' chief targets) were geocentrists, this is not a strong argument.

You find it puzzling that Lucretius does not criticize the immaterial soul, and suggest that this is because he has the Stoics in mind, and they were materialists. An interesting point, which could be right, although in that case it seems curious that we do not have more about the Stoic $\piνεῦμα$ and its mode of operation. But perhaps there is an easier explanation, in that immaterial entities have been already firmly eliminated in Book I.

M. Alfonsi: Riguardo ai modi della polemica filosofica di Lucrezio sia nei confronti della tradizione epicurea, sia dei contemporanei come lo stesso Cicerone richiamerei l'attenzione anche sugli aspetti stilistici di una polemica filosofica, realizzata da un poeta, in un'opera precettistico-didattica; e sulla differenziazione di quei passi dallo stile « sublime », generale dell'opera, cui pur si avvicinano, e da quello espositivo didascalico di altre parti, per un loro calore e impegno nonchè spesso ricerca di obiettiva precisione, anche nella ironia.

