This volume investigates why Plotinus, a philosopher inspired by Plato, made critical use of Epicurean philosophy. Eminent scholars show that some fundamental Epicurean conceptions pertaining to ethics, physics, epistemology and theology are drawn upon in the Enneads to discuss crucial notions such as pleasure and happiness, providence and fate, matter and the role of sense perception, intuition and intellectual evidence in relation to the process of knowledge acquisition. By focusing on the meaning of these terms in Epicureanism, Plotinus deploys sophisticated methods of comparative analysis and argumentative procedures that ultimately lead him to approach certain aspects of Epicurus’ philosophy as a benchmark for his own theories and to accept, reject or discredit the positions of authors of his own day. At the same time, these discussions reveal what aspects of Epicurean philosophy were still perceived to be of vital relevance in the third century AD.

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PLOTINUS AND EPICURUS

*Matter, Perception, Pleasure*

EDITED BY

ANGELA LONGO

and

DANIELA PATRIZIA TAORMINA
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Marco Ninci, an alumnus and former research fellow of the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, focuses on Greek patristics and its relation to pagan Neoplatonism and medieval philosophy. After publishing an annotated translation of Plotinus’ Fifth Ennead prefaced by an extensive introduction (M. Ninci, Il pensiero come diverso dall’Uno, Quinta Enneade (2000)), he has continued his work on Plotinus by authoring a number of wide-ranging articles. His edition of the Greek letters by
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Preface

This volume arises from the PRIN MIUR 2009 project Le filosofie post-ellenistiche da Antioco a Plotino (Post-Hellenistic philosophies from Antiochus to Plotinus). In particular, it reflects the work organised by the research unit set up by Angela Longo and Daniela Patrizia Taormina, Gli atomi di Epicuro e l’ordine di Plotino: Uno scorcio sugli usi plotiniani dell’epicureismo (Epicurus’ Atoms and Plotinus’ Order: An Overview of Plotinus’ Use of Epicureanism). The terms ‘atoms’ and ‘order’ here refer not to any specific field, but to the underlying conceptual structures of the two philosophies, at work in all areas of enquiry: physics, ontology and ethics. The idea of conducting this comparative work on Plotinus came from Angela Longo, and was immediately and enthusiastically taken up. This enthusiasm might seem rather surprising, given that Platonism and Epicureanism may not unreasonably be regarded as philosophies so distant from one another as to appear quite incompatible and unsuitable for comparison. Recent studies have shown, however, that it is possible to bridge the distance between the two. Beyond the polemic, clear points of contact between the two philosophies have been seen to emerge.

What we have, then, is a twofold perspective. On the one hand, the polemical distance between two highly distinctive philosophies is bound to bring out important aspects of both. On the other hand, the emergence of unexpected convergences sheds light on some significant historical and theoretical aspects.

In our pursuit of this perspective, we organised three symposia: on 29 November 2012 at the headquarters of the Società Geografica Italiana (Palazzetto Mattei) in Rome, on 7 and 8 March 2013 at the University of L’Aquila and on 19 April at the Swiss Institute in Rome.

In these symposia we sought to contextualise Plotinus’ position within the framework of the more general debate between late Platonists and Epicureans, not least in relation to specific theoretical stances held by Epicurus and his followers. The papers delivered covered a broad range of topics:
Preface

‘So that you may understand the philosopher under every aspect and not judge him before knowing him’: The school and writings of Epicurus in the early centuries of the Roman empire (T. Dorandi); Epicurus and Epicureans against geometry? (F. Verde); Aspects of Plutarch’s anti-Epicureanism: A re-assessment (E. Kechagia); Sextus Empiricus and the Epicurean telos: Is pleasure preferable by nature? (E. Spinelli); Epicurus and Epicureanism in Seneca (S. Maso); No deviations allowed: Causality and Epicurean atomism in Plotinus’ tr. 3 (Enn. III 1) (C. Arruzza); ‘Heavy birds’ (tr. 5 (Enn. V 9) 1.8): References to Epicureanism and the problem of pleasure in Plotinus (M. Pagotto Marsola); Corporeal matter, indefiniteness and multiplicity: Plotinus’ critique of Epicurean atomism in treatise 12 (Enn. II 4) 7.20–8 (M. Ninci); Dieu, le monde et les corps: Le retournement du motif épicurien de la fatigue et de l’inaction (Plotin, traité 6 (Enn. IV 8) 2) (J.-F. Balandé); Plotinus, Epicurus and the problem of intellectual evidence. Treatise 32 (Enn. V 5) 1 (P.-M. Morel); ‘What is known through sense perception is an image’: Plotinus’ tr. 32 (Enn. V 5) 1.12–19: An anti-Epicurean argument? (D. P. Taormina); Arnobius’ Christian Epicureanism (C. Moreschini); With Epicurus against Platonists: Augustine on the physiology of the human body (Th. Fuhrer); and Proclus confronting real and imagined Epicureans (C. Steel).

My thanks go to the speakers and to all the people who took part in the symposia and contributed to turning them into important moments of mutual engagement among scholars through in-depth and wide-ranging discussions: our students and colleagues, especially F. Alesse, A. Aportone, G. Basileo, R. Chiaradonna, A. Conti, A. Corti, G. Di Tommaso, L. Ferroni, F. Fronterotta, F. Giampietri, F. G. Masi, A. M. Ioppolo, C. Maggi, L. Perilli, A. Serangeli, G. Schiavon and C. Tommasi.

The present volume only includes those works presented in the three symposia that were turned into a text focusing on Plotinus’ criticism of Epicureanism. The volume also features five contributions that, while developed in the context of the project, for purely contingent reasons were not preceded by any discussion during the symposia: A. Longo, The mention of Epicurus in Plotinus’ tr. 33 (Enn. II 9) in the context of the polemics between pagans and Christians in the second to third centuries AD; Parallels between Celsus, Plotinus and Origen; M. Mazzetti, Epicureans and Gnostics in tr. 47 (Enn. III 2) 7.29–41; E. Eliasson, Plotinus’ reception of Epicurean atomism in On Fate, tr. 3 (Enn. III.1) 1–3; A. Cornea, Athroa epibolé: On an Epicurean formula in Plotinus’ work; A. Linguiti, Plotinus and Epicurus on pleasure and happiness.

We have greatly benefited from a set of critical remarks by anonymous reports.
We are most grateful to Sergio Knipe for his accurate translation or proofreading of the articles in the present volume. We would like to thank John M. Dillon for his conscientious re-reading of the manuscript. And the authors’ grateful thanks also go to Rosario Scalia for his careful preparation of the three indices.

Daniela Patrizia Taormina
Abbreviations

This list contains the abbreviations used in this volume to refer: 1. to collections of works, fragments, papyri and inscriptions; 2. to collections of modern studies; 3. to ancient authors and works or fragments. In the case of authors of a single work, references, as a rule, are by author’s name only.
For modern editions of the most important works, see Ancient Authors, Editions, Translations and Commentaries Cited below in this volume.

1 Collections of works or fragments of various authors, of papyri and inscriptions

*C PF* Corpus dei papiri filosofici greci e latini, Florence 1989–.
*IG* Inscriptiones Graecae, Berlin 1902–.
*NH* Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi, Québec et al. 1997–.
*P Berol.* Berliner Leihgabe griechischer Papyri.
*P Herc.* Herculaneum Papyri.
*P Oxy.* Oxyrhynchus Papyri.
*SEG* Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum, Leyden 1923–.
List of abbreviations

2 Collections of modern studies


DphA  Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques, publié sous la direction de R. Goulet, Paris 1989–


3 Ancient authors and works or fragments

Aët.  Aëtius Placita

Alcin.  Alcinous Didaskalikos

Alex.  Alexander Aphrodisiensis

Fat.  De fato

in de Sens.  In librum De sensu commentarium

in Metaph.  In Aristotelis Metaphysica commentarium

Mant.  De anima libri Mantissa

Mixt.  De mixtione

Prov.  De providentia

Quaest.  Quaestiones

An.  Anonymous in Theaetetum

Arist.  Aristoteles

Cael.  De Caelo

de An.  De Anima

EN  Ethica Nicomachea

GC  De generatione et corruptione

Mem.  De Memoria

Metaph.  Metaphysica

Mete.  Meteorologica

Phys.  Physica

Po.  Politica

Protr.  Protrepticus

Sens.  De sensu et sensibilibus

Attic.  Atticus

Fr.  Fragmenta

Aug.  Augustinus

Conf.  Confessiones

Calcid.  Calcidius
List of abbreviations

in Tim.  In Timaeum
Cicero
Div.  De divinatione
Fat.  De fato
Fin.  De finibus
Luc.  Lucullus
ND  De natura deorum
Tusc.  Tusculanae disputationes
Clem.  Clemens Alexandrinus
Ex. Theod.  Excerpta ex Theodoto
Strom.  Stromateis
Demetr. Lac.  Demetrius Lacon
D.L.  Diogenes Laërtius Vitae
Diog. Oen.  Diogenes Oenoandensis New Fragments
Epic.  Epicurus
Ep. Hdt.  Epistula ad Herodotum
Ep. Id.  Epistula ad Idomeneum
Ep. Men.  Epistula ad Moeneceum
Ep. Pyth.  Epistula ad Pythoclem
Fr.  Fragmenta
Nat.  De Natura
RS  Ratae Sententiae
VS  Sententiae vaticanae
Eus.  Eusebius
PE  Praeparatio evangelica
Gal.  Galenus
Libr.  De libris suis
PHP  De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis
Himerius
Orat.  Orationes
Hipp.  Hippolytus
Ref.  Refutatio omnium haeresium
Irenaeus
adv. Haer.  Adversus Haereses
Lact.  Lactantius
ID  De ira Dei
Luc.  Lucianus Samosatensis
Alex.  Alexander seu pseudomantis
List of abbreviations

Lucr. Lucretius
DRN De rerum natura
Orig. Origenes
Cels. Contra Celsum
Phil. Philo Alexandrinus
Op. mun. De opificio mundi
Phld. Philodemus
De piet. De pietate
Sign. De signis

Plato
Gorg. Gorgias
Lg. Leges
Phd. Phaedo
Phdr. Phaedrus
Phil. Philebus
Pol. Politicus
Resp. Res publica
Symp. Symposium
Thtr. Theaetetus
Tim. Timaeus

Plot. Plotinus
Enn. Enneades
Tr. Treatise

Plut. Plutarchus Chaeronensis
An. Procr. De animae procreatione in Timaeo
Col. Adversus Colotem
Is. et Os. De Iside et Osiride
Stoic. Rep. De Stoicorum repugnantii
Suav. viv. Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum

Porph. Porphyrius
Abst. De abstinentia
Marc. Ad Marcellam
Plot. Vita Plotini

Procl. Proclus
in Tim. In Platonis Timaeum commentaria

Sen. Seneca
Ep. Epistulae

S.E. Sextus Empiricus
M Adversus mathematicos
List of abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>PH</td>
<td>Pyrrhonei hypotyposes</td>
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<td>Them.</td>
<td>Themistius</td>
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<td>Or.</td>
<td>Orationes</td>
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<td>Theon Sm.</td>
<td>Theon Smyrnaeus, Expositio rerum mathematicarum ad legendum Platonem utilium</td>
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Transliteration

Key words in Greek are transliterated and printed in italics. Only a long vowel at the end of a word is marked with a macron, whereas macra placed on other long vowels within a word are not marked.