PART I

INTRODUCTION

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Sources

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1 Why so much has been lost

We know a good deal about Hellenistic[1] philosophy, but by no means as much as we would like to know. The reason is that with very few exceptions no works written by the Hellenistic philosophers themselves survive. The situation is therefore quite different from that in which we find ourselves with regard to the great classical philosophers, Plato and Aristotle. Plato's complete works have been preserved. Much of Aristotle's vast output has perished, but the philosophically more important part of his writings is still available. The reason for the preservation of these Platonic and Aristotelian corpora is that these works continued to be taught and studied in the philosophical schools. Treatises of Aristotle were taught by the late Neoplatonists as a preparation for the study of a set of dialogues by Plato, and those of his works which were not part of the curricula have mostly perished. The professional teachers of philosophy themselves were required to have perfect knowledge of practically everything these great masters had written.

But by the end of the third century AD the schools (in the sense both of institutions and schools of thought) which had been founded in the early Hellenistic period had died out.[2] The works of Epicurus and his immediate followers, or of the great early Stoics for example, were no longer taught, though a preliminary instruction in the views of the main schools could still be part of a decent pagan education in the fourth and to a much lesser extent in the fifth and sixth centuries AD.[3] The institutional basis

[1] For the nineteenth-century origin of this problematic denomination and periodization see Bichler 1983, Isnardi Parente 1985–6. For *belles-lettres* the classical period is the 5th century, for philosophy the 4th, for medicine the 5th/4th century BC. For mathematics it is the 3rd/2nd century BC, i.e. the early Hellenistic period (most of the works of Euclid, Archimedes and part of Apollonius having been preserved, as well as opuscula by other authors); for the traditions involved see Knorr 1989, esp. 224–45 on Pappus and Eutocius.

[2] On the philosophical recession in the third century AD see Longinus at Porph. *VP* 20, Saffrey and Westerink 1968, xli–xlii. [3] For the survival of doxographical literature see below, n. 65.

which would have ensured the preservation of the Hellenistic philosophers disappeared.

From the second to the fourth centuries AD the originally humble vellum (or papyrus) codex, the forerunner of our book, gradually replaced the papyrus scroll as the vehicle for higher forms of literature[4]. The works that were taught to students and studied by the professors themselves were carefully and systematically transcribed, and in sufficient numbers. The enormous mass of works that were no longer taught were either not transcribed at all and so eventually perished along with the fragile material on which they had been written, or transcribed in quantities that were not sufficiently large to warrant their survival, though works that were popular for other reasons had good chances to survive. Libraries tend to deteriorate and – much worse – burn.[5] In order to explain Plato and Aristotle, as the expression was, 'from themselves',[6] that is to say from what is stated in their own writings, there was no need to adduce the works of the Hellenistic philosophers. These thinkers and their later followers had often enough criticized Plato and Aristotle, or attempted to work out ideas which they believed to be better, and in some cases undoubtedly were better. But from the first centuries BC and AD onwards, the professors of Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy had taken some of these criticisms and alternatives into account in their oral or written comments and commentaries on individual works. Useful ideas worked out by philosophical rivals had been incorporated in updated versions of the Platonic system, and the ingenuity of Plato's exegetes had found intimations of, and so a legitimation for, these ideas in Plato's own works. The commentaries on the great classical philosophers were quite effective in protecting students against the impact of potentially destructive doctrines of rival schools. What the average student should know about Stoicism or Epicureanism, to mention only the more important currents, was found in elementary handbooks or in the Platonic and Aristotelian commentary literature itself. Doing philosophy had more and more turned into exegesis, that is to say into the study and interpretation of the works of the great classics.[7] The actual practice of teaching and doing phi-

[4] Up-to-date overviews in Cavallo 1989, 1994. For the disappearance of literary works that were no longer taught see Irigoin 1994, 72–6.
[5] For the history of transmission in general see Reynolds and Wilson 1978, Wilson 1983.
[6] Cf. Schäublin 1977, and e.g. Procl. *TP* 1.2, p. 10.1–4.
[7] P. Hadot 1987, Sedley 1989a, 97–103, Barnes et al. 1991, 4–7, Baltes in Dörrie and Baltes 1993, 162–6, Erler 1993. For Demetrius of Laconia's exegesis of Epicurus see Puglia 1988, and the comments of Roselli 1990, who compares Galen's practice. For the commentaries on Aristotle see the papers in Sorabji 1990, with useful bibliography 484–524; for those on Plato Westerink 1990, lxi–lxxvi, Dörrie and Baltes 1993, 20–54, 162–226. For what should be taught and how see I. Hadot 1990, 1991, Mansfeld 1994b.

losophy therefore hardly encouraged the study of the original works written by representatives of other schools of thought. Accordingly, in the later exegetical literature concerned with Plato and Aristotle the doctrines of the Hellenistic philosophers that could not be assimilated survive, if at all, in a fossilized form, that is to say as objections or alternatives that were worth remembering precisely because they had been neutralized, and so provided useful material for training one's students.

II Primary sources

The extant primary sources are very few. Epicureanism has fared comparatively well, because we still have three didactic letters written by Epicurus himself as well as a collection of aphorisms, the so-called *Key Doctrines* (*KD*), all preserved in Diogenes Laertius book x.[8] The letters are the *To Herodotus*, dealing with physics, the *To Pythocles*, dealing with cosmology and meteorology, and the *To Menoeceus*, dealing with ethics. It is important to recognize that these letters do not work at the same level. In the proems to the first two Epicurus makes a distinction between those who diligently study all his works and others who for one reason or other are not in a position to devote their life to the study of nature. For the latter the (lost) so-called greater *Greater Abstract* (from the multi-book treatise *On Nature*) had been especially written (*Ep. Hdt.* 35), whereas the *Ep. Hdt.* has been composed as an *aide-mémoire* for the accomplished Epicurean who no longer needs to go into the details (cf. *Ep. Hdt.* 83). At *Ep. Pyth.* 84–5 Epicurus says that a succinct account of cosmo-meteorology will be useful both for beginners and for those who are too busy to study the subject in depth. The *Ep. Pyth.* therefore is on the same level as the lost *Greater Abstract*, while the *Ep. Hdt.* is an entirely different sort of work. We are not in a position to read it with the eyes of its original public, because only (quite large) fragments of a number of books of the *On Nature* have been preserved among the remains of the library at Herculaneum.[9] The *Ep. Men.* is directed at young as well as at old readers, so presumably is a combination of introduction and *aide-mémoire*, though the protreptic element predominates. The *KD* is a sort of catechism.[10]

The remaining scraps of primary material are scanty indeed. Diogenes

[8] Another collection, the so-called *Gnomologium Vaticanum* (not to be confused with the other *Gnom. Vat.* edited by L. Sternbach 1963), first published by Wotke 1888, contains fragments of Epicurus (among which several sayings from the *KD*), and others, among whom Metrodorus. Further fragments, among which again several from the *KD*, are incorporated in the inscription of Diogenes of Oenoanda; text in M. F. Smith 1993. [9] See below, n. 20.

[10] For the role of such compendia in the Epicurean community see I. Hadot 1969a, 53–4, I. Hadot 1969b, see below, p. 670.

Laertius has preserved catalogues of the works of the more important Hellenistic philosophers,[11] but these are not always complete. For Epicurus, for instance, we are only given a selection, while the full and systematic bibliography of Chrysippus breaks off half way because the unique ancestor from which our extant manuscripts derive had already been damaged. For Stoicism we have the *Hymn to Zeus* by Cleanthes preserved in Stobaeus.[12] We also have the remains of part of Chrysippus' *Logical Investigations* (*PHerc*. 307)[13] and fragments of anonymous treatises, preserved in the library at Herculaneum. A large number of fragmentary scrolls containing the doctrines of minor Epicureans have also survived at Herculaneum. Further papyrus fragments have been found in Egypt.[14] Other first-hand evidence for the Hellenistic philosophers consists of verbatim quotations in a variety of authors, a number of whom only cite in order to refute. Pyrrho did not write anything, so for early Pyrrhonism we mainly have to rely on his disciple Timon, of whose works only fragments are extant. All our other evidence is at one or more removes from the originals and consists of various forms of reportage.

III Secondary sources

For our information about Hellenistic philosophy we are therefore for the most part dependent on peripheral sources.[15] In this section, I shall briefly enumerate the more important among the works and authors that are involved. The earliest evidence is from about the mid-first century BC, and the fact that it is at our disposal at all is in two cases due to events which were rather unfortunate for those concerned.

In 46 BC the great rhetorician, orator and statesman Cicero, who had studied philosophy and read philosophical literature during his whole active life and already published works on political philosophy from a

[11] Similarly, Soranus is said to have composed a *Lives of Physicians and Schools and Writings*, ten books, *Suda* I.4, 407.23–4. The more important catalogues are at D.L. VI.80 (Diogenes the Cynic), VIII.4 (Zeno), VII.162 (Aristo), VII.166 (Herillus), VII.167 (Dionysius), VII.174–5 (Cleanthes), VII.170 (Sphaerus), VII.189–202 (Chrysippus), X.24 (Metrodorus), X.25 (Polyaenus), and X.27–8 (Epicurus).

[12] Nothing is known about its *Sitz im Leben*; I suspect that it may have served as an easily memorized compendium of Stoic thought. This would help to explain why it has been preserved. At any rate Cleanthes' four lines of prayer to Zeus-and-Destiny according to Epictetus will be always 'ready at hand' (*procheiron*), Epict. *Diss*. III 22.95, IV 4.34; *Ench*. 53. For this technical term see I. Hadot 1969a, 58 n. 107.

[13] Preliminary text at *FDS* 698.

[14] Eventually, this material will be better accessible in the *CPF* which for pieces whose author is known proceeds in alphabetical order.

[15] Glucker 1991 has carried out the interesting experiment of reconstructing in outline what would be our view of Plato if only the late derivative reports were still extant.

mostly Platonic and Stoic point of view, was forced to retire from the political scene. He had just written a short tract entitled *Stoic Paradoxes*, six rhetorical essays on philosophical issues. Because he wanted to continue to be of service to society, or at least to the 'good people', he decided to bring Greek philosophy to the Roman world by composing a series of philosophical treatises.[16] Some of these are dialogues in which issues in systematic philosophy are set out and discussed from the points of view of the major Hellenistic schools, namely by Epicurean, Stoic and Academic speakers. But in most of his other works too Cicero attempted to present the divergent options fairly fully, so that the reader would be in a position to make up his own mind. As a rule he does not take sides, though he indicates which point of view seems most plausible to him, or most useful – at least for the time being.

These works, the sequence of which by and large conforms to that of the parts of philosophy, but which fail to provide a complete treatment, were written in an unbelievably short span of time, from 45 to 43 BC. He started by writing a pamphlet, the *Hortensius* (lost), in which he warmly recommended the study of philosophy. Next came the *Academics*, of which two different editions were published. We still have the first part of the first book of the second edition, and the second book of the first; the former gives an overview of the three main divisions of philosophy, namely logic, physics, ethics, and the latter deals with epistemological questions from Stoic and sceptic angles. Next are the still extant five books of the *On the Chief Ends of Good and Evil*. In 44 BC, he first wrote the *Tusculan Disputations* in five books, consisting of disputes about questions of major practical importance between an anonymous and dominating master (Cicero himself) and an anonymous respondent. In the last book, for instance, the master argues that all the philosophers worth the name are agreed, or almost, that virtue is sufficient for happiness, but does so without committing himself on the nature of either happiness or virtue. Next is the *On the Nature of the Gods*, in three books, with one large and several small gaps in the third book which contains the Academic counter-arguments against the Stoic position. This work is not a theological treatise only, but also an important source for Stoic physics and cosmology

[16] Cicero describes the works he had written and still plans to write in the autobibliography at *Div.* II.1–4; cf. also the excursus at *ND* I.6–7, and see P. L. Schmidt 1978, Steinmetz 1990. Rawson 1975, 230–48, Schofield 1986b, 48–51, and Powell 1995a, 7–11 are useful brief surveys. MacKendrick 1989 is a detailed study of the corpus, with summaries of each work and discussion of sources and influences; Görler and Gawlick 1994 is an overview of the corpus (including the rhetorical treatises) and an up-to-date introduction to the philosophy. For *Tusc.* see also Douglas 1995.

because of the central role that the gods play in the Stoic conception of the cosmos.[17] The *On Divination* in two books follows; divination was an important issue in Stoic philosophy and a fact of Roman life. Book one argues pro, book two contra. The more technical *On Fate*, which treats a closely related topic, the arguments pro and contra determinism, survives only in mutilated form. Two rather literary essays, *On Old Age* and *On Friendship*, have also survived. Cicero further wrote the *Topics*,[18] a treatise on various forms of argument which is more rhetorical than logical. Finally he wrote the *On Duties* in three books, dedicated to his profligate son. This is a treatise, and a sternly moralistic one, in which he declines to furnish arguments against the rather dogmatic stance adopted. It should finally be added that the rhetorical treatises composed by Cicero in his youth and middle age are interesting sources for certain aspects of Hellenistic philosophy too, and of course also for the history of rhetoric.

Cicero was not the only person to promote philosophy in the Rome of his day. His younger contemporary Lucretius (died before 50 BC) wrote an epic poem in six books entitled *On the Nature of Things*,[19] which may have been published from his papers after his death. It deals with the whole of physics (including e.g. psychology and history of civilization) from the Epicurean point of view and is in fact an attempt to convert its readers to what we may call the gospel of Epicurus. It is one of the most important sources for Epicurean philosophy still extant.

We also have the carbonized remains of the philosophical library of a villa near Herculaneum, which was buried and thus preserved by an eruption of the Vesuvius in AD 79 and dug up in the eighteenth century.[20] The majority of these scrolls had been brought to the villa by a professional philosopher, the Epicurean Philodemus who was a contemporary of Cicero, or been produced there under his supervision or by his successors.[21] Needless to say, they have been very much damaged, firstly by nature, then not only by the patient human attempts to unwind and preserve them but also by stupidity and neglect. Apart from important

[17] See below, pp. 758–62. [18] Not on a boat; see Immisch 1928.

[19] *De Rerum Natura* translates *Peri Phuseōs*, the title traditionally given to works by Presocratic philosophers such as that of Empedocles (much admired by Lucretius) or to treatises dealing with the philosophy of nature, like Epicurus' own *On Nature*. Note that Cic. *Acad.* II.73 translates Metrodorus of Chius' title as *De natura*.

[20] Short overview of the contents with references to the literature in Dorandi 1995b; catalogues of the papyri: Gigante 1979, Capasso 1989.

[21] See Cavallo 1983, 58–65, 1984, 6–23, who further points out that the Epicurus scrolls have to be dated to the third–second centuries and will be copies of the holdings of the school at Athens; those with the works of Demetrius of Laconia date to the second–first centuries BC and are contemporary with the author.

remains of works by Epicurus and several other Epicureans (Carneiscus, Polyaenus, Polystratus, Demetrius of Laconia), the library comprises quite a number of writings composed by Philodemus himself.[22] It would seem that several of these are based on memoranda of lectures (*scholai*)[23] of Philodemus' masters. In some cases even parts of the drafts survive.[24] These books provide us with important insights into the discussions which took place both inside the Epicurean school and with opponents, e.g. the Stoics, and so are an important source of information for Hellenistic Stoicism too. Philodemus wrote among other things on signs, theology, ethical subjects, literary theory and rhetoric. Of particular relevance are the remains of his historical treatise, entitled *Arrangement of the Philosophers* (Σύνταξις τῶν φιλοσόφων), especially the two books dealing with the Academics and the Stoics. Of great interest too is his polemical treatise *On the Stoics*.[25]

Among the many works of the Jewish exegete of the Old Testament, Philo of Alexandria (died after AD 40), there are also several philosophical treatises which contain a considerable amount of information on Hellenistic philosophy. Two of these, *On the Eternity of the World* and *That Every Good Man is Free*, are extant in Greek; the other two, *On Providence*[26] and *Alexander or Whether Irrational Animals Possess Reason*, in a very literal sixth-century Armenian translation. Philo discussed topics which were of interest to an orthodox Jewish audience, and in some ways his position is comparable to that of Cicero *vis-à-vis* his Roman public. Like other Jews before and a whole crowd of Christian authors after him, he was convinced that the Greek philosophers had been either directly inspired by God or cribbed their doctrines from the Old Testament. Accordingly, their views could be used to interpret the Old Testament (as Philo did in his treatises devoted to the exegesis of the 'books of Moses') or to discuss issues which arose in the context of its interpretation.[27] For this reason, commentaries and homilies by learned Christians on individual books and passages of the Old as well as the New Testament may contain sections that are of interest for the historiography of philosophy, including Hellenistic philosophy, as long

[22] For modern editions see list of editions of sources and fragments, and bibliography. The villa also seems to have possessed a text of Lucretius, see Kleve 1989; but the fragments are minimal.

[23] The Epicurean Diogenes of Tarsus wrote a treatise entitled *Epilektai Scholai* or *Epilekta*, in at least twenty books; see D.L. x.97,120,136,138. On *scholai* see Sedley 1989a, 103–4; cf. also Quint. *Inst.* i. 7.

[24] Dorandi 1991d; cf. also Manetti 1994 on the *Anon. Lond.*

[25] See Dorandi 1990a and 1990b; texts: Dorandi 1982b, 1991b, 1994b.

[26] Several passages in Greek from *Prov.* ii have been preserved by Eusebius.

[27] Mansfeld 1988a, Runia 1990, Runia 1993; in general Ridings 1995.

as one does not forget that these works have been composed from a particular point of view.

The date of the remains of a more general work, or works, by a certain Arius Didymus remains uncertain;[28] it may be as late as the third century AD. A systematic treatment of Stoic and of Peripatetic ethics which with some confidence may be attributed to him has been preserved in Stobaeus. Substantial fragments of his treatment of the physics of Aristotle (and his followers) and of the physical doctrines of the more important Stoics have been preserved by Eusebius and Stobaeus.[29] The title or titles of the work or works are not certain; fragments are quoted as from the *On Sects*, or *Abstract(s)*. One of the problems is that *epitomē* ('abstract') may pertain either to an abridgement of Didymus' work or to abstracts made from, or representing, the originals themselves.

Frequent references to Hellenistic philosophical doctrines are found in the voluminous writings of Plutarch (after 45–after 120). Of special importance are treatises such as the *On Moral Virtue*, and the polemical works against the Stoics and the Epicureans[30] which contain numerous verbatim quotations. The anti-Epicurean treatises are the *That Epicurus Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible*, the *Reply to Colotes* and the *Is 'Live Unknown' a Wise Precept?*. The treatises directed against the Stoics are the *On Stoic Self-Contradictions*, the *Against the Stoics on Common Conceptions*, and an abstract of the *The Stoics Talk More Paradoxically than the Poets*. The even more voluminous extant works of Galen (*c.* 130–*c.* 210) are also peppered with references and verbatim quotations (but the special treatises which he devoted to Stoic and Epicurean philosophy are lost).[31] Of major importance is his great treatise *On the Doctrines of Plato and Hippocrates*, in which he argues against Chrysippus' philosophy of mind and ethics, and attempts to pin down his opponent by verbatim quotation on a fairly generous scale.[32] At *PHP* VIII.2.12–14, Galen describes his method by saying that he does not explain 'every expression, as writers of commentaries do',

[28] The identification of Arius Didymus with the Stoic Arius, court philosopher to the emperor Augustus, has been challenged by Heine 1869, 613–14 and Göransson 1995, 203–26.

[29] Moraux 1973, 259–443, Kahn 1983, Long 1983a, Hahm 1990; for the physical fragments Diels 1879, 69–87, 447–72, and Moraux 1973, 277–305 (on the Peripatetic section only). Göransson 1995, 206–7, 219–26, argues that the attribution to Didymus of the section on Stoic ethics is less certain than that of the section on the Peripatos, and that the provenance of the majority of the anonymous fragments in Stobaeus attributed to Arius Didymus by Diels is problematic. The latter argument is answered by Runia 1996a, cf. in general Mansfeld and Runia 1997, 238–64.

[30] Babut 1969, Hershbell 1992a, 1992b. A number of philosophical works by Plutarch have been lost; see list in Einarson and De Lacy 1967, 2.

[31] Titles at *Lib. Prop.* XIX 47–8.

[32] Vegetti 1986, Tieleman 1996; in general Hankinson 1992. Much remains to be done on Galen as a source for Greek philosophy.