Concepts are basic features of rationality. Debates surrounding them have been central to the study of philosophy in the medieval and modern periods, as well as in the analytical and Continental traditions. This is a collection of seminal philosophical studies on ancient Greek approaches to the various notions of concept, exploring the early history of conceptual theory and associated philosophical debates from the end of the archaic age to the end of antiquity. It asks when and how various notions of concept emerged and evolved in the authors from the pre-classical to the post-classical periods, what questions were raised by ancient philosophers in the Greco-Roman tradition about concepts, and what were the theoretical presuppositions that made the emergence of notions of concept possible. The volume furthers our own contemporary understanding of the nature of concepts, concept formation, and concept use.

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CONCEPTUALISING CONCEPTS IN GREEK PHILOSOPHY

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Preface

The conception, planning, and editorship of this volume have been from the very start a joint project. It has been motivated by philosophical interests that we share and by our common perception of a glaring gap in the study of Greek and Latin philosophical texts. Both of us, independently of each other, have been engaged over the years with contemporary work in the philosophy of mind and, in particular, concepts. Both of us were struck by the vast tensions between rival accounts of concept formation, the disagreements regarding the psychological mechanisms involved in the acquisition and use of different sorts of concepts, and the debates over the epistemology of concepts and the relation between concepts and language in contemporary as well as Greco-Roman philosophy. While we benefitted from valuable publications on such topics, many questions, we thought, remained unanswered, and a comprehensive study was still missing from the secondary literature in Greco-Roman philosophy.

We had many opportunities to discuss these matters in professional as well as in private settings, thus pursuing a philosophical dialogue and an intellectual and personal companionship that stretches back to the years of our graduate studies and the training that we both received in Paris from Jacques Brunschwig and, subsequently, in the Cambridge Faculty of Classics from the specialists in Ancient Philosophy active at that time. The idea of preparing together a collection of essays exploring ancient Greek approaches to the concept of concept (or, more precisely, different concepts of concept) presented itself naturally and quite spontaneously in one of these conversations. In light of what seemed to be the status questionis, we agreed that an effort should be made to fill an important lacuna in the relevant scholarship. We began planning the volume in Cambridge, in Lent term of 2016, and we issued invitations to our prospective authors over the course of the next few months.

The completion of the volume took approximately six years plus an additional year devoted to the final revisions taking into consideration the
comments made by the anonymous referees. This stretch of time is not especially surprising for a work of such complexity, magnitude, and scope. But perhaps the main reason why the preparation of the manuscript took so long to be completed was our determination to do all the editorial work together rather than in parallel with each other. We are still convinced that this was the best way of giving substantial comments to our authors and of preserving a certain level of unity and consistency throughout the volume. We composed the Introduction and our chapter ‘Epicurean Preconceptions and Other Concepts’ in a similar way: this is genuinely joint writing, not parallel writing.

In addition to reducing the number of stylistic disparities and conceptual tensions between the different chapters, the primary benefit of our method of working undoubtedly derived from our direct and sustained philosophical interactions over the ideas, contentions, arguments, and interpretations advanced by our authors or indeed ourselves. We regret that the participants did not have the opportunity to interact in person with each other and with ourselves in the context of a common venue. We planned to hold a conference about half way through the preparation of the volume at which the contributors could have presented and discussed the first drafts, but this conference never materialised for reasons outside our control.

All in all, this has been a unique and marvellous intellectual journey, and it is time to express our gratitude to those that made it possible. Our first thanks are due, of course, to the authors who participated in the volume for their outstandingly valuable contributions as well as their patience, flexibility, and collegiality. We could not have had a more fruitful and felicitous experience as editors, and we are very grateful to them all. We owe a special debt to David Sedley for advice on practical and procedural matters and for the loving support that he so characteristically and generously gave. We are obliged to Paul Kalligas for his input on the structure of the volume, especially the part concerning Platonism. Our students and colleagues, at the Cambridge Faculty of Classics and at UCSB respectively, have been an inexhaustible source of information, inspiration, and constructive criticism. Of particular importance for the philosophical relevance of our project were two reading groups on concepts and concept-formation organised by UCSB graduate students and attended by members of the faculty as well. They showed us the way towards the most recent literature on the subject, facilitated our deeper engagement with the relevant philosophical issues, and enabled us to better situate ancient and modern views in relation, comparison, or contrast with each other.
Moreover, we warmly thank the anonymous referees for their detailed and helpful comments and criticisms, which led to substantial revisions of the form and the contents of the collection.

We presented penultimate versions of our own chapter on the Epicurean approach to concepts at a conference held by Alex Long at the University of St Andrews (April 2022) and a conference organised by Stéphane Marchand and Pierre-Marie Morel at the University of Paris I - Panthéon Sorbonne (September 2022). We thankfully acknowledge the feedback we received at those events for our own paper. At the end of the conference in Paris, and after a last day of joint work, we sent off the complete manuscript from Le Rostand, a café across from the Jardin du Luxembourg in the Quartier Latin, familiar to us from our student years and still special to us both.

We extend our warmest thanks for Michael Sharp for his unparalleled expertise and diligence, his wise guidance and advice, and his unstinting support of this project. Also, many thanks to Katie Idle for all her help, to Angela Roberts for the copy-editing, and to Franklin Mathews Jebaraj for the general management of the production of the book.

We have debts of a different kind as well, though no less important. Apart from the hours, days, and indeed, months spent on zoom, we did our most productive writing and editing in the summers, in Voula and Richard’s country home in Galaxidi, often in the company of our respective families. We are profoundly grateful to our spouses, Ági and Richard, and our children – Juli, Zsófi, and Eleni – for graciously putting up with our long hours of work and for the gift of their presence, company, and good spirits. Our co-authored chapter is dedicated to them, with all our love.
# Abbreviations

## Aëtius

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<td>Plac.</td>
<td>Placita</td>
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## Anon. in Theaet.

Anonymi Commentarius *In Platonis Theaetetum*

## Albinus

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<td>Albinus</td>
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<td>Prol.</td>
<td>Prologos</td>
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## Alcinous

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<td>Did.</td>
<td>Didaskalikos</td>
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## Alexander of Aphrodisias

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<td>De an.</td>
<td>De anima</td>
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<td>Eth. Probl.</td>
<td>Ethical problems</td>
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<td>in Metaph.</td>
<td>In Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria</td>
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<tr>
<td>in Sens.</td>
<td>In librum de sensu commentarium</td>
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<tr>
<td>in Top.</td>
<td>In Aristotelis Topicorum libros octo commentaria</td>
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<td>Mantissa</td>
<td>De anima libri mantissa</td>
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List of Abbreviations

MIXT. De Mixtione
QUAEST. Quaestiones

Ammonius

In Porph. Isag. In Porphyrii isagogos sive quinque voces

Aristotle

An. Post. Analytica Posteriora
An. Pr. Analytica Priora
Cael De Caelo
Cat. Categoriae
De An. De Anima
De insomn. De insomniis
Eth. Eud. Ethica Eudemia
Eth. Nic. Ethica Nicomachea
Gen. an. De generatione animalium
Gen. corr. De generatione et corruptione
Hist. an. Historia animalium
Int. De Interpretatione
Mem. De Memoria
Mete. Meteorologica
Metaph. Metaphysica
Part. an. De Partibus Animalium
Ph. Physica
Resp. De Respiratione
Top. Topica

Asclepius

In Metaph. In Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria

Augustine

De civ. D. De cievate Dei
List of Abbreviations

Basil

C. Eun. Contra Eunomium

CAG Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca

Cicero

Acad. Academicae quaestiones
Acad. post. Academica posteriora
Acad. Pr. Academica priora
Fin. De finibus
Luc. Lucullus = Academica posteriora
Nat. D. De Natura deorum
Top. Topica
Tusc. Tusculanae disputationes

Clement of Alexandria

Strom. Stromata

Damascius

in Phaed. In Phaedonem
in Phil. In Philebum
Princ. De principiis

David

in Porph. Isag. In Porphyrii isagogen commentarium

Dexippus

in Cat. In Aristotelis categorias commentarium
List of Abbreviations

Diodorus Siculus

Diod. Sic. Diodorus Siculus

Diogenes Laertius

Diog. Laert. Diogenes Laertius

Diogenes of Oinoanda

NF New Fragment(s) of Diogenes’ inscription

DK

H. Diels and W. Kranz, Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker (Berlin, 1934–7; 5th ed.)

Epicurus

Epic. Epicurus
Ep. Hdt. Epistula ad Herodotum
Ep. Men. Epistula ad Menoeceum
Nat. On nature
RS Ratae sententiae

Epictetus

Epict. Epictetus
Diss. Dissertationes ab Arriano digestae

Erotianus

Glosarri Hippocr. praef. Erotiani Vocum Hippocraticarum collectio

Euripides

Phoen. Phoenissae
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List of Abbreviations

Eusebius

Praep. evang.  Praeparatio evangelica

Galen

De opt. doc.  De optima doctrina
Dig. Puls.  De dignoscendis pulibus
Hipp. Epid.  In Hippocratis epidemiarium commentarii
Plac. Hipp. et Plat.  De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis

[Galen]

Def. Med.  Definitiones medicae

Gregory of Nyssa

C. Eun.  Contra Eunomium
De hom. opif.  De hominis opificio

Homer

Od.  Odyssey

Iamblichus

Comm. M.  De communi mathematica Scientia liber

LM


LS

List of Abbreviations

Lucretius

Lucr. Lucretius
DRN De Rerum Natura

Loeb

Loeb Classical Library

LSJ

H. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. Jones, A Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford, 1940; 9th ed.)

Nemesius

De nat. hom. De natura hominis

Origen

C. Cels. Contra Celsum
Hom. Jer. Homiliae in Jeremiam
In Joh. Commentarii in evangelium Joannis
Princ. De Principiis

Philodemus

Phld. Philodemus
Ad [...] De poematis
De oecon. De oeconomia
Piet De pietate
Rhet. De rhetorica
Sign. De signis

Papyri Herculanenses

PHerc. Papyri Herculanenses
## List of Abbreviations

### Philoponus

- **in An. post.** In Aristotelis Analytica posteriora commentaria
- **in Cat.** In Aristotelis Categorias commentaria
- **in De an.** In Aristotelis De anima libros commentaria

### Pindar

- **Ol.** Olympian Odes

### Plato

- **Plat.** Plato
- **Chrm.** Charmides
- **Cra.** Cratylus
- **Cri.** Critias
- **Grg.** Gorgias
- **Hp. Mai.** Hippias maior
- **Ep.** Epistles
- **Euthphr.** Euthyphro
- **Euthyd.** Euthydemus
- **Lach.** Laches
- **Phd.** Phaedo
- **Phdr.** Phaedrus
- **Phlb.** Philebus
- **Plt.** Politicus
- **Parm.** Parmenides
- **Prt.** Protagoras
- **Resp.** Republica
- **Soph.** Sophist
- **Symp.** Symposium
- **Tht.** Theaetetus
- **Tim.** Timaeus

### Plotinus

- **Plot.** Plotinus
- **Enn.** Enneades
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Plutarch

Plut. Plutarch
Adv. Col. Adversus Colotem
Comm. not. De communibus notitiis
De E. De E apud Delphos
De sera num. vind. De sera numinis vindicta
De soll. an. De sollertia animalium
Non posse Non Posse Suaviter Vivi Secundum Epicurum
Stoíc. rep. De Stoicorum repugnantiss

Michigan Papyri

PMich. Michigan Papyri

Porphyry

Porph. Porphyry
Abst. De abstinentia
Ad Marc. Ad Marcellam
in Cat. In Aristotelis Categories commentaria
in Ptol. Harm. Commentarius in Claudii Ptolemaei Harmonica

Pseudo-Alexander of Aphrodisias

Ps-Alex. Pseudo-Alexander of Aphrodisias
in Metaph. In Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria

Pseudo-Archytas

Ps.-Archyt. Pseudo-Archytas
De int. On intellect and sense perception

Proclus

El. Theol. Elementatio theologica
in Alc. in Platonis Alcibiadem priorem commentarii
in Crat. In Platonis Cratylium commentaria
in Eucl. in primum Euclidis elementorum librum commentarii
in Parm. In Platonis Parmenidem commentaria
List of Abbreviations

in Remp. In Platonis Rempublicam commentarii
in Tim. In Platonis Timaeum commentarii
Theol. Plat. Theologia Platonica

ROT


Seneca

Ep. Epistulae

Sextus Empiricus

Sext. Emp. Sextus Empiricus
M. Adversus mathematicos
PH. Pyrrhoniea Hypotyposes

Simplicius

Simpl. Simplicius
in Phys. in Aristotelis Physicorum Libros Quattuor Postiores Commentaria
in Cat. In Aristotelis Categorias commentaria

SVF


Syrianus

in Metaph. In Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria

Theophrastus

Theophr. Theophrastus
Sens. De sensibus