

Preface

This volume contains the *acta* of the colloquium on 'Lucretius and His Intellectual Background' which took place under the supervision of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences in Amsterdam from 26 to 28 June 1996. This colloquium brought together a number of specialists in Hellenistic philosophy and literature to study the context and sources of Lucretius' *De rerum natura*. Several reasons may be given for this specific choice of focus. One reason concerns the direction Lucretian scholarship itself has taken over the last decades. Now that the 'psychological' approach appears to have lost its appeal and the phantoms of the 'mad poet' and the 'antilucrèce chez Lucrèce' are no longer with us, Lucretian scholars are more and more trying to explain particular features of the *De rerum natura* by reference to the affiliations of doctrine and method between Lucretius and others (Epicurus, the Epicurean tradition, or other Greek and Roman philosophers and poets). However, there is still no consensus nor on the degree to which Lucretius faithfully represents Epicurus' philosophy, nor on the extent to which he incorporates elements from other sources. Further explorations therefore appear to be called for. Another reason is that the study of Hellenistic thought has made considerable progress over the last decades. Thus the research on the papyri from Ercolano and on the fragments of Diogenes of Oenoanda has allowed us to draw in some finer shades in our picture of the Epicurean tradition. But also in other areas, such as the history of Stoic philosophy, or ancient doxography, scholarship has advanced. It seems legitimate to ask where all this leaves Lucretius, and whether we are now better placed to determine his position within the larger contexts of Epicureanism and Hellenistic philosophy.

The present volume approaches this question of Lucretius' position along two different lines. The first nine papers systematically explore the relation between Lucretius and specific other authors or schools. The remaining nine papers rather offer what might be called 'case studies' sketching the background of particular motifs or passages in Lucretius.

Within the group of general studies the first five deal with the relation between Lucretius' poem and the Epicurean tradition. David Sedley discusses Lucretius' use of Epicurus' *On Nature* and attempts to reconstruct Lucretius' *Arbeitsweise* in writing the *DRN*. Graziano Arrighetti then focuses on how the *DRN* as a didactic poem fits into the Epicurean tradition, despite this tradition's alleged hostility towards poetry. Tiziano Dorandi discusses the evidence on the Epicurean circles in the area around the Bay of Naples in the first century BC. The possibility that Lucretius was

acquainted with these Epicurean circles, in particular with Philodemus, is explored by Knut Kleve. Finally, Martin Ferguson Smith deals with the question whether there was any connection between Lucretius and Diogenes of Oenoanda — a question which until a few years ago hardly anyone would have thought of putting in this form, but which now deserves our consideration in view of recent attempts to redate Diogenes' inscription.

The next four general contributions explore how Lucretius should be positioned *vis-à-vis* other elements of Hellenistic intellectual life. Michael Erler studies the elements of meditation and therapy in Lucretius' poem against the background of other Hellenistic and Roman examples of protreptic literature concerned with the *ars vitae*. David Runia takes *DRN* V.1204-1240 as an example of how Lucretius used the Hellenistic doxographical tradition. The question whether any connection can be established between Lucretius and Varro is the subject of Lucienne Deschamps' paper. Carlos Lévy concludes this part of our volume by an investigation of how Lucretius reacted to sceptical arguments and whether he can be shown to have known Aenesidemus' work.

Of the remaining nine contributions the first five are case studies dealing with more or less specific or technical philosophical issues. Anthony Long focuses on the way in which Lucretius integrates the subjective and objective aspects of the Epicurean self, i.e. the way we are supposed to *experience* the world on the one hand, and the description and explanation of that world in the 'objective' terms of Epicurean physics on the other. Keimpe Algra highlights the Epicurean background of some aspects of the *Kulturentstehungslehre* of *DRN* V, and questions the view that Lucretius here introduces heterodox elements. Piet Schrijvers' contribution explores the background of various biological passages in *DRN* and tries to answer the question whether we can find traces of direct acquaintance on Lucretius' part with Aristotle's biological works. Mieke Koenen comments on Lucretius' account of smell in *DRN* IV.673-715 and studies those elements of ancient olfactory theories that may help to put Lucretius' account in perspective. Josy Kany-Turpin studies Lucretius' account of the origin of epidemic diseases in the sixth book of *DRN*, partly against the background of what is known of Democritus' theory of an extra-cosmic provenance of such diseases.

Four further case studies remain. Diskin Clay discusses what he regards as Lucretius' polemical adaptation of a motif we know from the remains of Aristotle's *On Philosophy*. The sources of and the literary models for Lucretius' application of the metaphor of the human soul as a vessel are the subject of Woldemar Görler's contribution. Alain Gigandet contrasts some instances of Lucretius' treatment of myth with the Stoic practice of allegorical interpretation. Finally, Kimberly Gladman and Phillip Mitsis take issue with some interpretations of Lucretius which involve the notion of the unconscious. They argue that the relevant passages should be explained in different terms and that a conception of the unconscious in anything like the Freudian sense was not part of Lucretius' intellectual background.

Inevitably there is quite a lot in these contributions which is tentative or hypothetical, and concerning many of the questions that are raised a *non liquet* is as far as we can get. Also the main question whether Lucretius was an orthodox, or even 'funda-

mentalist', Epicurean or whether he from time to time allowed himself to include heterodox views, does not receive a definitive or even unanimous answer in this book. Some papers may be regarded as contributing to the 'fundamentalist' picture (Sedley), others rather favour the picture of a more heterodox Lucretius (Schrijvers), or take some kind of middle position (Long) by arguing that Lucretius sometimes paraded Epicurean ideas in a Stoicizing dress, taking advantage of the fact that there was in some respects a considerable common ground between the various Hellenistic schools. Maybe this scholarly *diaphônia* should be taken as a warning that the question of orthodoxy *versus* heterodoxy should not be put in too general terms and that it allows of different answers for different elements in Lucretius' work. Anyway, the editors, inspired by Aristotle's dictum that τοῖς εὐπορῆσαι βουλομένοις προὔργου τὸ διαπορῆσαι καλῶς (*Metaph.* A 995a27-28), like to believe that a collection of studies like the present one should not only be judged by the answers it provides, but also by the questions it raises and by the way it maps the limits of what can be known at present.

Editorial interventions have been limited to purely technical matters. This means that the contributors have been free to present unorthodox views if so they wished. It also means that one will sometimes find that different contributors have taken different or even opposing stances on a particular subject. Any attempt to impose uniformity would have been otiose, and the editors believe that the readers should be allowed to assess the various positions and arguments for themselves.

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