

ESF Exploratory Workshop

Scientific Report

Between Greece and Rome. Hellenistic Philosophy and Roman Culture from 150 to 88 B.C.

Faculty of Philosophy/University of Rome “La Sapienza” – Room XI
(Rome, ‘Villa Mirafiori’/V. Carlo Fea 2 // 27-31 July 2004)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The workshop “**Between Greece and Rome. Hellenistic Philosophy and Roman Culture from 150 to 88 B.C.**” – inserted in a series of Conferences on Hellenistic Philosophy, started in 1977 and organized by the most influential leading authorities in Europe (open however also to the active participation of scholars from U.S.A. and Canada): the so-called ‘Symposia Hellenistica’ – has been devoted to a deep analysis of the dialectical interrelations between Greek Hellenistic philosophy and Roman culture in a period, which was extremely influential in the development of philosophy in later centuries. All the participants agreed on the fact that it gave rise to successful results and achieved some important aims. The background of the overall discussion on the topic above described was based on two presuppositions, namely:

- a. the most important philosophers and thinkers of this period did not receive the attention they deserved;
- b. accordingly, they were wrongly considered less important than their predecessors.

Therefore, the different papers of the workshop tried:

1. to focus on some relevant aspects of their thought;
2. to show that they represent a turning-point in the long history of ancient philosophy;
3. to promote a real exchange of information and knowledge among different scholars and different specialists;
4. to reach a firm and common basis, thanks to which one might develop in the future new research-projects.

After reaching these first steps, the next stages of the work begun during the Workshop can be so summarized:

- A. the papers of the meeting, after being duly revised for at least one year (deadline for the submission: September 2005) thanks to the collaboration of all the participants, will be published in the series “Elenchos” (by Bibliopolis, Neaple: hard-copy format only);
- B. Anna Maria Ioppolo, David Sedley and Emidio Spinelli will be responsible for the final edition of the *Proceedings*; they will coordinate together the mutual work of stimulating new questions and collecting useful remarks and/or objections; they will also send to all the contributors a style guide and precise instructions for submission of relative manuscripts and/or disks/files by e-mail;
- C. for this common work also other scholars and colleagues will be contacted in due course, so that the final product of the Workshop will become in fact a comprehensive and scientifically reliable picture of that period, full of interesting and not always well examined interconnections between Greek and Roman cultures.

WORKSHOP DISCUSSION AND SCIENTIFIC CONTENT

All the participants shared the idea according to which the period under examination was one of the best examples of a significative historical and philosophical clash, but at the same time fusion, between two different cultures. Thanks to advanced techniques of analysis and taken for granted the necessity of an inter-disciplinary approach to the topic, the final goal of the workshop was to create the appropriate conditions and the first basis for a new and profitable survey of the most important thinkers and ‘movements’ active from 150 to 88 B.C.

As a sort of necessary introduction to the historical framework active behind each other paper, Jean-Louis Ferrary (*Les philosophes a Rome*) underlined the central role played by Rome and its growing political power in the Mediterranean world and showed that all the philosophers examined in the papers of the workshop – from Carneades to Aenesidemus – were in some way linked to Roman figures or institutions. Their activity and most of their solutions are to be considered in fact against the background of the Roman world, while their presence stimulated also the cultural reaction by some Latin authors, who begun to develop a Roman way to philosophical thought (let us think, in this case, especially to Cicero and Lucretius). Apart from any ‘tour de formation’ of young and rich Roman people to Athens, invaluable for the successive history of ancient philosophy was the fact that the most important Greek thinkers decided to leave their fatherland Rome and establish in Rome their philosophical activity.

Specific attention received Cicero’s evidence for reconstructing Carneades’ general scheme of different ethical doctrines in antiquity. Julia Annas (*Carneades’ Classification of Ethical Theories*) examined it carefully and put forward an important conclusion: such a classification has to be intended not as a collection of established theories, but as a theoretical construction, proposed by Carneades in order to fill all the gaps, also where no historical thinker was available as a defender of specific positions. Annas tried also to demonstrate that the classification had two different uses in Cicero, since it supported *both* a sceptical argument against the reliability of any possible ethical theories *and* – as seems to happen also in the case of Pseudo-Archytas’ *Ethical Education* – a more positive proposal. Such a proposal aimed to select one of these theories among (and against) the others, thanks to an alleged ‘harmony’ – put forward by Antiochus in his not neutral ‘history of philosophy’ – between theses introduced by the Old Academy and the Stoics.

A strong *desideratum* among scholars who work on ancient philosophy is a fresh and new reconstruction of all what can be known about Critolaus and his Peripatetic environment. This is the target of David E. Hahn’s paper (*Critolaus Revised*), completely devoted to a global reassessment of Critolaus’ role (especially in Cicero’s texts) and in particular of his polemical or even aggressive stance against other

contemporary philosophical movements. Once assumed his position (too often neglected) as a formidable Peripatetic apologist and at the same time his respect for (or better his imitation of) ancient Peripatetic predecessors, Hahn presented direct evidence as well as indirect echoes of Critolaus' themes and arguments, which constituted a firm and substantive opposition to Stoic theory. The overall atmosphere of such a complicate discussion gave rise to a rich tradition, transmitted however not only through brief doxographical texts but also in a context of fundamental oral debates.

Against the background of the more comprehensive question regarding the correct relationship between a sceptical attitude in philosophy and its use of a proper language, Clitomachus' solution emerged as a coherent attempt at avoiding any dogmatic position about the problem of assent and argumentation. Anna Maria Ioppolo (*L'assenso nella filosofia di Clitomaco: un problema di linguaggio?*) decided to focus on Clitomachus' position on these topics and to compare it with Carneades' attitude, as attested by other (parallel and also non sceptical) sources. Her conclusion is clear and highly stimulating: it is possible to detect a Clitomachean solution, which is not only coherent, but also original. According to it, a moral action can be explained only thanks to *physis* or nature, namely in virtue of the natural persuasive force of representations (*phantasiai*) which are probable (*pithanai*). In this case no rational deliberation is necessary, although an active role is played by our capacity of evaluating different degrees of probability of those *phantasiai*, in order to approve them (as Cicero says by using the verb *probare*) without however giving any kind of dogmatic assent.

Among Stoic philosophers, who represent a central 'party' in the wide debates of this period, Panaetius seems to be remained faithful to the main points of the official doctrine of the school, especially in the case of moral psychology. This is the conclusion reached by Teun Tieleman (*Panaetius' Place in the History of Stoicism, With Special Reference To His Moral Psychology*), who argued against the more traditional view of a strong Platonic and Aristotelian influence on Panaetius and proposed therefore a new portrayal of this Stoic thinker. Tieleman offered his own interpretation of Panaetius' presence and influence in the first two books of Cicero's *de officiis*: he aimed to reconstruct Panaetius' theses on the structure of the soul and the role of emotions as well as his famous doctrine of the four *personae*, in order to conclude that Panaetius' position and importance is in no way 'revolutionary'; it has been rather overestimated by many scholars, who decided to emphasize his weight by following Cicero's literary and philosophical evaluation.

A detailed analysis of the few texts (namely: FF. 92, 96 e 101 Edelstein-Kidd) on the difficult doctrine of substance allows Francesca Alesse (*La dottrina della sostanza in Posidonio di Apamea*) to show not only how Posidonius treated this notion in its double meaning (universal and individual substance), but also how he described the relationship between substance and matter and, consequently, between substance

and God, the active principle *par excellence*. Posidonius seems to offer a non-dualistic and materialistic approach to the concept of 'substance'. As to the philosophical goal aimed at by him, a reasonable hypothesis is also advanced: although he does not change anything in the ontological *dogmata* of his Stoic teachers, he tried perhaps to underline the unity of 'quality' and 'matter' (or God and matter), because he wanted to attack the dualistic metaphysics of the Platonic tradition. The very controversial question of the actual sources of Posidonius' solution is also examined by Alesse; without assuming any prejudicial stance, she is able to indicate some possible influences due to Aristotle's lexicon and conceptual framework.

Also the role of other philosophical schools can help to understand the atmosphere of great exchange of ideas and theoretical inquiries in this period. It is the case of the Epicurean community, and particularly of Philodemus' thought, whose place both inside the Garden and with regards – often polemically – to other schools was examined in its ethical, psychological and methodological characteristics by Voula Tsouna (*Philodemus of Gadara and the Epicurean Tradition: Remarks on Ethics, Moral Psychology, and Method*). Her rich paper commented not only on some scanty evidence relative to moral tenets of the Epicurean school, but also on the more interesting question of the philosophical coherence of its hedonism. In his arguments – from the point of view of both the content and the methodological strictures – Philodemus depended, as it seems, especially from Zeno of Sidon (and less from Demetrius Lacon) and maintained a rigorous sense of reverence towards Epicurus. At any rate, he wanted to consolidate the main teachings of the founder of the school and at the same time to grant their transmission to posterity. In doing that he did not limit himself to a list of advices and sayings practically orientated, but exhibited a high level of theoretical consciousness.

As to the sceptical movement, a scholarly 'puzzle' of Aenesidemus' philosophy, namely his alleged 'Heracliteanism', received a new critical assessment by Malcom Schofield (*Aenesidemus: Pyrrhonist and 'Heraclitean'*). Schofield was convinced that Aenesidemus did not endorse *in propria persona* all of Heraclitus' doctrines, although the founder of neo-pyrrhonism did not assume a completely detached attitude towards them. Accordingly, in most of his paper Schofield tried to explain and refine – also thanks to some large assumptions – the general hypothesis that somewhere Aenesidemus wrote a 'sympathetic' defence of Heracliteanism, considered by him as a philosophical stance well supported, from a sceptical point of view, by observations and arguments on the situation of conflicting appearances. This kind of revised Heracliteanism could also provide him with an appropriate metaphysical doctrine on the nature of the universe, a sort of 'theory of reality', which was theoretically useful for sustaining the Aenesidemean appeal to non-conflicting *phainomena*.

ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS AND DECISIONS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

1. The scientific work done by different and qualified scholars in the course of this workshop has definitively assured that the doctrines of various thinkers of this historical period represent a basic point of reference in the long development of ancient philosophy, especially because they tried to offer solutions – often new and in any case challenging also for the most recent trends of our contemporary philosophical agenda – with regards to fundamental themes of philosophical and cultural relevance, from an epistemological as well as an ethical point of view.
2. In addition, it must be underlined that all the papers confirm another important result: the authors included in the period under examination adopted indeed a peculiar reading of the past. Although their positive doctrines are put under the *auctoritas* of thinkers of the classical age (Plato, Aristotle, Pyrrho, Epicurus, the Old Stoa, etc.), they represent at the same time an original advancement in the history of ancient philosophy, since there is a dialectical relationship between tradition and innovation.
3. Such a relationship has been investigated in details under different points of views and according to a variety of scholarly approaches, thanks also to a careful study of their technical philosophical lexicon – a sort of ‘bridge’, capable of maintaining the original, abstract sense proper to any theoretical term, but at the same time of acquiring a practical value, functional also to didactic aims.
4. According to a shared interdisciplinary approach, another important and common ground of inquiry has been created, since the results of the workshop allow to prepare a complete ‘map’ of both the ancient sources and the modern and/or contemporary studies on some central philosophical issues of this period, in order to offer a sort of updated ‘data-base’ of crucial texts and/or comments.

All the results above summarized are to be intended as a solid ground for any future effort of explanation and evaluation regarding the development of Hellenistic philosophy and its influence on Roman culture. In particular, thanks to such an accurate analysis of not always appreciated and often neglected texts:

- a. it will be possible to create on those topics an European and international centre of interest and activity, which will be able to continue its work also after the end of the conference (a co-operative arrangement for such a detailed study might be first of all established between some scholars active in Italy and France, and then extended to other colleagues in other European countries as well as in the USA/Canada);
- b. in this direction, other minor projects will be also undertaken – initially again thanks to the collaboration of colleagues from Italy, UK, Greece and France – in order to explore the possibility of checking how the permanent, philosophical heritage of that period acted later on specific fields and thinkers;

- c. according to this new line of research, special attention will be payed to physical doctrines and to alternative models developed during the first three centuries A.D.;
- d. finally, application to the ESF might be made, with the aim to funding a more general and 'electronic' project (three-years or longer duration), which should take care of preparing a data-base with all the texts and if possible their reliable English translation related to authors, schools, philosophical movements active from 150 to 88 B.C.;
- e. such a product might be 'edited' on-line, thanks to the technical (and hopefully economical) support of the Faculty of Philosophy/University of Rome "La Sapienza".

FINAL PROGRAMME

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Tuesday 27 July 2004

- 15:30 **Prof. Anna Maria Ioppolo and David Sedley**
Introduction to the workshop
Chairman: Prof. Dorothea Frede
- 16:00 **Prof. Julia Annas**
Carneades’ Classification of Ethical Theories
- 17:00 *Coffee break*
- 17:30 Discussion
- 20:00 *Dinner*

Wednesday 28 July

- Chairman: Prof. Brad Inwood*
- 09:30 **Prof. David E. Hahm**
Critolaus Revisited
- 10:30 *Coffee break*
- 11:00 Discussion
- 13:00 *Lunch*
- Chairman: Prof. Susanne Bobzien*
- 15:30 **Prof. Jean-Louis Ferrary**
Les philosophes a Rome

16:30 *Coffee break*
17:00 Discussion
20:00 *Dinner*

Thursday 29 July 2004

Chairman: Prof. Anthony A. Long

09:30 **Prof. Anna Maria Ioppolo**
L'assenso nella filosofia di Clitomaco: un problema di linguaggio?
10:30 *Coffee break*
11:00 Discussion
13:00 *Lunch*

Chairman: Prof.

Keimpe Algra

15:30 **Prof. Teun Tieleman**
Panaetius' Place in the History of Stoicism
16:30 *Coffee break*
17:00 Discussion
20:00 *Bus-Transfer to 'Villa Piccolomini' - Dinner*

Friday 30 July 2004

Chairman: Prof. David N. Sedley

09:30 **Dr. Francesca Alesse**
La dottrina della sostanza in Posidonio di Apamea
10:30 *Coffee break*
11:00 Discussion
13:00 *Lunch*

Chairman: Prof. Myles Burnyeat

- 15:30 **Prof. Voula Tsouna**
Philodemus of Gadara and the Epicurean Tradition
- 16:30 *Coffee break*
- 17:00 Discussion
- 20:00 *Dinner*

Saturday 31 July 2004

Chairman: Prof. Jonathan Barnes

- 9:30 **Prof. Malcom Schofield**
Aenesidemus: Pyrrhonist and 'Heraclitean'
- 10:30 *Coffee break*
- 11:00 Discussion
- 13:00 *Lunch*

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STATISTICS ON PARTICIPANTS

Nationality:

UK	9
Italy	4
Germany	3
France	2
Netherlands	2
Greece	2
Hungary	1
Belgium	1
USA	3
Canada	1

[PS-The presence of scholars from USA/Canada is due to objective reasons: most of them are originally from Europe (see for example Annas, Long, Bobzien), although they work now in the States; and above all they - along with other participants, obviously - were and are the best experts on the topic of our workshop.]

Age range:

30-40	3
40-50	8
50-60	10
60-70	7