
Jens Gerlach (G.) has written a masterful study of the ethical maxims attributed to Democritus in Byzantine florilegia that is sure to become an important reference for future scholars. The primary object of study is the material related to Democritus in the so-called Corpus Parisinum (henceforth CP, chiefly represented in codd. Par. Gr. 1168 and Bodl. Digby 6). This material was first published by Hermann Diels in FVS under the heading 'Unechte Fragmente'. Though many of these sententiae are seemingly banal, some are nearly identical with or parallel to fragments labelled as genuine. This may be said to be the point of departure for G.’s investigation of the connections of this late medieval material to the historical Democritus. In the introduction to my own edition of the Corpus Parisinum (Lewiston–Queenston–Lampeter 2007), I wrote: «Gerlach has devoted much thought and diligence to researching the structure and formation of CP, and his soon to be published doctoral dissertation is expected to offer a most careful source analysis...» In the commentary to my edition, I added: «Gerlach will soon be releasing his own thoroughgoing edition and analysis of ‘the maxims attributed to Democritus’ ... His study will make any commentary of my own on the Democritus’ maxims as well as on many other aspects of CP superfluous.» Suffice it to say that he has more than met my expectations.¹

¹ I want to apologize both to the editorial board of Gnomon and to the author for the tardiness of my review, which was the result of a sudden change in my employment that led to an unexpected and significantly increased workload. I also need to disclose that I am personally acquainted with Dr. Gerlach, although our friendship has been strictly professional, and that he wrote a critique of my edition soon after its publication: ‘Die kompositorische Einheit des Corpus Parisinum. Eine methodologische Stellungnahme zu Searbys Gesamtedition’ in Medioevo greco 8 (2008).
The book will have two main audiences with some overlapping: scholars working on Democritus and scholars interested in late antique or Byzantine florilegia and gnomologia. On the whole it is a difficult read, and there is a risk that readers interested in Democritus may lose themselves in the morass of gnomological details. This is in part illustrated by the brief review in *JHS* 130 (2010) by Teresa Morgan, an excellent scholar. She is rightfully positive but also rather unspecific concerning details. For example, she refers to the insights gained into the compilation of miscellanies. Yet G.’s point is that the CP is not a miscellany. A miscellany is a little bit of this – botany, arithmetic, alchemy, metaphysics – a little bit of that – selections from Isocrates, Gregory of Nyssa, Aesop’s fables, Plutarch’s Lives, while CP is, G. maintains, a thoughtful compilation in two redactional stages. Because the two likely audiences will come to G.’s work with rather different preparation, I will attempt to summarize his principal lines of argument – for this long and complex study may well be seen as an extended, step-by-step argument for taking the Democritea of the CP seriously. There are so many detailed and interconnected discussions in the book, that I must omit a large number of important points (e.g. the question of the Greek dialect in the maxims).

The book’s main divisions cover (i) the transmission of the ethical philosophy of Democritus (pp. 11–78); (ii) the transmission of two specific collections, namely, the Democritus-Epictetus-Isocrates collection (DEI, also known as *Gnomologia Byzantina*) first edited by C. Wachsmuth in 1882, and *Ἀριστὸν καὶ Πρῶτον Μάθημα* (AΠΜ or APM), first edited by H. Schenkl in 1889 (79–205); (iii) an analysis and thorough discussion of CP (207–372); (iv) a discussion of the *Loci Communes* of pseudo-Maximus Confessor, a far more widely disseminated florilegium than CP and a very important textual witness, since CP served as the primary source for its ‘pagan’ or ‘profane’ sayings (373–408); (v) the critical edition itself of the Democritea in CP (409–563). In addition to these main parts, G. includes an introduction (1–9), a summary of conclusions (565–576), and a number of useful appendices and indices (579–637), including a list of textual differences between G.’s edition and FVS as well as a concordance of the numbering of selections in my own edition. The latter is necessary because I created my own system of numbering while G., on the basis of references in Wachsmuth & Hense’s edition of Stobaeus and elsewhere, has reconstructed and follows the numbering in Anton Elter’s never published and now completely lost edition.

In part (i), G. first traverses territory familiar to students of Democritean ethics, namely the numerous ethical *sententiae* of late date ascribed to Democritus and the paucity of other fragments. The situation is succinctly described by J. F. Procopé in ‘Democritus on Politics and Care of the Soul’, *CQ* 39 (1989) 307–331. One might also cite the descriptions of the situation from different angles by C. C. W. Taylor in *The Atomists: Leucippus and Democritus* (Toronto 1999) p. 222 f., and W. Leszl in ‘Problems raised by an edition of Democritus with comparisons with other pre-Socratics’ in *Qu’est-ce que la Philosophie Présocratique*, edd. A. Laks & C. Louguet (Villeneuve d’Ascq 2002). G. cites none of these prior works, which is most surprising in the case of Procopé, whose unpublished dissertation (*Democritus the Moralist and his Contemporaries*, Cambridge 1971) was...
of great use to him. Leszl has, moreover, also had some things to say on Democritus as himself the author of gnomic sayings, an idea that G. actually rejects (‘Democritus’ Works: from their titles to their contents’, included in Democritus: Science, the Arts and the Care of the Soul, edited by A. Brancacci and P.-M. Morel, Brill, Leiden 2007, pp. 11–76, esp. pp. 64 ff.). There are several more recent works that could have been used to deepen G.’s characterization of Democritean ethics, such as J. Annas ‘Democritus and Eudaimonism’ in Presocratic Philosophy. Essays in honour of Alexander Mourelatos (Ashgate 2002), or perhaps J. Warren, Epicurus and Democritean Ethics: An Archaeology of Ataraxia (Cambridge 2002). Relevant to his discussion would also have been G. Navaud, ‘Maximes de Démocrite et Callimaque’ in REG 2006 (119) 114–138. My point here is not simply the reviewer’s typical complaint of bibliographical lacunae but rather the observation that, with respect to Democritean studies, G. engages more with 19th and early 20th century scholars and less with later scholars: the only secondary literature on Democritus cited from the present millennium is his own article of 2004, and there are relatively few titles from the preceding decade. G. appears quite sure of his own view of Democritean ethics and his reconstruction of ‘authentic’ Democritean ideas, but some scholars of Democritus will surely disagree, for example, with his discussion of wealth and poverty as opposite conditions that can convert into one another. Be that as it may, what G. brings to the discussion is his deep knowledge of and reflections on the gnomological tradition. Building on criteria of authenticity developed by Natorp (Die Ethika des Demokritos, TU Marburg 1893) and, especially, Procopé (dis.), G. argues not for a direct textual transmission of Democritus’ ethical works to Hellenistic times and beyond but for a reworking of Democritean formulas and concepts and their reception in other traditions (Epicureanism, Pythagoreanism) that fed into the later gnomologia. What we often encounter in the gnomologia are rephrasings and abbreviations – often generalized to the point of triviality – of longer or more authentic passages (G. excludes Democritus himself as the author of gnomic sayings). Concerning the general question of authenticity, G. should deal more squarely with the issue of how much a gnomic tradition can be manipulated and yet still retain something authentic from the original author. I wrote my own dissertation on Aristotle in the gnomological tradition and, if that were all we had to go by as evidence of Aristotle’s ethics, we would find practically nothing that we today regard as Aristotelian. The two most important sources for the ethical fragments of Democritus are Stobaeus’ Anthology and the so-called ‘golden maxims of Democrats’ (a much discussed misnomer). Through a careful comparison, G. confirms Lortzing’s conclusion that Stobaeus utilized a collection of Democritus’ maxims nearly identical with the pseudo-Democrites collection, which, for G., has the methodological consequence of making Stobaeus an indirect witness to that tradition, complicated by the thematic rearrangement in the Stobaean anthology. G. describes the structure of the pseudo-Democrites collection as a series of different ‘thematic nests’ of sayings, the result, he thinks, of the compiler’s linking together maxims from (at times) different original contexts by keywords («Stichwortverkettung») – here he builds on Laue as well as on Nietzsche’s «Stichworttheories» (G.’s term) used to describe the Theognidean corpus. Yet not even a
modified keyword theory fully explains the collection with its frequent lack of a keyword link between the individual items, says G., but one must also take into account the gnomological urge to reduce a source passage to simple and concise statements, thus removing the original connection of a maxim lacking a keyword or thematic link to its surrounding ‘thematic nest’. I have laid this out in some detail because of its importance to the book as a whole. Moreover, G. uses variations on the idea of keyword or signal-word linking to explain phenomena in CP. G. regards the thematic chains as the work of a redactor and not as something originating with Democritus, though that can scarcely be proven.

In the next major section (ii), G. deals with the Gnomologium Byzantinum or DEI (a thematic collection of anonymous maxims under the heading Democritus Epictetus Isocrates) and the alphabetically arranged collection of (almost entirely) anonymous sayings abbreviated ΑΠΜ (Ἀριστον και πρῶτον μάθημα, the opening words), usually transmitted together in the mss., both of which are represented in different ways in CP. This section is an important contribution to gnomological research in general as well as to that related to Democritus. In some ways, this is the most important section prior to the edition itself, because it establishes the relationship of DEI and ΑΠΜ to pseudo-Democrates as well as to each other. G. offers a thorough description and classification of mss of DEI into four groups and engages independently with both much earlier (e.g. Schenkl, Wachsmuth, Laue) and more recent (e.g. Odorico) scholarship. He is able to construct what I find to be a persuasive picture of the transmission of the two collections. He identifies the oldest stratum of DEI mss. (Class I), as containing only Democritus and Epictetus. Selections from Isocrates were thus a later addition (I am entirely persuaded by this). The prior redaction of pseudo-Democrates was one source of this first redaction, which also eventually flowed into one branch of the ΑΙΙΜ tradition. This is significant for the possibility of locating more authentic Democritean maxims in a DEI-dependent collection like CP or DEI itself which are not found in either Stobaeus or pseudo-Democrates (e.g. see pp. 98–99 on ‘Echtheitskritik der Spruchreihe π. πλούτου aus dem DEI’).

G. reaches a number of editorial conclusions in this chapter which would require too much space to discuss here. As I understand, after the publication of the present work, G. has continued to investigate this tradition further, so we may hope for a new edition of DEI (and, perhaps, ΑΙΙΜ) in the future. In this long chapter, G. delves into some of the brief thematic sections of DEI in quite some detail, employing again his ideas of keyword or signalword structuring (Stichwort and Signalwort are distinguished by G. but I pass that over here). He also introduces the idea of osmosis between collections and between manuscript classes, which he would like to distinguish from the more general concept of contamination.

He offers a few examples of osmosis which are introduced with a sentence characteristic of his penchant for scientific expression: «Daß die verwickelten Osmoseprozesse nur durch eine detaillierte und notwendig mit Hypothesen operierende Analyse jedes einzelnen Spruches aufgedeckt werden können und daß sich nicht immer eine verlässliche Entscheidung hinsichtlich der Priorität wird fällen lassen, sei zum Abschluß der Analyse von DEI und ΑΙΙΜ anhand einiger ausgewählter Beispiele dargelegt.» The examples of ‘osmosis’ give, however, only rather tentative results.
G. then embarks on a discussion of the main object of study, the CP and the Democritea it transmits. This 170-page long chapter covers the entire CP with all its Christian and non-Christian sayings, although with an obvious emphasis on the profane part. (For those interested in the Christian sayings, I would note that José Declerk is currently working on an edition of their major source: the *Sacra Parallela* attributed to John Damascene). CP is extant in basically two manuscripts (P and D, mentioned above); the other witnesses offer only exiguous remains, the most significant (and oldest) of these being cod. Par. suppl. gr. 690 (S), the next most important being Vat. gr. 1357 (V). CP in its extant form in mss P and D begins with Christian selections from the Fathers and the OT wisdom literature and a few other sources. This is followed by a brief collection of Christian prophesies ascribed to pagan sages, which both G. and I regard as a kind of bridge to the profane part of the collection which G. divides into 5 parts: apophthegms grouped by author, excerpts from Stobaeus, abridged version of DEL, a second series of excerpts from Stobaeus (deliberately placed there according to G., displaced in my opinion), a series of apophthegms arranged alphabetically according to initial. Both main manuscripts follow up with a significant selection of the monostichs of Menander, which both G. and I regard as a later addition to CP, and which G. more or less leaves out of his discussion. Both G. and I regard the CP collection as a deliberate arrangement – not a miscellany – although I should perhaps state here that my own impression of CP was that it was less than systematic in its arrangement – as if the compiler had grown tired of compiling. The contrast will no doubt amuse some: When the stringent, methodical German scholar turns to CP, he discovers stringent, methodical compilers; when the slapdash American scholar turns to CP, he finds a mess. Nonetheless, it is reassuring that, despite our quite different approaches, there is still much resemblance between our two views of the genesis of CP, and where they do diverge, I would recommend doubtful readers to trust G. more than me.

G. offers a *stemma codicum* on p. 240 as well as a diagram illustrating his genetic analysis on p. 260. Two of my colleagues in Uppsala, Jan Fredrik Kindstrand and Dimitrios Jordanoglou, offered previous stemmatic analyses based on their collation of specific parts of P and D. All scholars are in complete agreement about the obviously close relationship between P and D: they descend from the same hyparchetype. Kindstrand, who noted D’s omission of 26 monostichs of Menander, drew the reasonable conclusion that a page had been lost at some stage either in the hyparchetype itself after P had already been copied or in an intermediary copy between D and the hyparchetype. G. has decided for an intermediary copy between the hyparchetype and D, although I do not find a clear argument for why he does so. Prior to the hyparchetype of P and D, G. postulates a further hyparchetype α from which pseudo-Maximus drew, and then the archetype ω from which a second, abbreviated (in comparison with the branch of P and D) one derives: this would be the source of S and V. This seems to me a very reasonable view, which builds on Kindstrand’s discussion and edition of the collection in V. When G. enters into an analysis of the two postulated redactions carried out by Redaktor A and Redaktor B, things get necessarily hypothetical. The first redaction (A) included the Christian sayings, the oracles and the first
part of the profane selections (sayings in groups by author). On the one hand, this redaction, G. holds, was rearranged and shortened in redaction A\', the source of mss S and V; on the other hand, another redactor produced an expanded version – redaction B – that included the Stobaeus excerpts, DEI and the alphabetically arranged apophthegms. (Redaction B is the ancestor of mss P and D.) One very useful thing in G.'s discussion of CP is his detailed analysis of both the Stobaeus excerpts and the DEI section in CP as well as the alphabetic collection of apophthegms related to AIM but also to the *Gnomologium Vaticanum* tradition.

My above, highly simplified summary of G's redactional model needs some further comment. In postulating (at least) two different redactional stages by different compilers, G. differs from Elter (and, indeed, my own) view of a unified corpus compiled by a single redactor. Let us concentrate on the first and most important collection in the profane part, that grouped by author. In P and D, this is a conglomerate made up from other collections, such as *Gnomica homoeomata* (ed. Elter), DEI, Stobaeus, collections of apophthegms and other collections – all these sources had, of course, different arrangements, either by author (Gn. hom.) or theme (Stob, DEI) or alphabetical (AIM, GV). Obviously, some of these sources for this first profane part are also represented in the remaining profane parts, albeit in abbreviated fashion – items present in the first part are as a rule not reduplicated in the other parts. This is a primary reason that Elter and other scholars have posited a single redactor. G., on the contrary, argues for successive, non-contemporaneous redactions for three reasons: (1) the structural inhomogeneity; (2) evidence for a utilization of different manuscript classes for some sources; (3) the fact that the remaining profane parts have left no traces outside mss P and D. As to these, I would say that (3) is both a question of definition and a kind of argument e silentio: the ancestor of P and D (ο) has indeed left numerous traces of all parts of CP in the *loqui communes* of pseudo-Maximus, and there is no reason to assume an equal fecundity for its ancestor (ο). It is unclear to me why (2) should necessarily exclude a single compiler – especially if, as I speculate, he may have been re-working his own material. By (1) G. means the fact that the Christian part, the short series of oracles, and the first profane part are arranged by author, while the arrangement of the remaining parts is first thematic and then alphabetic. This is G.'s primary argument for two different redactors – the different structural arrangements represent, as he puts it, two redactors' different conceptualities. G. locates a specific passage as the original ending of CP 504 (3.111 in my numbering). This is a saying of the Christian writer Nilus (Neilos) which is the only Christian saying in the profane section. G. argues that this is not a mere displacement or a mistake but represents a deliberately chosen ending to the entire original collection – a sort of flashback to the sacred half at the end of profane half of this sacrosanct collection. After this saying in mss. P and D, the author group continues with a marked number of borrowings from Stobaeus. G. interprets this as an addition from the later redactor wishing to provide a transition from the author group to his thematically grouped selections from Stobaeus which is the second collection in the profane part of CP. There are, of course, many details in G.'s argument which space does not permit me to address here. I would point out that little new manuscript evidence is added but, rather, a new and generally satisfying interpretation of the existing evidence for CP is given. However, the interpretation is open to question at a number of points. After all, it is not clear why the Nilus saying ('a quiet life is more glorious than ever so much money') would be a fitting ending to the original collection. More importantly, we are assuming that a different redactor took the original collection and went back to its same sources (even if not always to the same manuscript copies) in order to amplify it: all the collections that are added on, in G.'s model, in redaction B – in first a thematic, then an alphabetic block – had already been utilized by the first redactor in order to create redaction A. I find G.'s analysis to be stimulating and would like to be able to accept it entirely, and yet I have lingering doubts as to whether it is the right explanation, despite the barrage of G.'s theoretical tools from
signal-words to osmosis to conceptualities. However, I do agree with him about there being two redactional stages – it is only that I still regard it as a fair possibility that the same redactor was behind both, despite the apparently changed ‘conceptuality’.

In Chapter 4, G. deals with pseudo-Maximus and the CP. We are fortunate today to possess Sibylle Ihm’s critical edition of one branch of this important florilegium (which I reviewed in these pages in number 75, 2003, pp. 222–225), which aids enormously in comparing CP and Maximus. The Loci communes is an important witness to CP as well as decisive proof that the version extant in P and D, though without the Menander monostichs, was produced soon after G.’s postulated original version of CP. The important point here is that Maximus descends from a version prior to that of P and D, which leaves open the possibility that some sententiae, including ones attributed to Democritus, found in Maximus but absent in P and D may descend from an earlier version of CP. G. does take some umbrage at my own throw-away idea about CP perhaps being the working papers for the compilation of ps.-Maximus. Of course, this would be prejudicial to his conception of redactors A and B and their different conceptualities, yet it would be a lot more interesting historically speaking and it is not impossible. I bring this up not to argue for it – I accept G.’s position as the stronger one (mine is not really a position, just an idea) – but to point to a possible deficiency in G.’s discussion, which is this: his treatment of the anonymous redactors remains very much on the abstract level, even when descending to the details of their conceptualities. He does not attempt to locate the compilation of CP to a specific social or cultural setting, let alone consider why the compilation(s) may have been made. I regard this as a legitimate limit to his investigation but imagine that it will leave his work vulnerable to criticism from Byzantinists primarily interested in uncovering the immediate historical background to the compilation of CP.

At long last the reader arrives at G.’s edition with its substantial introduction. It is worth noting that both G. and I have devised (independently) quite similar plans for the notes in the apparatus, which points to a new standard being established for gnomological editions. G. prints each item separately and adds up to five apparatuses: (a) the critical apparatus comparing manuscript readings; (b) the source apparatus (e.g. noting Stobaeus or DEI); (c) the dependent apparatus noting items (mostly in the Maximus tradition) dependent on CP; (d) parallels in collections with either an unclear or an independent relationship to CP; (e) attribution apparatus, noting the item’s appearance in fragment collections and briefly remarking (if possible) on whether the attribution is well founded or not. After this there follows for each item a list of relevant literature. Taken together, these apparatuses (written in excellent Latin) make up G.’s analytical commentary – there is no additional commentary nor are there any translations, though one might have wished for a modern German translation of the texts. For those familiar with the Greek gnomologies, there are few surprises as to the manuscript sources cited in the apparatuses, although the collection in cod. Ups. gr. 8 will be unfamiliar to most. (I must say that I object to the continued denomination of the sayings in cod. Neapolit. II D 22 as a ‘gnomologium’ – it is rather an example of schedographia using gnomological material). His edited Greek text does not differ much from the corresponding texts in my own edition, but where
there are differences, G. gives the better and more accurate text and must be considered an improvement. (The only slight point where I would differ is in his number 4, my 3.162, where, I think, we must have a question mark after ῥί δεῖ μαθεῖν.) One chief virtue of G.’s edition lies in the publication of more material for Democritus from CP than just the sayings going there under Democritus’ name: G. is able to do this thanks to his preceding source analysis and argumentation, especially in Chapter 2. Another chief virtue is the very concise but judicious consideration of the validity of each item’s attribution to the tradition of Democritus.

Although I have brought up certain points of criticism – or, rather, points for further dialogue – let me conclude this review by stating my enthusiastic admiration of and gratitude for G.’s scholarly resourcefulness and stamina. This is a major contribution to the study of the Greek gnomological tradition. Some scholars of Democritus may perhaps be somewhat disappointed in the results – but only if they expect substantial new fragments and not typical gnomological fare. However, the real value for Democritean studies is the reevaluation of the whole tradition of ethical sayings, based on careful source-analysis, which delineates the connections of Byzantine to ancient sources more clearly than has previously been done. We can find traces of Democritus even in very late products like CP, such as the ‘nova Democritea’ of sayings 1 and 88 (= my 3.77 and 6.192): 'Many choose as friends not those who are best but those who are wealthy’ and ‘Changes of place neither teach wisdom nor take away stupidity’ (my translation). G. is to be especially commended for his acribeta, his array of conceptual tools, the clarity and construction of his edition and his helpful appendices. He is perhaps to be less commended for the decision to communicate the results of his investigations in a single volume rather than in two complementary monographs or in a series of articles preparing his two different publics for the edition. At the basic level a collection of sayings like CP is easy to grasp conceptually. However, any reality becomes complex when you apply a variety of perspectives to it. That is what is so fascinating about the world we live in: you can go on digging forever to reach the reality behind the evidence.

Uppsala

Denis M. Searby


Timon of Phlius was a disciple of Pyrrho of Elis, the original inspiration for the later philosophical movement known as Pyrrhonian skepticism. He depicted Pyrrho and his ideas both in verse and in prose, and also, in his major hexameter work Silloi, satirized all the other philosophers who fell far short of Pyrrho’s standards of tranquility and renunciation of the search for truth. We have only fragments of these works, but at least in the case of the Silloi, we have enough to be able to piece together a fair idea of its contents. In recent years, scholars who have concerned themselves with Timon, at least in the Anglophone world, have tended to come from departments of Philosophy, rather than Classics; as a result,