



own argumentative and reflective methods and does not share arguments that will later be put forward by Gianfrancesco and Savonarola in their treatises. Finally, he looks (in chapter 6) at how Pico interprets the influence of the sun and the moon over the earth and argues that this is a development of the concerns already expressed before in the *Heptaplus* and the *Expositiones*, which seek resolution within the framework of natural philosophy.

The book's last section is devoted to the pro and contra reception of the *Disputationes* among Pico's contemporaries. A study of the works of Savonarola (chapter 7) and Gianfrancesco Pico (chapter 8) allows Akopyan to establish that they have substantive differences with Pico's position and that there is also evidence that they were influenced by the *Disputationes*, not vice versa. On the other hand, an analysis of the works of Lucio Bellanti, Giovanni Pontano, and Francesco Zorzi (chapters 10, 11, and 12) serves to contrast Pico's ideas and to broaden our view of the debate over astrology at the time, but also to identify in detail the context in which the arguments that question the authorship of the *Disputationes* arise.

Debating the Stars undoubtedly opens a new horizon to understanding Pico's *Disputationes* as a part of his greater intellectual enterprise. It opens further questions on how his ideas evolved and his philosophical relation to Savonarola and Gianfrancesco. As Akopyan suggests, Pico was a leading philosopher, not a mere follower of Savonarola's ideas.

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Epicure aux Enfers: Hérésie, athéisme et hédonisme au Moyen Âge.
Aurélien Robert.

Fayard Histoire. Paris: Fayard, 2021. 368 pp. €24.

Only one of the ancient philosophers is relegated by Dante to hell: Epicurus. With this metaphor taken from the *Divina Commedia*, Robert begins a magnificent book dedicated to the analysis of the reception of Epicurus's figure and doctrines from antiquity to the Renaissance. His main thesis argues that the master of the Garden was recovered long before the fifteenth century, and, in the context of the scholarly discussion between continuationists and rupturists about the survival of the classical tradition in medieval times, the author masterfully argues that the transmission of Epicureanism shows lines of continuity up to modernity. Despite being a heterogeneous, complex, and ambivalent reception, in general terms during the Middle Ages Epicurean philosophy was rejected and associated with heresy.

The basis on which medieval authors approached Epicurus was established by the late antique Christian apologists and mediated by their struggle against the

philosophical schools and paganism. This conflict was probably generated by the competition between Epicurean and Christian communities in the provinces located in the eastern area of the Roman Empire. In part 1, Robert analyzes the development of the depreciation suffered by Epicurean philosophy and piety, interpreted by medieval authors as uncontrolled hedonism and atheism. The author locates the peak of this development in the twelfth century, due to the assignment of a new meaning to the name Epicurus—i.e., “shallow”—as well as to an exegetical tradition that identified several biblical figures as followers of the philosopher of Samos.

The negative view of Epicureanism did not belong exclusively to the Christian world but was also shared by the rabbinic and Islamic traditions, as Robert explains in part 2. This Hellenistic philosophical school was invoked as a phantasmagorical and threatening (rather than real) heresy and juxtaposed with Manichaeism to reinforce the strategies of hatred toward dissent. The image that was transmitted of the Epicurean was not anchored in their philosophical doctrines, but these were presented as blurred figures invoking demons in nocturnal orgies presided over by the devil in the form of a wild beast. These scenes of the collective imaginary were also relevant in foreshadowing the later characterization, even up to the fifteenth century, of the gatherings of other groups considered heretical: witches and sorcerers.

The reception of Epicureanism in pastoral practice is the focus of part 3. Particularly, Robert analyzes the preaching of the mendicant orders of the thirteenth century, in which the laity were warned that Epicurus incited debauchery, abandonment to sensuality, and the seduction of the worldly, and that he drew the faithful away from the real goal of their lives: to walk toward salvation under the directives of the church. Similarly, in the poetry of the time the Epicurean was perceived as a being given to pleasure for its own sake. These precedents explain Epicurus’s placement in the Dantesque infernal circles. A century later, in 1417, a manuscript of Lucretius’s *De natura rerum* was recovered and the materialistic Epicurean philosophy spread. However, the author insists, Epicurus did not return in the Renaissance, but what existed was a historiographical lacuna.

As the author shows, there are previous studies on the posterity and fortune of Epicurus. However, Robert’s monograph stands out not only for its up-to-date approach to the subject matter, but above all for the broad chronological scope it covers, the inclusion of Jewish and Muslim traditions in addition to Christianity, and the interpretative analysis of the main texts on the subject. The reader will be able to make a precise and careful journey through the central contents of the medieval period, thanks to Robert’s clear and at the same time rigorous, detailed, and erudite expository style. It is a reference book demonstrating the survival of the classical tradition in the Middle Ages that offers, in addition, an unavoidable perspective on the medieval dissidences.

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