

Commento retorico- filosofico a Plutarco, *Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* (1086C- 1093C) - con saggio di edizione critica (1086C- 1088D)

Dottoranda: Simona Postiglione

Abstract

This Ph.D. thesis delves into the anti-epicurean nature of Plutarch's *Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum*. The introduction analyzes some general aspects about the work (textual tradition, ancient and modern printed editions, subject matter, dating), investigates them in the light of its polemical nature and shows the methods used in the commentary to provide an analysis of contexts, motivations and strategies with which Plutarch confuted epicurean basic dictates. A special focus is turned to the dialogical setting: it introduces and supports the whole development of the doctrinaire exposition. A particular attention is dedicated to the system of characters (Plutarch's students, Plutarch himself), with a specific reference to their characterization and the role they play in the construction of the philosophical exposition. The commentary, an accurate analysis of the part 1086C- 1093C, delves into some literary and philosophical aspects concerning the text. The PhD thesis emphasizes, on the basis of some categories of the analysis suggested by Roskam¹, how Plutarch chooses, introduces and quotes the epicurean arguments, in connection with the polemical *literary context* and the *philosophical context* implied and with the *contentual context*

¹ Compare G. Roskam, *The Displeasing secrets of the Epicurean Life. Plutarch's Polemic against Epicurus' Political Philosophy*, in *Plutarco e l'età ellenistica*. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi (Firenze, 23- 24 settembre 2004), a cura di A. Casanova, Firenze 2005, pp. 351- 368; G. Roskam, *Plutarch as a source for Epicurean Philosophy. Another aspect of his Nachleben*, in "Ploutarchos", n.s. 4 (2006- 2007), pp. 67- 82; G. Roskam, *A commentary on Plutarch's De latenter vivendo*, Leuven 2007.

of the contiguous arguments. Plutarch takes care of presenting his pamphlet as a model of refutation (compare *suav. viv. Epic.* 1086D 6-11), indicating the necessity, for those who want to refute opponents, to adhere to an earnest deference for their statements, but, actually, later he contradicts his own assertions, building a confutation inspired by different *criteria*. He selects the most extremist epicurean arguments, and submits them to a simplification, neglecting their theoretical hints or pointing out the most drastic consequences of them. Plutarch leaves out instead some reference to basic aspects, which are, however, not very susceptible to debate aspects. He excerpts statements from their original context and distorts their meaning with an astute or not careful use of the epicurean terminology, making clever insertions in order to discredit the other's view: the insertion of the epicurean quotes, for the most part paraphrased, concur to belittle the ήδοινή. Disregarding any preliminary remarks of methodological rigor, Plutarch doesn't construct his challenge on the basis of objections based on a meditated and objective examination of the epicurean doctrine, in fact he makes use of not very orthodox stratagems: reversal of the arguments against his opponents, distortion of their thought, deliberate trivializing of their doctrines. Furthermore, Plutarch uses the weapons of the subtle irony or of the explicit sarcasm to denigrate his opponents, introducing them as foolish and arrogant, lacking of tact and moderation, envious and mean-minded persons, only leaned to the satisfaction of the most elementary needs and fanatical followers of an objectionable doctrine with ridiculous results, whose limits they would be essentially aware. Those strategies cooperate in firmly distancing not only Theons' audience but also Plutarch's reader, from the Epicureans, relegating to the background the out-and-out doctrinaire challenge. The emotional factor of the confutation gets rich of references to the common experience, which induce the audience, involved in the exposition through the fatic functions of the language, to conceive as unwise the epicurean statements. Plutarch's confutation rests also on a skilful use of quotations, reported in a literary form or

in a paraphrase or simply through an allusion, decontextualized and refunctionalized in the new context: they concur to lend polemical vigor to the arguments. In addition to the epicurean quotations, which constitute integral part of the main structure of the work, there are also quotations from philosophical *auctoritates* (Plato) or literary ones (Homer, the tragedians), which belittle the arguments of the opponents and legitimize Plutarch's criticism: it has been really important to use an intertextual approach. Moreover a special attention was turned, in the commentary, to the rhetorical devices (homeoteleuton, parallelism, metaphor, simile, anaphora, use of polysyllabic or composite terms, alliteration, assonance, litotes, antithesis), useful to demonstrate the incoherence of the arguments of the Epicureans. So Plutarch doesn't seem to be a reliable source to reconstruct better Epicurus' thought, even if he is often the only witness of several fragments; his speech denotes a deep knowledge of the epicurean doctrines and he pays great attention to the rhetorical aspects, but his aim is polemical. In fact he conceives the philosophical system of Epicurus' Garden as a subversive and unethical doctrine. The Ph.D. thesis comprises also a translation from Ancient Greek to Italian of the section 1086C- 1093C of the pamphlet: this translation is based on the edition made by Einarson- De Lacy², even if it sometimes turns from it under certain circumstances.

The essay of critical edition, instead, is about the part 1086C- 1088D: the main codices have been collated, consulted on reproductions of microfilms or on printed pages from microfilm (X g c d a B A E) or on originals (Mon); the main modern critical editions, from the Aldina edition (1509) to today, have been consulted too. The new critical text has a positive *apparatus* and follows the *criterion* of a well-balanced preservation of the text handed down; the reading of the *codices* has made possible to point out some mistakes in the current critical editions. It was possible to confirm a trend: the contamination

² *Plutarch Moralia*, XIV, with an English translation by B. Einarson and Ph. H. De Lacy, Cambridge (Mass.) – London 1967.

between the two branches of the manuscript tradition. Philological notes have been settled to clarify the textual choices concerning the most disputed passages of the text.