the conclusions and ideas of the dialogue, including the rector rei publicae, were
informed by the methodology of Academic scepticism.

The scholarly interest in Epicurus and the Epicurean tradition also remains lively.
Francesco Verde’s Epicuro is a useful introduction, in Italian, to all the main aspects
of Epicurus’ life, works, and philosophy (under the general headings of ‘canonic’, natu-
ral science, and ethics), with a final minimalist overview of some other main
Hellenistic and post-Hellenistic figures of the Epicurean school. The book takes into
account our main sources (including key papyrological ones) and appears well
informed about the current scholarly discourse; the thirty-five-page bibliography, the-
metically organized, will be an excellent tool for students. Verde’s declared approach
is primarily ‘storico-filologico’ (‘historico-philosophical’ [226]), with the aim to recon-
struct and expound the key tenets and arguments of Epicurus and their development,
more than to examine their philosophical distinctiveness and worth, or their theoretical
difficulties. The section on freedom, self-determination, and the clámen (195–211) is
a good illustration of the merits, and possible shortcomings, of this approach. Much
attention is devoted to a nuanced discussion of whether the doctrine of the swerve
was originally introduced by Epicurus, and at what stage of his philosophical career,
and how it relates to his apparently different defence of human responsibility against
a form of Democritean necessitarianism in On Nature 25. But the essential philo-
osophical question of how the introduction of a form of uncaused, random sub-atomic
motion at the level of the atoms of the mind could help Epicurus’ case for human
responsibility, understood either as mere autonomy or as some more robust form of
freedom of will, is only lightly touched upon, and some of the fundamental conceptual
distinctions involved are either overlooked or mentioned too briefly, without the kind of
supporting explanation which would be necessary for a student to appreciate truly the
philosophical implications of Epicurus’ proposal and the fascinating exegetical debate
surrounding it. As perhaps hardly avoidable in a wide-ranging introductory study
such as this, some finer distinctions are misrepresented: for example it is not the
‘validità del giudizio disgiuntivo’ (‘the validity of the disjunctive judgement’; namely,
I suppose, Verde’s imprecise label for the law of the excluded middle) that Epicurus
primarily rejected in order to avoid falling into a form of logical determinism (198),
but the validity of the principle of bivalence (and such a logical determinism would
not imply, anyway, that one of the alternative propositions must be ‘logically
necessary’).

Verde is also the co-editor, with Stéphane Marchand, of a recent collection of eight
essays on Épicurisme et scepticisme. In the short (French) introduction, the editors
present the volume as an attempt to explore the ‘historical, philosophical and theoretical’
relationship between Epicureanism and scepticism in the wake of Marcello Gigante’s
approach in his 1981 monograph Scetticismo e epicureismo. Per l’avvento di un discorso
storico-grafico (vii). In fact, the variety of approaches and methodologies of the individual
contributors is evident, and indeed welcome. The way in which the ‘relationship’ is
constructed is equally broad: some essays explore similarities between Epicureanism

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12 Épicurisme et scepticisme. Edited by Stéphane Marchand and Francesco Verde. Roma,
and various forms of scepticism (Erler on argumentative strategies; Giovacchini on ‘therapeutic scepticism in Epicureanism’ [in French]; Marchand on causation, the truth of the senses and belief [in French]); others focus on differences and criticisms (Warren on Cyrenaics and Epicureans on the role of opinion in pleasure and pain; Machuca on Sextus’ attack on the Epicurean criterion of truth); the final two essays examine how sceptical sources can be used to reconstruct the details and development of Epicurean doctrines (Verde on the sceptical account of the Epicurean attitude towards geometry; Spinelli on Sextus on pleasure as the Epicurean goal [in French]). Svavarsson’s chapter on tranquillity in Democritus and Pyrrho has, surprisingly, nothing to say on the Epicureans and Epicurean *ataraxia*. With its focus on some general strategies of arguments, rather than views, concepts, terminology, or arguments, Erler’s essay is a particularly interesting approach to the exploration of the similarities between Epicureanism and scepticism. He argues that the strategies of ‘accumulation of arguments’ and multiple explanations were adopted both by the Epicureans and by the Pyrrhonists with an ultimately therapeutic aim: the persuasion of the audience (in the former case, towards the acceptance of Epicurean tenets; in the latter, away from certain dogmatic theories). He traces the use of both strategies back to Plato, and suggests that they were ‘most probably...borrowed from traditional rhetoric in forensic context’ (39). It is regrettable that Erler does not examine and classify with full precision the argumentative strategies that he focuses upon. ‘Accumulation of argument’ need not have the form of a linear sequence in which different arguments for the same conclusion are merely juxtaposed (think, for example, of ‘concessive’ chains of the form: P, therefore Q; and even if not Q, S (because R); and even if not S . . .), and should be distinguished from dilemmatic or plurilemmatic arguments (the title of Erler’s essay ‘Chain of Proof in Lucretius, Sextus and Plato’ is thus slightly misleading). Erler’s use of the *Phaedo* as a Platonic illustration of the strategy of using a sequence of arguments for the immortality of the soul with a therapeutic function is convincing, whereas his adoption of the *Apology* for multiple explanations (‘death is either finis or transitus’ [35–6]) appears strained. He refers to Libanius and Quintilian to support the claim that Greek orators used accumulation of arguments and multiple explanations to defeat their adversaries and persuade the judges; but of course he could have looked no further than Gorgias’ *Encomium of Helen, Defence of Palamedes,* and On *What is Not* to support his point and connect more firmly the rhetorical use of these strategies with the later philosophical tradition.

Since antiquity Epicureanism has often been represented as an especially dogmatic philosophy, not only in the sense that it proposed and defended positive philosophical tenets against sceptical attacks, but even more so because, over several centuries, the members of Epicurus’ school did not make any serious attempt to revise and develop their revered founder’s doctrines. The collection of essays on *Epicurus and the Epicurean Tradition*13 edited by Jeffrey Fish and Kirk Sanders proposes to help correct this misperception, exploring ‘various aspects of the interplay between tradition and innovation within Epicureanism’ (1). It is fair to notice that over the last few decades much has already been done to rectify this misperception, and so the volume, rather than setting a new research agenda, serves as a welcome addition to, and reinforcement

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