

**Diogenes Epikourios: keep taking the tablets\***

The Epicurean inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda is an intriguing monument. Here and in what follows, I stress its monumentality and physical form, not only because this is what ensures its uniqueness as a source for Epicurean philosophy, but also because it has not always been given due attention by those commentators who have chosen to write about Diogenes and his inscription. For example, in her recent monograph on Diogenes, Pamela Gordon hardly mentions the archaeological context of the find, nor does she seem to consider the fact of its inscription on a wall at least four metres high and up to eighty metres long to be immediately relevant to her discussion of Diogenes' 'inimitable voice'.<sup>1</sup> It is true that the long-hoped-for systematic excavation of Oinoanda has still not been completed, and that therefore we lack a detailed material context for the fragments which have been recovered.<sup>2</sup> But it is equally true, and evident from the fragments of Diogenes that we have recovered, that the medium in which Diogenes chose to express himself was significant both for the way in which he saw his own purpose and position within Epicureanism and second-century Lycia, and also for the way in which we should read these fragments.

Some of the responsibility for the blindness of some commentators to the importance of the monumentality of Diogenes' work must lie with Diogenes himself. It was pointed out some time ago that the inscription consists in a number of narrow columns arranged in bands in order to resemble an unrolled scroll, and so when one reads *editions* of Diogenes it is very easy to assimilate his work to the more familiar and equally fragmentary Epicurean sources from Herculaneum papyri. It is therefore easy to forget the epigraphical source of these columns.<sup>3</sup> But, as I shall argue, the text itself and the concerns which it displays are intimately bound up with the form and general practice of public inscription. I offer no technical epigraphical discussion of the inscription. Instead, I present a reading of some pas-

sages in which Diogenes makes explicit reference to the nature of his work, and set these within the context of Epicurean therapy, recruitment, and philanthropy. This will demonstrate that Diogenes was concerned to stress and manipulate his choice of medium for the goal of the promotion of Epicurean philosophy.

Early in the presumed order of the inscription, Diogenes himself takes pains to underline the monumental nature of his work:

Since the remedies of the (or 'an') inscription (σὺ γράμμα)<sup>4</sup> reach a large number of people, I wished to use this stoa to advertise publicly (ἐν κοινῶι) the [drugs] that bring salvation.

3.V.8–VI.2 (cf. 119)<sup>5</sup>

It has been noted before that there is a peculiar irony in Diogenes' insistence that a stoa is the best place to advertise one's therapeutic Epicureanism. Not only do the more familiar denizens of the philosophical Stoa receive quite a lot of criticism from Diogenes over the course of his exposition, but also the entire notion of public proselytizing is sometimes thought to sit uneasily with the Epicurean ideal of retirement from public life.

It has been suggested that early Epicureans used statues of their founder to impress upon the un-Epicurean passer-by a notion of the ideal of tranquillity, without needing to engage in active evangelism.<sup>6</sup> Whether or not we accept that particular notion, it is clear that Diogenes' inscription must certainly be viewed in a related manner. This huge exposition of Epicurean ethics and physics, once erected, requires no proselytizing effort on the part of its sponsor. Indeed, the *content* of the inscription makes it abundantly clear that the 'I' of the programmatic introduction, the 'I' who explains his reasons for setting up this public monument, *cannot* have any on-going investment in the message's efficacy. Diogenes is quite clear in the very first passages that, for him, 'the writing is on the wall'. That is to say, he is an old man who recognizes that he is dying.<sup>7</sup>

Having already reached the sunset of my life (being almost on the verge of departure from the world on account of old age), I wanted, before being overtaken by death, to compose a [fine] paian [to celebrate the] fullness [of pleasure] and so to help those who are well constituted.<sup>8</sup>

3.II.7–III.5

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<sup>1</sup> There are brief remarks in her Epilogue: P. Gordon, *Epicurus in Lycia: The Second-Century World of Diogenes of Oinoanda* (Ann Arbor 1996) 128–9.

<sup>2</sup> It is something of a *topos* in discussions of Diogenes to lament this situation. See A. Casanova, 'Qualche riflessione sui frammenti dell'iscrizione di Diogene d'Enoanda', in W. Burkert, L. Gemelli Marciano, E. Matelli, L. Orelli (eds.), *Fragmentsammlungen philosophischer Texte / Le raccolte dei frammenti di filosofi antichi* Aporemata 3 (Göttingen 1998) 262–72, at 270. Some excavation was begun in 1997; see M.F. Smith, 'Excavations at Oinoanda 1997: the new Epicurean text', *AS* 48 (1998) 125–70.

<sup>3</sup> This situation should now be improved by the publication of M.F. Smith, *Diogenes of Oinoanda: The Philosophical Inscription* (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Ergänzungsbände zu den *Tituli Asiae Minoris* NR 20, Vienna 1996), which collects all the material information about the fragments and includes drawings and find spots.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. DL 10.120: [τὸν σοφὸν] καὶ συγγράμματα καταλείψειν; M.F. Smith, 'The chisel and the muse: Diogenes of Oinoanda and Lucretius', in K.A. Algra, M.H. Koenen, P.H. Schrijvers (eds.), *Lucretius and his Intellectual Background* (Amsterdam 1997) 67–78, at 73.

<sup>5</sup> References are to the edition of M.F. Smith, *Diogenes of Oinoanda: The Epicurean Inscription* (Naples 1993). Translations are based on those found there.

<sup>6</sup> B. Frischer, *The Sculpted Word: Epicureanism and Philosophical Recruitment in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley 1982).

<sup>7</sup> *fr.* 117: he has some kind of stomach complaint. Cf. *fr.* 120–1, Smith (n.3) 547 for the diagnosis.

<sup>8</sup> A. Grilli, 'ΔΙΑΘΕΣΙΣ in Epicuro', in ΣΥΖΗΤΗΣΙΣ: *studi sull'epicureismo greco e romano offerti a M. Gigante* (Naples 1983) 1 93–109 at 99 on εὐσύγκριτοι: 'Orbene,

Again, it might be wondered why an Epicurean, convinced of both the truth of Epicurean hedonism and of the maxim that 'death is nothing to him' would bother to undertake such a task, knowing that any effect the inscription might have would not be perceived by him. Diogenes will never feel the pleasure of his philanthropy's effectiveness. Similar worries are often expressed about Epicurus' own provision of a will. What status do its requests have, if its writer and its intended audience share the thought that death is annihilation? When I die, my interests die also. If any such suggestions of inconsistency have force for Epicurus, then they will have more force for Diogenes, who not only constructs a huge therapeutic inscription as he dies, but insists that his will is inscribed upon it.<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps no inconsistency is threatened by Epicurus' will.<sup>10</sup> In any case, for Diogenes, the fact that he will not perceive any benefit from his philanthropic inscription serves a positive function: it guarantees that his philanthropic motives are pure. His bequest to the community has no strings attached. This is a common *topos* in such inscriptions, but unlike other commemorative monuments, this does not record an act of beneficence; it *is* Diogenes' gift to the community. Moreover, the literal death of *this* author ensures that the inscription itself must do all of the therapeutic work alone. Nussbaum has well remarked that this inscription is not like a simple billboard sign which reads 'Jesus saves'.<sup>11</sup> It cannot be. It cannot function as a proreptic to further discussion with its author. Instead, it must perform the function both of recommending itself and its message to the passing viewer, and of providing all of the information and teaching required to fulfil its particular promise. Its monumentality fits this dual purpose. It impresses by its scale, and its scale ensures that it can do its work by carrying all of the required information for philosophical instruction.

Diogenes refers explicitly and implicitly to the form in which his message presents itself. The clearest explicit reference uses a striking verb to draw attention to Diogenes' epigraphical achievement. Part of *fr.* 116 reads:

gli εὐσύγκριτοι di Diogene non sono saggi, ma sono persone cui non è inutile venire in soccorso (βοηθεῖν), perché la loro composizione atomica consente loro di recepire i buoni ammaestramenti e di arrivare a una migliore διάθεσις.' Cf. *fr.* 2.II.14; C.W Chilton, *Diogenes of Oenoanda: The Fragments* (Oxford 1971) 29; Smith (n.5) 436.

<sup>9</sup> *fr.* 117 ff. read very much like the opening to a will. D. Clay, 'Individual and community in the first generation of the Epicurean school', in ΣΥΖΗΤΗΣΙΣ (n.8) 1 255-79 at 259, and *id.*, 'A lost Epicurean community', *GRBS* 30 (1989) 313-35 at 325. Smith (n.5) 546 is less convinced. For Epicurus' will: DL 10.16-21; Cic. *fin.* 2.101-3. On Diogenes' imitation of Epicurus: Clay, 'Individual and community', 259-64; Gordon (n.1) chh. 3-4.

<sup>10</sup> Diogenes himself offers some evidence to support this view: *fr.* 33.VIII.1-4 suggests that *present* pleasure can be enjoyed on the basis that one will be remembered fondly after one's death.

<sup>11</sup> M. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire* (Princeton 1994) 137.

It is in case you have not yet [attained any] knowledge of these matters that I (or 'we') have set these words in stone (ἐλιθοποιήσαμεν<sup>12</sup> γράμματα) for you.

116.8-11<sup>13</sup>

It is made clear early in the inscription that the large-scale public nature of Diogenes' pronouncement was not his preferred method of address. Like a good orator's *recusatio* Diogenes begins: 'unaccustomed as I am to public inscriptions...'

Now, if only one person or two or three or four or five or six or any large number you choose, sir, provided that it is not very large, were in a bad predicament, I should address them individually and do all in my power to give the best advice. But, as I have said before, the majority of people suffer from a common disease, as in a plague, with their false notions about things, and their number is increasing (for in mutual emulation they catch the disease from one another, like sheep); moreover [it is] right to help [also] generations to come (for they too belong to us, though they are still unborn); and, besides, love of humanity prompts us to aid (ἐπικουρεῖν) also foreigners who come here. Now since the remedies of the inscription reach a large number of people, I wished to use this *stoa* to advertise publicly the [drugs] that bring salvation.

3.III.5-VI.4<sup>14</sup>

The widespread suffering Diogenes sees around him compels him to extraordinary measures. Ideally, Epicureans prefer individual face-to-face counselling and therapy, since it allows for the individual tailoring of advice, encouragement, and reproach for the particular anxieties and misconceptions of each student. This is the method which they seem to have adopted within their Epicurean communities.<sup>15</sup> But Diogenes is tackling a more widespread problem among those who have not yet turned to Epicureanism. Such is the scale of the

<sup>12</sup> Otherwise used in Greek of this period to mean 'to turn to stone', of, for example, Medusa: Luc. *D. Mar.* 14.3; *Im.* 1. Cf. Alex. Aphrod. *Prob.* 1.109.8. Smith 'Chisel and muse' (n.4) 78.

<sup>13</sup> Smith (n.5) 143 thinks this is 'a humorous acknowledgement as well as a serious defence of the epigraphic colossus which his missionary zeal has created'.

<sup>14</sup> Compare Philodemus *de morte* 28.37-29.18, who also refers to people 'dying in herds'. He goes on to note that it would be bizarre if it were more glorious to die among rows of corpses during a plague (and here he refers to Thucydides' treatment of the deaths of Themistocles and Pericles) than to die as did Metrodorus and Epicurus, or in the heat of battle. This reference confirms that the Campanian Epicureans were reading Thucydides — something suggested by Lucretius' use and manipulation of Thucydides' treatment of the Athenian plague of 430 BCE in *DRN* 6. See H.S. Commager jr., 'Lucretius' interpretation of the plague', *HSCP* 62 (1957) 105-18.

<sup>15</sup> See Philodemus, *Peri Parrhesias* (*PHerc* 1471); N. De Witt, 'Organisation and procedure in Epicurean groups', *CP* 31 (1936) 205-11, and the text with translation by D. Konstan *et al.*, *Philodemus on Frank Criticism* (Albany 1998).

problem Diogenes must tackle that the therapeutic methods of the Garden are ineffective, and a more public advertisement of Epicurean salvation is demanded.

The metaphor of a disease of *kenodoxia* from which the non-Epicurean world is suffering is almost as common in Epicurean writings as the related thought that the requisite philosophical doctrines are to be applied to the sufferer like a drug. The four-fold remedy of Epicureanism, the *tetrapharmakos*, was the most concise distillation of its central tenets. Diogenes here refers to his message as a *pharmakon*.<sup>16</sup> But this metaphor is made even more powerful by allowing it to refer to the physical medium by which the drug is applied. The inscription itself becomes a *pharmakon* ready to be applied by each reader on each visit, a constant source of therapy and a talisman against *kenodoxia*.

Lucretius also makes extensive use of the metaphor of the disease which afflicts a non-Epicurean. When Athens falls to the plague of 430 BCE and is made in the last book of the *de rerum natura* to stand as a reminder of the evils possible in a pre-Epicurean world, the arrival of Epicurus, promised in the proem to that book, is clearly intended to bring the disease to an end.

A passage from Pausanias reveals that it was not an uncommon practice to set up temples to some divinity on the occasion of a city being delivered from plague. The standard epithet for the deity in such contexts seems to have been *Epikourios*.

In the same area there is a place called Bassai and a temple of Apollo Epikourios. The name was given to Apollo for his aid during a time of plague, just as in Athens he took the name Alexikakos, having delivered them too from the plague.<sup>17</sup>

Pausanias 8.41.7–8

Pausanias suggests that the same plague as struck Athens in 430 is commemorated by the temple at Bassai. His evidence for this is sketchy: both appellations of Apollo suggesting *εἰκοῦς τι*, and the fact that Iktinos was both the architect of the temple in Phigalia and a contemporary of Perikles (8.41.9). Whether this is true is not important.<sup>18</sup> Pausanias made the connection, and he must have based this connection on some tradition or evidence. Perhaps Lucretius also believed that the temple of Bassai was connected with

<sup>16</sup> 3.VI.1, 2.

<sup>17</sup> ἐν δὲ τῷ αὐτῷ χωρίῳ τὸ ἐστὶ καλούμενον Βάσσαι καὶ ὁ ναὸς τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος τοῦ Ἐπικουρίου, ... τὸ δὲ ὄνομα ἐγένετο τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι ἐπικουρήσαντι ἐπὶ νόσῳ λοιμῶδει, καθότι καὶ παρὰ Ἀθηναίους ἐπωνυμίαν ἔλαβεν Ἀλεξικάκος ἀποτρέψας καὶ τούτοις τὴν νόσον.

<sup>18</sup> It is now considered doubtful that Bassai had such a direct connection to the plague of 430. Thucydides denies that the plague ever got this far south (2.54.5). F.A. Cooper, *The Temple of Apollo at Bassai: A Preliminary Study* (New York 1978) 10–28, suggests that Pausanias' story comes from the identification as Phigalians of a number of Arkadian mercenaries stationed in Athens during the plague of 430. The war god Apollo already worshipped at the site was then associated with these mercenaries, and Ἐπικούριος denotes Apollo the Mercenary (*ἐπίκουρος*) rather than Apollo the Healer.

the plague of 430, based on similar evidence or tradition. But this is pure speculation.

While there is no evidence in the text of Lucretius for this connection between Epicurus and the traditional epithet of gods who delivered cities from plague (Lucretius is famously reticent to use Epicurus' name in the poem), Diogenes makes the connection explicit by using the verb *ἐπικουρεῖν* in the section just cited to refer to his therapeutic mission.<sup>19</sup> So the inscription and its implied praise of Epicurus should be seen both as a monument which is a medium for transmitting a *pharmakon* to a diseased population, and also a monument of thanks for the removal of past and future psychic disease. Combined with the depressing account of the spread of infectious *kenodoxia* is the assurance, embodied in a monument to the great alleviator of this plague, that all the necessary cures are readily available. This is a disease which can be beaten.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Diogenes' own circumstances as revealed on the inscription provide a good illustration of the power of the Epicurean wonder-drug. Old and decrepit, and suffering from some kind of heart or stomach complaint, Diogenes is nevertheless confident in the power of his chosen philosophical allegiance. Epicurean teaching allows one to overcome the physical pain of illness and old-age by treating the psychic disease of *kenodoxia*, of valuing things which are unnecessary and/or unnatural. Once one has learned the true nature of pleasure, one can overcome physical ailments without anxiety by recollecting past pleasures.<sup>21</sup>

The surgical metaphor is well combined with a metaphor taken from epigraphy, also in this introductory fragment. Diogenes says he has literally 'cut out' (*ἐξεκόψαμεν*, 3.VI.9) groundless pains. The surgical use of this word is common, familiar and straightforward. Those connotations here perpetuate the medical metaphor. In other contexts, however, the verb is used to describe the erasure of an inscribed name or phrase and its replacement by another.<sup>22</sup> This meaning too, especially when it is read on a monumental inscription such as this, must be relevant. Diogenes has chiseled away his former, pre-Epicurean, empty desires and fears and has replaced them with a true understanding of the world. The inscription, then, mirrors the soul of its creator, into which have been inscribed the apotropaic *pharmaka* which ward off disease and anxiety.

<sup>19</sup> Smith (n.3) 439 notes that the verb *ἐπικουρεῖν* 'is probably chosen to emphasise that the aid is to be the philosophy of Ἐπίκουρος', but does not refer this passage to the plague of *DRN* 6. Clay, 'Individual and community' (n.9) 260; id. 'A lost Epicurean community' (n.9) 319. Cf. Pl. *Rep.* 5.463b1: 'the rulers in "our" city are called σωτήρας καὶ ἐπικούρους'; *Symp.* 189d1. Diogenes also uses σωτηρία and related terms: 3, 116.. Epicurus is a κῆρυξ at *fr.* 72.III.13: Clay, 'A lost Epicurean community' (n.9) 325–6: a 'herald of personal salvation'. Cf. Democritus B288.

<sup>20</sup> Diogenes looks forward to a utopia of Epicurean sages in *fr.* 56, although 56.I.1–2 suggests that some people are unable to attain the required state. See Plutarch, *Tranq.* 465F and compare with the εὐσύγκριτοι of *fr.* 3. Above n.8.

<sup>21</sup> DL 10.22. Diogenes includes what looks like a work of his own on *Old Age* (*fr.* 137–79 in Smith's edition). *Old Age per se* is no better or worse than youth. See *SV* 17.

<sup>22</sup> Arist. *Rhet.* 2.1400a34, *SIG*<sup>3</sup> 38.38, *CIG* 3028.

It is also an *active* monument, however, since by reading it one can hope to inscribe into one's own soul the same remedies.<sup>23</sup> The Epicurean view of the world is just as permanent and indelible as the letters cut into the stone blocks, and it renders the Epicurean just as durable against the threat of pain or *kenodoxia*.

In addition to these references which can be found on the inscription itself, it is possible to outline relationships between this Epicurean inscription and two other epigraphical genres, both of which were prominent in Oinoanda around the period of Diogenes' lifetime (i.e. the first half of the second century CE).<sup>24</sup> Both honorary inscriptions to wealthy euergetists and the public display of oracular utterances were common in the city, and both are attacked by Diogenes, who offers in their stead his own particular brand of epigraphical civic relief.

The mausoleum of Opramoas of Rhodiapolis, for example, is inscribed with a large number of honorary inscriptions which this particular plutocrat received during his life. One of them advertises his benefaction of 10,000 denarii to the people of Oinoanda for the construction of a bath-house. This inscription has been dated to a period after the earthquake which perhaps shook the region in 140–1, and so it is likely to postdate Diogenes' inscription.<sup>25</sup> However, it is reasonable to think that Diogenes was deliberately inviting comparison with people such as this Opramoas when he inscribed upon his very public stoa. Smith offers this reconstruction of a very fragmentary piece of the inscription:

I declare that the [vain] fear of [death and that] of the [gods grip many] of us, [and that] joy [of real value is generated not by theatres] and [... and] baths [and perfumes] and ointments. [which we] have left to [the] masses, [but by natural science...]

2.III.4–14

Smith's reconstruction here is necessarily speculative, but one of the words certainly visible upon the stone is βαλανεῖα (2.III.11). Here, therefore, in the programmatic section of the work which explains why he has set up this monument (2.III.2–4), Diogenes could well be offering his true and useful public service in contrast to the self-serving lavish constructions of Opramoas and his like. Again, Diogenes casts himself as the true disinterested philanthropist who can provide the real cure for the problems of the city. He has avoided the lures of political ambition, which for an Epicurean are the sure sign of an incorrect evaluation of what matters

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Luc. *DRN* 3.307–22.

<sup>24</sup> For this dating, see Smith (n.5) 35–48. This was criticized by L. Canfora, 'Diogene di Enoanda e Lucrezio', *RIFC* 120 (1992) 39–66, who prefers to make Diogenes a contemporary of Lucretius. See Smith's response in 'Did Diogenes of Oinoanda know Lucretius? A reply to Professor Canfora', *RIFC* 121 (1993) 478–92, in his latest text of the inscription (n.3) 17, and 'Chisel and muse' (n.4) 68–71. Smith's dating is implicitly accepted by Gordon (n.1).

<sup>25</sup> *IGR* iii.739, *TAM* ii.3.905. R. Cagnat, *Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes* (Paris 1906) 3.298, lists the various donations made by Opramoas recorded on his mausoleum. Cf. J.J. Coulton, 'The buildings of Oinoanda', *PCPS* 29 (1983) 1–20, 10; Clay, 'A lost Epicurean community' (n.9) 320, 331; Smith (n.5) 52–3.

for human happiness, and probably betray an incorrect conception of the nature of death.<sup>26</sup> His inscription demonstrates his disinterested philanthropy and is therefore both a testament to his own achievement of true happiness and the provider of the necessary information for others to reach that same goal.

Even closer to home for Diogenes would be another enormous inscription from Oinoanda, dwarfed by Diogenes' own work but nevertheless of a remarkable size.<sup>27</sup> The Demostheneia inscription details in some 117 lines the complex regulations for the founding and administration of a set of musical competitions.<sup>28</sup> These competitions are to be named after the founder and provider of the required finances, one C. Iulius Demosthenes. Demosthenes' intentions in inaugurating these games are clearly stated. He is honoured in the inscription for his φιλοτιμία (12) and it is made clear that after the provision of subsidies to the local market, and even the erection of a new market building in the city, Demosthenes had decided on this further venture to perpetuate his name (12). This remarkably detailed inscription has been used previously in studies of Diogenes. It is the primary piece of evidence for the dating of Diogenes' inscription to the Hadrianic period, since it uses remarkably similar letter-styles.<sup>29</sup> Diogenes and Demosthenes were not only chronologically close. Indeed it is now thought that Diogenes' *stoa* was probably not far away from the market building constructed by Demosthenes.<sup>30</sup>

The Demostheneia inscription is, of course, of enormous importance for setting Diogenes' probable dates, and for the general information it provides about Oinoandan élite agonistic practices and the administration of civic affairs. But it is equally clear that the Demostheneia inscription is a symptom of just the sort of beliefs that Diogenes vigorously opposes (namely φιλοτιμία, and a desire for personal *post mortem* survival). Not only is it the case that Demosthenes offers a way of dating and siting Diogenes; he also offers a prime local and contemporary example of just the sort

<sup>26</sup> Sisyphus in Luc. *DRN* 3.995–1002 is meant to represent the futile toil of political ambition. See D.P. Fowler, 'Lucretius and politics', in M. Griffin and J. Barnes (eds.), *Philosophia Togata* 1 (Oxford 1989) 120–50.

<sup>27</sup> A third enormous inscription from Oinoanda is the near-contemporary genealogical inscription on the mausoleum of the Licinnii. See †A.S. Hall, N.P. Hilner and J.J. Coulton, 'The mausoleum of Licinna Flavilla and Flavianus Diogenes of Oinoanda: epigraphy and architecture', *AS* 46 (1996) 111–44.

<sup>28</sup> See M. Wörrle, *Stadt und Fest im kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien: Studien zu einer agonistischen Stiftung aus Oenoanda* (Munich 1988) for text and detailed commentary which sets the inscription within the political and agonistic context of second-century Oinoanda. There is an English translation and discussion in S. Mitchell, 'Festivals, games, and civic life in Roman Asia Minor', *JRS* 80 (1990) 183–93. Also see the documents collected in A. Hall and M. Milner, 'Education and athletics. Documents illustrating the festivals of Oenoanda', in D. French (ed.), *Studies in the History and Topography of Lycia and Pisidia in Memoriam A.S. Hall* (British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara Monograph 19, Oxford 1994) 7–47.

<sup>29</sup> Smith (n.5) 39–48.

<sup>30</sup> Smith (n.5) 47.

of diseased behaviour that Diogenes' inscription is designed to eradicate. Epigraphy is clearly the medium in which civic values were projected at this time, and so Diogenes uses that very medium on a gargantuan scale to offer his counter-attack.

A second epigraphical genre attacked by Diogenes is that of oracular responses, of which some examples have survived from Oinoanda. The so-called Klarian oracle was inscribed into a (perhaps disused) portion of Oinoanda's city wall and seems to refer to some kind of worship of Helios-Aither. Hall dates this to the late third century CE, so some time after Diogenes,<sup>31</sup> but there are earlier references to similar examples. Twice in his work *Alexander or the false prophet*, Lucian refers to oracles inscribed on walls (36: one used as a charm against plague, 43). Whether one thinks that these were actual inscriptions seen by Lucian (as does Clay)<sup>32</sup> depends on how one generally conceives of the historicity of this work.<sup>33</sup> I would not make such a strong claim. It suffices for my purposes to claim only that some such inscriptions were present in Diogenes' context.<sup>34</sup> If that is so, then we can set against these inscriptions those portions of Diogenes' text which explicitly attack the efficacy of divination and oracles, and indeed blame the accompanying religiosity for many of the anxieties which afflict the uneducated non-Epicurean.<sup>35</sup> Like the contemporary Epicureans in Lucian's work, Diogenes has no time for oracles and divination:

[Enough of this...] unless you think that we do not appreciate what great misfortunes some have experienced on account of this ambiguity and intricate obliqueness of oracles, or that this is the right time for us to give an explanation of the kind of disaster which the Spartans suffered.<sup>36</sup>

23.5–14

<sup>31</sup> A. Hall, 'The Klarian oracle at Oinoanda', *ZPE* 32 (1978) 263–8.

<sup>32</sup> Clay, 'A lost Epicurean community' (n.9) 332.

<sup>33</sup> U. Victor, *Lukian von Samosata; Alexandros oder der Lügenprophet* (Leiden 1997), seems equally prepared to look at it as a work of contemporary history. Cf. D. Clay, 'Lucian of Samosata: four philosophical lives', *ANRW* 2.36.5 (1992) 3406–50, 3438–48, although he recognizes that the *persona* of Lucian the narrator and the addressee Celsus (who appears to be an Epicurean: *Alex.* 61) are literary constructs to some degree. R. Bracht-Branham, *Unruly Eloquence: Lucian and the Comedy of Traditions* (Cambridge, Mass. 1989) 181–210, has a more nuanced approach to the work, avoiding an over-emphasis on historicity, but insisting that the work must still be placed within a socio-cultural as well as literary context in order to capture its satirical force.

<sup>34</sup> There was a huge 'dice oracle' inscription in nearby Termessos at roughly the same period (*TAM* iii.1.34, cf. ii.3.1222), and perhaps similar examples in Oinoanda. These inscriptions share the monumentality of Diogenes' inscription. Cf. J. Nollé, 'Südkleinasiatische Losorakel in der römischen Kaiserzeit', *AW* 18.3 (1987) 41–9.

<sup>35</sup> Gordon (n.1) 109–15.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Hdt. 1.66 for the oracle and subsequent disastrous Spartan invasion of Tegea.

Much of the surviving material of this sort specifically attacks Epicurus' atomist predecessor, Democritus, who seems to have maintained some theory of divination through dream-images.<sup>37</sup> But there is little doubt that Diogenes in the fragment just cited, and probably elsewhere too, attacked more generally the very practices that had provoked a number of the inscriptions which would have adorned the walls of Oinoanda, and perhaps even surrounded the very stoa in which his own inscription was carved.

Diogenes of Oinoanda's curious inscription is not so curious at all. There are perfectly good, perfectly Epicurean reasons why he should have undertaken to commission such a remarkable monument. It embodies the permanence and resilience of the Epicurean view of the world in a form which allows its author to retain the required indifference to active proselytizing. It furthermore attacks two major sources of human anxiety—political ambition and the fear of the supernatural—in the very physical form in which these two diseases would have been most evident to the citizens of Oinoanda.

Joyce Reynolds concluded her review of Chilton's translation and discussion of Diogenes' inscription by noting that the problems such discussion involved 'nicely illustrate the unity of scholarship—and provide an occasion for archaeologists, epigraphists, textual critics, philosophers, and historians, to co-operate'.<sup>38</sup> Much progress has been made in the study of Diogenes over the intervening years and many new fragments have been found, but this call for co-operation is still pertinent. Quite apart from the hope that it would produce a rounded, contextualized, and generally illuminating account of Diogenes, his times, and his Epicureanism, its absence has contributed to the marginalization of Diogenes to the fringes of ancient philosophy and other interested disciplines. Moreover, the concentration on the restoration of the text in order to uncover its philosophical content, while itself clearly an 'epigraphical' exercise, has tended to produce interpretations of the work which understate the importance of the imposing physical form of these fragments to the content and intentions of the work, despite Diogenes' own clear insistence on his use and manipulation of the epigraphical medium.

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<sup>37</sup> *fr.* 9–10, 52–4. P.-M. Morel, *Démocrite et la recherche des causes* (Paris 1996) 295–305.

<sup>38</sup> J. Reynolds, review of Chilton (n.8) in *The Antiquaries Journal* 54 (1974) 106–8.