

Probable Interplay: Reactions to Epicureanism and Probabilism in the Seventeenth Century

Rudolf Schuessler

Abstract: Scholastic probabilism regulated the use of opinions in much of seventeenth-century Catholic moral theology. It should therefore not come as a surprise that it also affected the acceptance of philosophical doctrines like epicureanism in Catholic countries. The ups and downs in the careers of probabilism and epicureanism in Italy are in conspicuous synch as this paper will show, with special emphasis on the Jesuit Cardinal Francesco 'Pietro' Sforza Pallavicino. Pallavicino (1607–1667) was one of the leading probabilists of his time and sympathetically discussed epicurean positions in *Del bene* (1644). Probabilism's license to favor the convenience and utility of agents in doubt about moral restrictions facilitated the adoption of epicurean attitudes, while opponents criticized probabilism for promoting the 'prudence of the flesh', a topos of longstanding anti-epicurean pedigree. The rising storm of opposition against probabilism in the second half of the seventeenth century thus contributed to a worsening of conditions for the spread of epicurean thought, with observable effects in Italy.

Probabilism was (and is) a Catholic doctrine that guides conscience and regulates the use of opinions. Epicureanism is an ancient school of philosophy whose revival in the early modern era significantly contributed to the rise of modern science and philosophy. What might the two have in common? Answering this question requires some intellectual effort to weave probabilism and neo-Epicureanism together in a narrative. At closer inspection, some contact points, nevertheless, become discernible. The moral theology of probabilism was 'pleasure-friendly', an attitude that was sharply criticized by austere opponents.¹ Moreover, the patterns of growth and resistance to both currents of thought seem to be in sync, especially when we focus on Italy. This synchronicity is hardly fortuitous. Reactions to probabilism and Epicureanism in

¹ Today, the term 'probabilism' is often associated with any kind of probabilistic reasoning. By contrast, scholastic probabilism or moral theological probabilism was a specific doctrine for the legitimate use of probable opinions based on a very different understanding of probability as plausibility or sufficient backing by reasons. When referring to probabilism in this paper, I have this scholastic doctrine in mind. On probabilism in general, see Deman (1936); Schuessler (2019); Schwartz (2019); Tutino (2018). On criticism of pleasure-friendliness, see below Section 1.

the seventeenth century seem to have been influenced by common underlying developments, which should be identified to gain a more accurate understanding, especially of the trajectory of neo-Epicureanism. Periods of flourishing and decline or of smooth expansion and strong adversity, are commonly recognized in the literature on probabilism, but are rarely addressed in the historiography of neo-Epicureanism. Negative reactions by Catholic authorities in one century are often used to claim negative Catholic attitudes toward Epicurean thought in another century.² Such practices contribute to the accepted view that the Catholic Church abhorred Epicurean thought. Notable intellectual historians have corrected this ‘black legend’ and shown that Epicurean ideas received moderate acceptance in Catholic Europe, especially in a pruned and Christianized form.³ However, this trend in the scholarship on neo-Epicureanism still falls short of addressing cycles in Catholic attitudes toward Epicurean thought. Once a periodicity in the attitudes is recognized, it becomes clear that both negative and mixed views of the relationship between Catholicism and Epicureanism have some claim to truth – but during different periods. Accounting for the influence of probabilism helps explain this periodicity.

1. *Probabilism c. 1600-1650*

Probabilism is a doctrine of Catholic moral theology that allows agents to *prima facie* translate any opinion that is plausibly backed by sufficiently good reasons into action. The doctrine is difficult to understand unless the meaning of the scholastic term “probable opinion” (*opinio probabilis*) is clarified. First, opinions are assertoric sentences held true by persons but only under the qualification that the person is not certain that the sentence is true. A lack of certainty often arose from controversies between experts (e.g. expert theologians) who held different opinions and disagreed about their truth. By the late sixteenth century, opinions were considered probable if they were buttressed by strong reasons or solid intellectual authority.⁴ That is, an opinion was probable if it had

² See, e.g. the starkly polarizing ‘Hollywood’ plot of the bestselling Greenblatt (2011), which hardly allows for nuances or ‘swerves’ in Catholic attitudes toward Epicurus or Lucretius as philosophers. For a critique, see Palmer (2020).

³ On the recovery of Epicureanism and its early-modern trajectory, including the fate of Lucretius’s *De rerum natura*, see, e.g. Hardie, Prosperi, and Zucca (2020); Gillespie and Hardie (2007); Mitsis (2020); Norbrook, Harrison, and Hardie (2016); Paganini und Tortarolo (2004); Paladini (2011); Palmer (2014); Passanante (2011); Prosperi (2004); Warren (2009); Wilson (2008). Recent scholarship has, to a considerable degree, corrected the narrative of a uniform religious opposition to Epicurean ideas, see e.g. Krayer (1990; 1999); Palmer (2014; 2020); Prosperi (2020).

⁴ ‘Opinion’ was defined in the scholastic tradition as a proposition that a person held for true while not being firmly confident about its truth (Schuessler 2019: 33). Paradigmatic examples are the

sufficient backing by reasons or authoritative voices (usually from experts in the respective field) to be regarded as true by competent evaluators, even if other competent observers considered the opinion to be wrong. For instance, a contract might have been considered usurious by some theologians but not by others. If all experts agreed that the reasons of both sides were probable, they also agreed that their opponents could reasonably adopt opposite views, resulting in what we today call reasonable disagreement. Probabilism permitted persons to *prima facie* act in accordance with any opinion considered tenable by reasonable and competent persons. It was no longer necessary, as had previously been the case, to prefer theologically risk-free opinions (“safe opinions”) or opinions deemed more likely to be true by the agent or a specific group of theologians, e.g. the ‘larger and sounder’ part (*maior et sanior pars*) of theologians. Probabilism thus significantly increased the flexibility of dealing with opinions, a fact that I will relate here to Epicurean opinions, although certain restrictions to the license to adopt any probable opinion remained in place.⁵

Probabilism became *the* predominant Catholic moral theological approach in the first half of the seventeenth century. Only very few critics came to the fore during this period, and those who did were of minor theological stature. Early modern probabilists mostly defended their approach on account of its moral and epistemological merits, but there is no space here to discuss the respective justifications in any depth. Let me just remark on why probabilism spread like wildfire in the Counter-Reformation Catholic world after 1580. Though different explanations are feasible, I will only hint at my most favored one. The risks and exigencies of religious strife, the social and economic modernization of states, and the necessity to gain and retain the allegiance of people across Europe and the world at large called for a flexible tool that allowed for negotiation rather than imposing normative guidelines on Catholic populations, princes and various networks of Catholic clerics.⁶ Probabilism was precisely such a tool. It increased the space for negotiation by expanding the range of eligible opinions, but at the price of loosening theological and moral strictures, thus considerably enhancing the permissiveness of Catholic moral theology. In fact, excessive permissiveness soon became one of the major points of criticism

opinions scholars held in scholastic debates, in which the fact of an ongoing controversy signaled the epistemologically uncertain status of opponents’ opinions which often possessed as much epistemic authority as the proponent of a claim. On the evolution of the scholastic understanding of the term ‘probable’, see Schuessler (2019), Chaps. 4 and 8.

⁵ Probabilism was, for instance, often rejected in weighty matters of faith or war, see Schwartz (2019), part 2.

⁶ On the need to negotiate rather than impose the Counter-Reformation on different groups and constituencies, see Forster (2001); Hall and Cooper (2013: 4).

against probabilism. This permissiveness, as I will argue, also facilitated acceptance of elements of Epicurean thought.

Under the auspices of the meta-norms of probabilism, aspiring neo-Epicureans no longer needed to defeat Aristotelianism and establish Epicureanism as the leading ancient philosophy. It sufficed to establish specific Epicurean claims as being tenable by reasonable persons, an acknowledged general superiority of Aristotelianism and a resulting greater probability of Aristotelian tenets notwithstanding. This did not, of course, dispense with the need to adapt Epicurean ideas to a Christian worldview. Moreover, besides this general opening that probabilism offered to all philosophical doctrines, it also displayed a specific affinity with elements of Epicureanism – or so its friends and foes alike assumed. Probabilism was often understood as permitting actions that best suited an agent’s interests, their utility, or their convenience, at least unless the course of action taken was prohibited by doubtlessly valid laws. Regardless whether the laws were juridical or moral, if it was (at least) probable, i.e. assumable from a reasonable perspective, that a law was not valid, that law was not considered binding. In this case, an agent was *ceteris paribus* free to do as she liked.

The Jesuit Juan de Salas, one of the most important early probabilists, spoke in this respect of a “right to bring about what was useful for oneself” (*ius efficiendi, quod sibi utile fuerit*) (1607: 1205). Antonio Perez claims in his *Laurea Salmantina* that one might prefer a probable opinion “out of convenience” (*ratione commodi*) (1604: 562). Francisco Suárez also considered it prudent when in doubt to choose what is least inconvenient (*id esse agendum, quod iuxta materiae exigentiam, et negotii qualitatem minorem habet incommoda*) (1740: 263). ‘Convenient’ here most likely signifies that having the choice of a less probable opinion can facilitate collaboration in a committee or organization, precluding persons from becoming troublemakers who inflexibly insist on decisions they deem to be the most probably best.⁷ However, as anti-probabilist critics point out (see the case of Baron below), probabilist convenience was considered to have a broader sweep, sometimes becoming associated with pleasure-seeking. In any case, the quotes cited so far document that probabilists used the language of interest, utility, and convenience to make their point. Motives of self-interest or convenience could legitimately prevail if countervailing moral obligations did not qualify as binding; they were only binding if the cognition of their validity exceeded a very demanding epistemic threshold (if it reached moral certainty, *certitudo moralis*). It is therefore of relevance that the language of interest, utility, or convenience was also associated with neo-Epicureanism

⁷ See especially the literature on the highly-developed Spanish ‘polysynodal’ council system (Reinhardt 2016: 26).

in the early modern era. Probabilism and neo-Epicureanism thus seemed to share some common ground. This nexus did not elude the opponents of probabilism, once they began gaining influence in the second half of the seventeenth century. The theologian Vincent Baron emphasized that he did not want to impugn all probable opinions but only those that favored pleasure (*voluptas*) and convenience over duty and salvation.⁸ The implication is that probabilists err by ascribing too much moral weight to *voluptas*. The Jesuit Superior General Tirso González, a staunch enemy of probabilism, declared that probabilism could only be motivated by “prudence of the flesh”, a vice traditionally associated with Epicureanism.⁹

Against this background, it appears plausible that the uninhibited flourishing of probabilism in the first half of the seventeenth century helped create a propitious climate for the rise of neo-Epicureanism in the Catholic world. In fact, we find a Europe-wide boom of scholarly attention, combined with broadening social acceptance, for Epicureanism in the first half of the seventeenth century. In the following, we will mainly focus on Italy, France, and England in this respect. Therefore, a few words on probabilism in Italy and France appear appropriate (England being Protestant is a more complicated case with respect to probabilism, which cannot be discussed here).¹⁰ Probabilism reached its apogee in Rome under Pope Urban VIII, with members of the Theatine Order rivaling the established Jesuits of the Collegio Romano in influence and acumen in the development and application of this doctrine. In Cardinal Richelieu’s France, probabilism also flourished.¹¹ Notably, as we will see, the Barberini and Richelieu promoted or at least tolerated probings into Christianized Epicurean thought.

⁸ “Probabilia quaecumque non displicere, sed ea tantum, quae voluptati et commodo favent, contra officium et salute” (Baron 1677: 20).

⁹ “Uterius ostenditur, nullam aliam reperiri posse in sectanda sententia minus tuta, quando oppositum apparet operanti manifeste verisimilior, nisi prudentiam carnis” (Gonzalez 1694: 56).

¹⁰ Probabilism has so far understandably only been peripherally touched by historical accounts of Protestant moral theology and casuistry in England (see, e.g. Holmes 1981 and 2012, Sedgwick 2019), since there were no English Protestant probabilists. At best, Jeremy Taylor’s opposition to probabilism can be highlighted (Sedgwick 2019: 330). However, the probabilism of English Jesuits, and most notably Anthony Terill (an alias for Bonville), may also count as English theology, not least because of its possible political implications for England. Terill was one of the most important probabilists (see Schuessler 2019, Chap. 10), who stood in close contact with prominent Catholics at the court of Charles II. Whether Terill’s probabilism rendered it easier for the husband of Barbara Villiers, Countess of Castlemaine and mistress of Charles II, to acquiesce in her role as a supposed Catholic ‘honey trap’ for the English king is not a moot question. Terill dedicated his main work of moral theology to Roger Palmer, Earl of Castlemaine, the said husband.

¹¹ On probabilism under the Barberini and in early seventeenth-century France, see Burgio (1998: 17); Gay (2018); Schuessler (2019: 110).

2. *Epicureanism c. 1600-1650*

It is widely recognized that neo-Epicureanism ‘took off’ as a major current of early modern thought in the 1640s (Butterfield 2016; Kargon 1964; Kors 2016; Kraye 1999; Paganini 2020). Pierre Gassendi published his *De vita et moribus Epicuri* in 1647, followed by his *Syntagma* and *Animadversiones* on Epicurus’s philosophy in 1649. Gassendi’s Epicurean books mark a major and successful attempt to promote Epicurus’s philosophy in a suitably Christianized version as a basis for the modernization of Christian philosophy. His postulations subsequently became a reference point for the growing interest in Epicurean thought. Together with Cartesianism, Gassendism became one of the leading alternatives to a scholastic-Aristotelian worldview (Lennon 1993; LoLordo 2006). Further works on Epicurus and his main Roman spokesman Lucretius soon began to appear in France. Michel de Marolles published a translation of Lucretius’s *De rerum natura* in 1650. Saint-Evremonde wrote an essay on Epicurus’s ethics in 1684, although a manuscript was already available and had been pirated in print in 1668. François Bernier published his *Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendi* in 1684.

In England, Lucy Hutchinson very likely began her translation of Lucretius in the 1650s. It was circulated in manuscript by 1675.¹² Francis Bacon’s Lucretius-inspired *Cogitationes de natura rerum* appeared in 1653, although they had been written in 1604. Walter Charleton’s Epicurean physiology was printed in 1654, and John Evelyn published an essay on the first book of Lucretius in 1656. Hobbes’s mechanistic philosophy and ethics, which is ostensibly influenced by Epicurean thought, was circulated as early as 1640. Moreover, Hobbes, like many other English Epicurean sympathizers, travelled to France and found likeminded personages there. Hobbes befriended Gassendi when they met in 1640.¹³ During the English Civil War, Hobbes and many of the English Epicureans went into exile in France, often with long intermittent stays in Italy, mingling with neo-Epicureans on the continent (Raylor 2010).

Finally, Epicurean thought not only proved attractive to scholars but became fashionable in English court circles and among the aristocracy at large (Gillespie 2007). A pictorial program in a house of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle and Hobbes’s patron, shows pleasure reconciled with virtue.¹⁴ Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, not particularly fond of the Cavendishes, and one

¹² On Hutchinson, see: Norbrook (2015); on Charleton see Kargon (1964); Walters (2020); on Evelyn, see Darley (2006).

¹³ On Hobbes and Gassendi, see, e.g., LoLordo (2006: 10); Paganini (2020).

¹⁴ On the pictorial program, see Raylor (1999). On the Epicurean tendencies in the Cavendish circles, see Barbour (1998: 38); Sarasohn (2011); Walters (2020).

of the most important political movers under the Stuart Restoration, begins the first of his essays with reflections on Epicurus. There are further allusions to Epicurean thought in his essays on happiness and friendship. In one of Clarendon's houses, an inscription bore the quintessential Epicurean motto "Whoever hides well, lives well" (*Bene vixit, qui bene latuit*) (Craig 1911: 303).

The attitudes such examples document antedate the neo-Epicurean writings of Gassendi and can be traced to the court culture under the first Stuart king James I (Barbour 1998, Norbrook 2016). Thus, the assumption of Gassendi's Epicurean writings becoming a watershed for interest in Epicureanism appears misleading because much interest already existed before them. English travel on the continent, which had been instigated by the rise of the Grand Tour in the late sixteenth century, surged again in the 1630s after James II had mended relations with the Catholic great powers.¹⁵ It is therefore of relevance that Gassendi, whose thought was approachable through the intellectual networks of Peiresc and Mersenne, had already set out to work on Epicurus in 1626 (LoLordo 2006: 11). Other noted *libertins* documented related preferences. François La Mothe le Vayer published an Epicurus-friendly chapter in his *De la vertu des payens* in 1641, well before Gassendi's books on Epicurus appeared. Hence, Gassendi was not alone in fostering a revival of Epicurean thought in France, although others, such as La Mothe le Vayer, may have done so as part of an (even) more eclectic endeavor. In a book from 1626, Jean de Silhon (1596-1667), a founding member of the *Academie Française* and a political writer in the service of Richelieu, remarks that the school of Epicurus, who regarded the soul as mortal, has undergone a revival (1626: 410).

It is often believed that Gassendi ran a considerable personal risk of persecution by promoting Epicurus in Catholic France. However, the more recent research literature tempers this view more than just a bit. Gassendi was well-integrated in the clientele system of the powerful first minister of France, Cardinal Richelieu. Alphonse de Richelieu, the cardinal's brother, supported Gassendi from the 1620s onward.¹⁶ Together with other *libertins* like La Mothe le Vayer, Gassendi belonged to the intellectual coterie of Peiresc and Mersenne which flourished under Richelieu's protection (and supplied him with political information).¹⁷ Several *libertins* wrote political pamphlets and treatises for

¹⁵ See Raylor (2010: 23) and Dixon Hunt (1986: 8), who note the effect of increased travel on English garden culture.

¹⁶ See LoLordo (2006: 14) on Alphonse de Richelieu.

¹⁷ Peiresc's vast network of correspondents in Italy apparently not least served the purpose of keeping the powerful first minister of France informed about trends of opinion abroad. Miller (2000: 80) seems surprised that Peiresc avidly collected documents on the Valtellina, an activity that becomes intelligible against the background of Richelieu's Valtellina War of 1620-1626. Ford (2007)

Richelieu, which indicates that they should hardly be regarded as subversive dissidents in a modern sense. This is not to say that Catholic hardliners, who loathed the relative intellectual openness of the *libertins* and the milieu surrounding Richelieu, might not have longed to persecute authors who toyed with Epicurean or skeptical ideas, but Richelieu knew how to protect his flock, and much of the intellectual openness he tolerated continued under his chosen successor Mazarin.¹⁸

Protection by powerful patrons or networks goes a long way in explaining relative intellectual openness in early modern Europe, whether Catholic or Protestant. It is important in this respect that around the same time as Gassendi prospered under Richelieu, Urban VIII allowed Christianized Epicureanism to flourish in Rome. The Roman intellectuals who came to be linked to the Barberini papacy in the 1620s were quite open to Hellenistic trends of thought (see Section 2.1). Moreover, this scene was closely connected to the larger European one. The pro-French leanings of Urban VIII are well-known, and the collaboration between the Barberini and Richelieu had an important intellectual element.¹⁹ Key players from the intellectual circle around Richelieu mingled with clients of the Barberini and sometimes resided in Rome for prolonged sojourns. Gabriel Naudé offers a case in point.²⁰ Moreover, an increasing number of English aristocrats and intellectuals flocked to Italy in the 1630s. More than a few of them (mostly future royalists in the English civil war) had Epicurean inclinations. Hobbes is now the most famous among these travelers, but Kenelm Digby and John Evelyn are also prominent figures, both targets of attempted conversion by Catholic hosts.²¹

It should not axiomatically be assumed that these hosts must have been hostile toward the Epicurean leanings of their guests. Urban VIII and his nephew Francesco apparently condoned translations of Lucretius *De rerum natura* by

discusses the link between the early seventeenth-century French *libertins* and Lucretius. He does not, however, address the importance of La Mothe le Vayer.

¹⁸ The claim that probabilism helped prevent the persecution of free-thinking early modern French *libertins* should not be taken to imply that the *libertins* themselves approved of probabilism. Naudé, for instance, seems to have abhorred the laxity of contemporary casuists (see Pintard 1983: 561). Similarly, morally conservative attitudes can be found in La Mothe le Vayer, or in Bayle, their heir.

¹⁹ On Barberini policies, especially with respect to culture, see, e.g. Onori Mochi and Arcangeli (2007); Rietbergen (2006).

²⁰ Gabriel Naudé (1600-1653) became librarian of Cardinal Guidi di Bagno in 1629 and then of Cardinal Francesco Barberini in 1641. Richelieu died too soon to for Naudé to become, as planned, his librarian, and Naudé returned to France to establish the famous library of Giulio Mazarini, Richelieu's self-chosen successor. On Naudé, see Bianchi (1996); Rice (1939). On his role in the development of 'reason of state' doctrines in France under Richelieu, see, e.g. Thuau (2000: 319).

²¹ See Barbour (1998: 266, 272); Darley (2006: 58, 102).

their medical doctors.²² Even if nothing came of these projects, the intellectual atmosphere in Italy was not notably less friendly toward Epicurean thought than in France and England. In 1644, Francesco ‘Pietro’ Sforza Pallavicino, then a Jesuit professor of philosophy at the *Collegio Romano* and later a cardinal of the Catholic Church, published his work *Del bene* in Rome. *Del bene* contains extensive discussions of Epicurean ethics and natural philosophy, some elements of which are accepted by the author (see Section 2.1).

In 1647, Giovanni Nardi published a newly commented edition of Lucretius’ *De rerum natura* in Florence.²³ Nardi had been the personal physician of Grand Duke Ferdinand II and possessed a keen interest in the new sciences. His edition of Lucretius was the first to be published in Italy since 1515, and it came with a number of clerical endorsements. An apostolic protonotary and a Jesuit consultant of the Inquisition approved of the book. More importantly, and this often remains unnoted by scholars discussing Nardi, the book is dedicated to Maximilian I of Bavaria. Maximilian was the quintessential Counter-Reformation prince, if there ever was one (Bireley 1990: 154). The fact that it was possible to dedicate a commented edition of Lucretius to this man shows that the assumption of strict incompatibility between neo-Epicurean and Counter-Reformationist attitudes is far too simplistic.

Of course, both Nardi’s and Pallavicino’s books appeared after the death of Urban VIII, but it would be wrong to dissociate them from the intellectual atmosphere that had emerged under his pontificate. Many of the prelates and cardinals which had risen to power under Urban VIII showed some interest in new trends of thought and remained influential for one or two decades following his death.²⁴ Giovanni Delfino (1617-1699) still wrote Lucretius-inspired philosophical dialogues under Pope Alexander VII. Delfino became Bishop of Tagaste in 1656 and a cardinal in 1667 (Sarnelli 2020). Of course, it had long been possible in Catholic Italy to appreciate Lucretius for his literary and rhetorical qualities. In a letter dated 1557, Michele Ghisleri, soon to become Pope Pius V, rejected a ban on ancient poets, including Lucretius. Among the Jesuits, professors of rhetoric were apparently the first to show an interest in Lucretius.

²² Alsario della Croce, physician of Urban VIII, wrote a now lost commentary on Lucretius; Nardi dedicated his edition of *De rerum natura* to Baldo Baldi, Urban VIII’s physician (Beretta 2009: 7, 10).

²³ On Nardi, see Andretta (2012); Beretta (2009: 10); Butterfield (2016: 10); Palmer (2020: 185).

²⁴ A good example of such a cardinal is the staunchly pro-probabilist Francesco Albizzi (1593-1684). Albizzi was an assessor of the Holy Office for many years and thus managed the Inquisition’s day-to-day business. It is important to note that he tried to stifle the bouts of witch hunting that erupted during his times. Ceysens (1977) paints a rather unsympathetic picture of Albizzi, not least because Albizzi supported the persecution of Jansenists. Yet, his attempts to hold movements he considered fundamentalist at bay fit the picture of Albizzi as a moderate modernizer.

Tarquinio Galluzzi, a Virgil expert, remarks that Virgil learned from Lucretius. Famiano Strada, professor of rhetoric at the Collegio Romano from 1618 to 1647, praises Lucretius's style. It therefore comes as no surprise that the Jesuit Antonio Possevino takes a rather positive attitude toward Lucretius as a poet in his highly influential *Bibliotheca selecta*, even permitting the use of Lucretius in the classroom if suitably purged.²⁵

Such friendly attitudes, as noted by many scholars, seem to only extend to Lucretius the poet, not Lucretius the Epicurean philosopher. It is remarkable precisely for this reason that the aforementioned books, which appeared in Rome and Florence in the 1640s, discuss the philosophical side of Epicureanism and Lucretius. Pallavicino's *Del bene* was even conceived in the *Collegio Romano*, the intellectual center of the Jesuit Order. Moreover, *Del bene* demonstrates that it was possible to publicly discuss Epicurean philosophy in Italian and not only in Latin, which would have restricted the discussion to safer intellectual circles. Let us therefore inspect Pallavicino's *Del bene* a bit more closely.

2.1. Pallavicino's *Del bene* and Epicureanism

Francesco 'Pietro' Sforza Pallavicino (1607-1667) is a particularly interesting thinker in the present context, because he combines a footing in the Galilean (and Lucretius-inspired) new science of the *Accademia dei Lincei*, with a sterling pedigree as one of the most important Jesuit scholastic theologians of his time.²⁶ He was also an ingenious theorist of moral probabilism. In *Del bene*, he critically investigates Hellenistic philosophies, with a special emphasis on Epicureanism and Pyrrhonian skepticism. Pallavicino's theory of the human natural good (i.e. the good bereft of a theological dimension) may, as I will argue, be understood as intellectual hedonism and thus as a Christianized form of Epicureanism or at least as an eclectic position with significant Christian Epicurean elements.

In his youth, the intellectually precocious Pallavicino became a member of

²⁵ On Ghisleri, see Galluzzi (1621: 118); Palmer (2020: 179); on Strada see Passannante (2011: 1); on Possevino, see Paladini (2011: 181). Prosperi (2007: 215) emphasizes Possevino's hostility toward Epicureanism and assumes a 'dissimulatory code' behind the uses of Lucretius in Counter-Reformation Italy. I am not convinced that dissimulation rather than a sincere assumption of a limited and if necessary curtailed acceptability of Lucretius in Christian culture characterizes the reception of Lucretius in early modern Italy (see, e.g. Palmer 2020).

²⁶ On Pallavicino, see Delbeke (2012; forthcoming); Favino (2014). Pallavicino, as I will call him for short, is referred to by different first names in the academic literature. His baptismal first names were Francesco Maria Sforza (the last also being used as a first name). Ever since the nineteenth century, and in much of the recent literature, Pallavicino has mostly been referred to as Pietro Sforza Pallavicino. To avoid confusion that Francesco and Pietro Sforza Pallavicino are two different persons, I have inserted 'Pietro', Pallavicino's best known but spurious first name, after 'Francesco', his true first name. On the naming issue, see Favino (2014).

the *Accademia dei Lincei* and a follower of Galilei. He was banned from Rome by Pope Urban VIII in 1632 for this reason. In 1637, Pallavicino returned to Rome and joined the Jesuit Order, soon becoming a professor of philosophy and later teaching theology at the Order's Roman College. In 1659, he was raised to the cardinalate by his lifelong friend Fabio Chigi, by then Pope Alexander VII. Pallavicino is best known as having authored the *History of the Council of Trent* (1656-1657), but his intellectual spectrum was vast, and included important work on art theory in collaboration with Gian Lorenzo Bernini (Delbeke 2012). In terms of moral theology, Pallavicino remained a probabilist for a long time (if not until the end), contributing significantly to the development of the scholastic discourse of probability.²⁷ At the same time, he never fully abandoned the views of his youth, which is apparent in the quadrilogue *Del bene* (1644; 1646, as *De bono* in Latin).

Del bene offers a glimpse into the intellectual debates of Rome's literate society in the early seventeenth century, of which the four interlocutors of the book were elite members. Alessandro Orsini (1592-1626), a scion of the ancient and noble Orsini of Bracciano, became cardinal in 1615, and at the same time was a patron of Galilei and a friend of the Jesuit Order (Famiano Strada dedicated a book to Alessandro Orsini).²⁸ He probably died too young for his own intellectual activities to leave a deeper mark. Antonio Querenghi (or Quarenghi, 1546-1633) was a notable poet and antiquarian. Like the young Pallavicino, Querenghi was also a member of the *Accademia degli Umoristi*, which strove to renovate Italian poetry under the aegis of the Barberini. Gerardo Saraceni was apparently a descendant of the noble and influential Saraceni family of Siena. I could not ascertain his role in the intellectual circles within which Pallavicino moved. Andreas Eudaemon-Joannis (or Eudaemoniannes, 1566-1625) was a Greek philosopher and theological controversialist, who joined the Jesuit Order in 1581, becoming a confidant of Roberto Bellarmino. He taught philosophy at the *Roman College* in the 1590s, later acquiring prominence as an anti-protestant polemicist and theological advisor of Francesco Barberini on the latter's French legation. Eudaemon-Joannis joins the discussion of *Del bene* in book two, whereas the other personages participated from the outset.

The fictional quadrilogue of these interlocutors is set after 1615 (Orsini is addressed as cardinal) and before 1625 (Eudaemon-Joannis's death). Pallavicino's plot thus implies that the Hellenistic philosophies, which the book addresses, were intensely and quite openly discussed in Rome during this decade, includ-

²⁷ See Knebel (2000: 111, 415, and many other references to Pallavicino); Schuessler (2019: 174, 459); Tutino (2018: 244).

²⁸ On the interlocutors, see the respective entries in the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*.

ing clerical circles and the Jesuits. We will only focus here on the sympathetic treatment of Epicureanism in *Del bene*, which suggests that receptiveness to this school of thought was not anathema in Rome at the time. This, of course, is not to say that any of the interlocutors would have accepted Epicurean doctrines without Christian ‘circumcision’ (to use a term of François de la Mothe le Vayer). Nevertheless, an open-minded discussion of Epicurean ideas seems not only to have been possible in the decade 1615-25, but generally throughout the subsequent Barberini papacy.

Epicurus, the Epicureans, and Lucretius are mainly treated in three long passages of books one, two, and four of *Del bene*. Two of the discussions focus on Epicurean ethics, one on atomism (often with reference to Democritus) and randomness in Epicurean physics. Pallavicino’s attitude towards Epicurean tenets is surprisingly amenable. On the one hand, he regards Epicurus as a quintessential promoter of a conception of sensual pleasure as the highest natural good, a conception he rejects, replacing it with intellectual pleasure as natural *summum bonum*. Being, thought, and joy (*diletto*) emerge as the three main natural goods in Pallavicino’s approach. Nevertheless, he admits that sensual pleasure and pain contribute or detract from the human good, especially through their impact on calmness of mind and absence of pain, which are prerequisites for unhindered intellectual activity. Pallavicino’s views on animal suffering document that sensual pleasure has at least some value of its own as a natural good. According to him, even the pleasures and pains of animals matter morally, although only slightly (Pallavicino 1644: 97).

In contrast to Epicurean ethics, Stoic ethics gets rather bad press in *Del bene*. Stoic teachings are more briefly discussed than Epicureanism or Pyrrhonian skepticism, and Pallavicino has Orsini quip that the Stoics were the Lutherans and Calvinists of the heathens.²⁹ In the summary of book two, Pallavicino maintains that Stoic philosophy is not merely wrong but pestilential.³⁰ With respect to Epicurus, by contrast, Pallavicino uses the classical defense that although Epicurus has been much maligned, Seneca speaks well of him. Moreover, Alessandro Orsini leans heavily towards Epicureanism. After defending the possibility that the world, with all its meaningful and machine-like order, could have come about by chance, Orsini confesses: “In sum, I am in great part an Epicurean, yesterday [i.e. the discussions of book one] in ethics, today [i.e. the discussions of book two] in physics”.³¹ Orsini’s defense of Epicurean

²⁹ “[F]urono, si può dire, i Luterani, e i Calvinisti del gentilesimo” (Pallavicino 1644: 309).

³⁰ “La filosofia degli Stoici non solo è falsa, mà pestilente” (Pallavicino 1644: 317).

³¹ “In sommo io son grandemente Epicureo, ieri nella morale, oggi nella fisica” (Pallavicino 1644: 264).

(and Lucretian) ideas on the gestation of the world through particle movement and swerve is based on ingenious statistical reasoning from the cutting edge of mid-seventeenth-century scholastic probability theory.³² On the basis of seventeenth-century forays into combinatorics, Pallavicino points out that any combination of atoms is as probable as any other combination. It is equally likely that a random alignment of letters produces the *Iliad* or that it results in a particular meaningless mess of letters. Apparent intelligent design is therefore not proof of intelligent planning. However, this argument is later countered by another statistical argument brought forward by the interlocutor Antonio Querenghi. The more elements a meaningful whole consists of, the more unlikely it is that it came about merely by chance. Thus, the artful composition of the universe prevails at the end. Yet the fact that a Jesuit professor at the *Collegio Romano* could write and publish a book in the 1640s in which a Catholic cardinal professes to largely hold Epicurean views demonstrates that fierce opposition to this brand of thought cannot have been as deeply entrenched in Rome and among the Jesuits as is often purported. Cardinal Alessandro Orsini was a historical figure, and Pallavicino would hardly have dared to impute a pro-Epicurean stance to him if such a position had been too far from the truth. Moreover, Pallavicino's own ethics of natural happiness is a form of hedonism, and although he takes care to delimit his intellectual hedonism from an (alleged) Epicurean hedonism of the senses, he accepts elements from Epicurus's doctrine. For Pallavicino, natural happiness is joy or pleasure (*gaudio, diletto*) derived from a structured aggregate of natural goods. These consist of three principal internal natural goods (being, knowing, and enjoying/*essere, conoscere, dilettersi*), two external natural goods (love and honor), one moral good (right action), and a negative natural good (absence of badness) with five dimensions (absence of error, pain, guilt, hate, dishonor) (1644: 489). The extent of a person's natural happiness results from the balance of *diletto* deriving from the aggregate of these goods. Knowledge is the greatest human good, contributing the best, most efficacious, and most durable pleasure. Since in Pallavicino's view, Epicurus regarded sensual pleasures as the highest good, such an appreciation of intellectual pleasures was not Epicurean, an assessment that stands to be corrected if we acknowledge that Epicurus, in fact, exalted intellectual pleasures. In any case, Pallavicino views absence of bodily pain as a practical precondition for the enjoyment of intellectual pleasures. Andreas Eudaemon-Joannis accordingly concludes "in part against and in part in favor" of the "Epicurean sect" that the pleasures of the senses contribute only minimally to our happiness, but sensual pain represents

³² On Pallavicino's contribution to statistical reasoning in moral theology, see Knebel (2000); Schuessler (2019), Chap. 12.

a great part of our misery.³³ Absence of pain is therefore an important element of Pallavicino's conception of natural happiness, and this element is associated with Epicurus in *Del bene*.

Finally, Pallavicino's initial statistical defense of a random constitution of the universe provides direct evidence of how new developments in the scholastic discourse of probability, which to a considerable extent were motivated by the debate on probabilism in moral theology, could become relevant for the evaluation of ancient philosophies. In a first run of his argument, Pallavicino undercuts a central objection against Epicurean physics, namely that it cannot explain the observable order of the universe. Even in light of the final counter-argument, Epicurean physics is not defeated by traditional Aristotelian assumptions, but by new possibilities inherent in the scholastic discourse of probability. Epicurus thus emerges as an interesting sparring partner for new currents of Catholic thought. This further corroborates that Gassendi's endorsement of a Christianized form of Epicureanism was neither as subversive nor as risky as is often claimed.

3. *Probabilism c. 1650-1700 and Epicureanism in Italy*

Broader opposition against probabilism began to surface in the 1640s, reaching new heights after 1656, when Blaise Pascal's *Provincial Letters* instigated a storm of indignation, and the Dominican Order dissociated itself from probabilism.³⁴ Thereafter, probabilism became highly controversial among Catholic moral theologians.

There are many reasons for the rise of opposition against probabilism after 1640. Jansenism became an influential albeit controversial current of Catholic thought after this date, and the austere morality of the Jansenists as well as their psychological pessimism proved incompatible with probabilism. Jansenists such as Blaise Pascal and Antoine Arnauld, surely in self-defense, conducted a veritable propaganda campaign against probabilism and the Jesuits, the order with which probabilism was most closely associated (see, e.g. Radner 2016). As evidenced by the bestseller status of Pascal's *Provincial Letters*, this campaign was tremendously successful and caused many lukewarm supporters of probabilism to duck and take cover. It should be noted, however, that enthusiasm for probabilism had already cooled at the curia in Rome before Pascal's polemic

³³ "Per tanto io inferisco quest'ultima conclusione, in parte contraria, in parte favorevole alla seta Epicurea. I diletti del senso tengono una piccola porzione della nostra felicità; ma il dolore del senso è gran porzione della nostra miseria" (Pallavicino 1644: 592).

³⁴ On the Catholic opposition to probabilism, see Deman (1936: 501); Gay (2012); Schuessler (2019), Chap. 8; Tutino (2018), Chap. 6.

unfolded. Alexander VII took an ambivalent stance towards the doctrine, and both friends and foes of probabilism were well-balanced among his collaborators.³⁵ Catholic enemies of probabilism often claim that Pallavicino himself, one of the most important probabilists of the mid-seventeenth century, finally reneged on probabilism in his later years, that is, after his friend Fabio Chigi had become Pope Alexander VII (see Döllinger and Reusch, Vol. 1 1889: 52; Schuessler 2019: 130). In my opinion, the end of the Thirty Years War plays a significant role in this reversal of fortune. Probabilism seems to have been clearly advantageous for the Catholic Church and Catholic princes as long as they prioritized the allegiance of populations to their war effort more than the moral quality of said populations. After territories had become confessionally determined by the Thirty Years War, the task of moral theology shifted. Princes and Catholic hierarchs increasingly began to focus on the moral improvement of populations instead of merely securing their allegiance. Where such concerns gained the upper hand (and this did not happen everywhere in the Catholic World at the same time and to the same degree), promoters of a more rigorous moralization managed to roll back probabilism and the intellectual openness it had helped spawn.

Even notable theologians of the Jesuit Order, the former epicenter of probabilism, began to oppose the doctrine in the 1670s. It deserves to be noted, however, that none of these attacks managed to fully silence probabilism in Catholic moral theology. Even the resolutely antiprobabilist campaign by the Superior General of the Jesuit Order, Tirso González, in the 1690s did not suffice to dissociate the Jesuits from probabilism (Gay 2012). Many late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Catholic moral theologians remained probabilists, and in some regions, probabilism continued to thrive, spearheaded as usually by Jesuits (see De Franceschi 2020; Schuessler 2019: 141; Tutino 2018: 351). Still, the storm of opposition against probabilism in the late seventeenth century took its toll. It seriously weakened the support controversial moral and philosophical opinions could derive from Catholic moral theology. The permission to favor one's own convenience and utility over uncertain moral laws was now being condemned as pernicious. The opponents of probabilism demanded good Christians to prioritize moral law over their private predilections when they were in doubt about the applicability of the former. This view, of course, limited the scope of legitimate Epicurean pleasure-seeking.

A sequence of papal condemnations of permissive moral views bears witness to the strength of antiprobabilist sentiments. Pope Alexander VII issued a condemnation of lax moral sentences in 1665-1666 and Innocent XI denounced

³⁵ For probabilists and anti-probabilists around Alexander VII, see Ceysens (1977).

further sentences in 1679 (Quantin 2002). Both condemnations were deemed a blow to probabilism. In fact, Innocent XI (1611-89) lashed out against many writings that failed to correspond to his austere worldview. It is hardly coincidental that Montaigne's *Essais* were included in the index of prohibited books in 1676 after having been considered permissible and enjoyable reading for Catholics for nearly a century (see Smith 1981: 114).³⁶

Although attacks on probabilism weakened some props of hedonistic or Epicurean views, they did not uniformly determine the fate of such views in the Catholic world. In France, where probabilism was in retreat during the second half of the seventeenth century, propitious conditions apparently contributed to a greater resilience of and even progress in Epicurean thought. Gassendi was a French thinker and his international repute reflected positively on French philosophy. Moreover, Cartesian natural philosophy may have indirectly strengthened Epicureanism, from which its mechanistic worldview derived.³⁷ In Italy, probabilism proved more resilient than in France, but Epicurean thought diminished further in the second half of the seventeenth century, probably because papal antiprobabilism had a more direct impact. Between 1664 and 1667, Alessandro Marchetti worked on a translation of Lucretius' *De rerum natura*.³⁸ His translation benefitted from the earlier, favorable attitude toward atomistic thought in the *Accademia del Cimento*, whose patron Leopoldo de' Medici avidly supported the new sciences. When Marchetti finalized his translation in 1667 (when lax moral opinions had just been condemned) and asked Leopoldo for permission to publish it, his request was denied. Leopoldo was elevated to the cardinalate in the same year and reversed his former intellectual policies. The impact on the discussion of Epicureanism in Tuscany was immediate. Grand Duke Cosimo III made the publication of Marchetti's translation of Lucretius dependent on assent by the Holy Office in Rome, which was not forthcoming. In 1691, he banned the teaching of atomism at the University of Pisa. Marchetti's work was finally published in 1717 in London. In Rome, it was duly included in the index of prohibited books a year later.³⁹

The fate of Marchetti's translation should not be regarded as proof of a sustained centuries-long aversion against Epicurean thought in Italy. It should rather be understood in the context of mood swings between openness and conservatism in Italian intellectual centers. We should not expect synchronous swings

³⁶ On Montaigne's relationship to Epicureanism and Lucretius, in particular, see Ford (2007).

³⁷ On Epicureanism in France in the second half of the seventeenth century, see Kors (2016); Kraye (1999).

³⁸ On Marchetti's translation and the following developments, see Beretta (2009); Costa (2012); Palmer (2020: 185).

³⁹ See Beretta (2009); Costa (2012).

for the entire Catholic Church, whose position was rarely monolithic in the early modern era. Cycles of tolerance for and opposition to philosophical doctrines resulted much more from temporary changes in the balance of power and influence of competing power networks within the Catholic Church. Networks of probabilists and antiprobabilists played an important role in this respect.

4. *Conclusion*

This paper has shown that the ups and downs of two major intellectual currents in seventeenth-century Catholic Europe were in partial sync, and not fortuitously. Probabilism facilitated the spread of Epicurean ideas in Catholic Europe. Since probabilism was a general moral theological framework for dealing with controversial opinions, the flourishing of this doctrine in the first half of the seventeenth century affected intellectual activities far beyond the narrow confines of scholastic theology. The probabilist license to prioritize one's own utility or convenience under moral uncertainty facilitated the spread of Epicurean ideas in centers of probabilist theology such as Italy and France. In the first half of the seventeenth century, Epicurean and Lucretian philosophy could, in fact, be sympathetically discussed during the hightide of probabilism.

The acrimonious criticism of probabilism in the second half of the seventeenth century therefore had a restrictive effect. In Italy, it seems to have obstructed the spread of Epicurean ideas. In France, the outcome was different. Although opposition to probabilism became more powerful in Louis's XIV France than in Italy, a host of countervailing trends can be observed. Gassendi was a French thinker, and Cartesianism, the second new school of thought in France, promoted mechanism in natural science. The pronounced rise of a new scientific worldview in France may therefore have compensated neo-Epicureans for the decreased protection offered by probabilism.

Rudolf Schuessler
University of Bayreuth
rudolf.schuessler@uni-bayreuth.de

References

1. Primary sources

- Baron, Vincent, 1667, *Theologia moralis adversus laxiores probabilistas*, Balleoni, Venice.
- Galluzzi, Tarquinio, 1621, *Virgilianae vindicationes*, Alexandro Zannetti, Rome.
- Gonzalez, Tirso, 1694, *Fundamentum theologiae moralis, id est tractatus theologicus de recto usu opinionum probabilium*, Jacob Komarek, Rome.
- Pallavicino, Francesco Pietro Sforza, 1644, *Del bene libri quattro*, Francesco Corbelletti, Rome.
- Perez, Antonio OSB, 1604, *Laurea Salmantina*, Taberniel, Salamanca.
- Salas, Juan de., 1607, *Disputationes in Primam Secundae Divi Thomae*, Graells and Dutil, Barcelona.
- Silhon, Jean de, 1626, *Les deux vérités de Silhon*, Laurent Sonnius, Paris.
- Suárez, Francisco, 1856, “De Bonitate et malitia humanorum actuum”, in *Opera omnia*, 4, Vives, Paris.

2. Studies

- Andretta, Elisa, 2012, “Nardi, Giovanni”, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 77. Available at: www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-nardi (Accessed: 19 March 2021).
- Barbour, Reid, 1998, *English Epicures and Stoics. Ancient legacies in early Stuart culture*, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, MA.
- Beretta, Marco, 2008, “Gli scienziati e l’edizione del *De rerum natura*”, in Marco Beretta and Francesco Citti, eds., *Lucrezio. La natura e la scienza*, Olschki, Florence: 184-191.
- , 2009, “Lucretius as hidden auctoritas of the Cimento”, in Marco Beretta, Antonio Clericuzio, and Lawrence Principe, eds., *The Accademia del Cimento and its European Context*, Science History Publications, Sagamore Beach, MA: 1-18.
- Bianchi, Lorenzo, 1996, *Rinascimento e libertinismo: Studi su Gabriel Naudé*, Bibliopolis, Naples.
- Bireley, Robert, 1990, *The Counter-Reformation Prince: Anti-Machiavellianism or Catholic Statecraft in Early Modern Europe*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.
- Burgio, Santo, 1998, *Teologia Barocca: Il probabilismo in Sicilia nell’epoca di Filippo IV*, Società di Storia patria per la Sicilia orientale, Catania.
- Butterfield, David, 2016, “Lucretius in the Early Modern Period”, in Norbrook, David, Stephen Harrison, and Philip Hardie, eds., *Lucretius and the Early Modern*, Oxford University Press, Oxford: 45-68.
- Ceyssens, Luc, 1977, *Le Cardinal François Albizzi (1593-1684)*, Pontificum Athenaeum Antonianum, Rome.

- Costa, Gustavo, 2012, *Epicureismo e pederastia: Il "Lucrezio" e l'"Anacreonte" di Alessandro Marchetti secondo il Sant'Uffizio*, Olschki, Florence.
- Craik, Henry, 1911, *The Life of Edward Early of Clarendon*, 1, Smith, Elder & Co., London.
- Darley, Gillian, 2006, *John Evelyn*, Yale University Press, New Haven.
- De Franceschi, Sylvio, 2020, "Le basculement de la théologie morale catholique allemande", in Sara Di Giulio and Alberto Frigo, eds., *Kasuistik und Theorie des Gewissens von Pascal bis Kant*, De Gruyter, Berlin: 91-142.
- Delbeke, Maarten, 2012, *The Art of Religion: Sforza Pallavicino and Art Theory in Bernini's Rome*, Ashgate, Farnham.
- , forthcoming, *Sforza Pallavicino. A Jesuit Life in Baroque Rome*, Brill, Leiden.
- Döllinger, Ignaz and Franz Reusch, 1889, *Geschichte der Moralstreitigkeiten in der römisch-katholischen Kirche seit dem 16. Jahrhundert*, Beck, Nördlingen.
- Favino, Federica, 2014, "Pallavicino, Francesco Maria Sforza", in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* 80. Available at: www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-maria-sforza-pallavicino (Accessed: 20 February 2021).
- Ford, Philip, 2007, "Lucretius in Early Modern France", in Gillespie and Hardie 2007: 227-241.
- Forster, Mark, 2001, *Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque: Religious Identity in Southwest Germany, 1550-1750*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Freedberg, David, 2002, *The Eye of the Lynx: Galileo, His Friends, and the Beginnings of Modern Natural History*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Gay, Jean-Pascal, 2018, *Le dernier théologien? Théophile Raynaud, histoire d'un obsolescence*, Beauchesne, Paris.
- Gay, Jean-Pascal, 2012, *Jesuit Civil Wars: Theology, Politics and Government under Tirso González (1687-1705)*, Ashgate, Farnham.
- Gay, Jean-Pascal, 2011, *Morales en conflit: Théologie et polémique au Grand Siècle (1640-1700)*, Cerf, Paris.
- Gillespie, Stuart and Philip Hardie, 2007, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Lucretius*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Gillespie, Stuart, 2007, "Lucretius in the English Renaissance", in Gillespie and Hardie, 2007: 227-241.
- Hall, Marcia, and Tracy Cooper, 2013, eds., *The Sensuous in the Counter-Reformation Church*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Holmes, Peter, 1981, *Elizabethan Casuistry*, Catholic Record Society, Norfolk.
- , 2012, ed., *Caroline Casuistry. The Cases of Conscience of Fr. Thomas Southwell SJ*, Boydell Press, Woodbridge.
- Kargon, Robert, 1964, "Walter Charleton, Robert Boyle, and the Acceptance of Epicurean Atomism in England", in *Isis*, 55, 2: 184-192.

- Knebel, Sven, 2000, *Wille, Würfel und Wahrscheinlichkeit*, Felix Meiner, Hamburg.
- Kors, Alan, 2016, *Epicureans and Atheists in France 1650-1729*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Kraye, Jill, 1990, "Moral philosophy", in Quentin Skinner and Eckhard Kessler, eds., *Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 303-386.
- , 1999, "Stoicism and Epicureanism: Philosophical Revival and Literary Repercussions", in Glyn Norton, ed., *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism Vol. III: Renaissance*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 458-465.
- Lennon, Thomas, 1993, *The Battle of the Gods and Giants: The Legacies of Descartes and Gassendi 1655-1715*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- LoLordo, Antonia, 2006, *Pierre Gassendi and the Birth of Early Modern Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Miller, Peter, 2000, *Peiresc's Europe*, Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Mitsis, Philip, 2020, *The Oxford Handbook of Epicurus and Epicureanism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Norbrook, David, 2015, "Lucy Hutchinson: Theology, Gender and Translation", in *The Seventeenth Century*, 30, 2: 139-162.
- , 2016, "Atheists and Republicans: Interpreting Lucretius in Revolutionary England", in Norbrook, Harrison, and Hardie 2016: 223-258.
- Norbrook, David, Stephen Harrison, and Philip Hardie, 2016, eds., *Lucretius and the Early Modern*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Onori Mochi, Lorenza, and Luciano Arcangeli, 2007, eds., *I Barberini e la cultura europea del Seicento*, De Luca, Rome.
- Paganini, Gianni, 2020, "Early Modern Epicureanism: Gassendi and Hobbes in Dialogue on Psychology, Ethics, and Politics" in Mitsis, 2020: 671-710.
- Paganini, Gianni, and Edoardo Tortarolo, 2004, eds., *Der Garten und die Moderne. Epikureische Moral und Politik vom Humanismus bis zur Aufklärung*, Steiner, Stuttgart.
- Paladini, Mariantonietta, 2011, *Lucrezio e l'Epicureismo tra Riforma e Controriforma*, Liguori, Naples.
- Palmer, Ada, 2014, *Reading Lucretius in the Renaissance*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
- , 2020, "The Persecution of Renaissance Lucretius Readers Revisited", in Hardie, Philip, Valentina Prosperi, and Diego Zucca, eds., *Lucretius Poet and Philosopher: Background and Fortunes of "De Rerum Natura"*, De Gruyter, Berlin: 177-197.
- Passannante, Gerard, 2011, *The Lucretian Renaissance: Philology and the Afterlife of Tradition*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Pintard, René, 1983, *Le libertinage érudit dans la première moitié du XVIIe siècle*, Slatkine, Geneva.
- Prosperi, Valentina, 2004, *Di soavi licor gli orli il vaso: La fortune di Lucrezio*

- dall'Umanesimo alla Controriforma, Aragno, Turin.
- , 2007, “Lucretius in the Italian Renaissance”, in Gillespie and Hardy: 214-226.
- , 2009, “Per un bilancio della fortuna di Lucrezio in Italia tra Umanesimo e Controriforma”, in *Sandalion*, 31: 191-210.
- Quantin, Jean-Louis, 2002, “Le Saint-Office et le probabilisme (1677-1679)”, in *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome*, 114: 875-960.
- Radner, Ephraim, 2016, “Early Modern Jansenism”, in Ulrich Lehner, Richard Muller, and A. G. Roeber, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theology, 1600-1800*, Oxford University Press, Oxford: 436-450.
- Raylor, Timothy, 1999, “Pleasure Reconciled with Virtue: William Cavendish, Ben Jonson, and the Decorative Scheme of Bolsover Castle”, in *Renaissance Quarterly*, 52: 402-439.
- , 2010, “Exiles, Expatriates, and Travellers: Towards a Cultural and Intellectual History of the English Abroad”, in Philip Major and Lisa Jardine, eds., *Literatures of Exile in the English Revolution and Its Aftermath 1640-1690*, Ashgate, London: 15-43.
- Reinhardt, Nicole, 2016, *Voices of Conscience: Royal Confessors and Political Counsel in Seventeenth-Century Spain and France*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Rice, James, 1939, *Gabriel Naudé, 1600-1653*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.
- Rietbergen, Peter, 2006, *Power and Religion in Baroque Rome: Barberini Cultural Policies*, Brill, Leiden.
- Sarasohn, Lisa, 1991, “Epicureanism and the Creation of Privatist Ethic in Early Seventeenth-Century France”, in Osler, Margaret, ed., *Atoms, Pneuma, and Tranquility: Epicurean and Stoic Themes in European Thought*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 175-196.
- , 2011, “Margaret Cavendish, William Newcastle and Political Marginalization”, in *English Studies*, 92: 806-817.
- Sarnelli, Mauro, 2020, “Lucretius in (Moderate) Baroque”, in Philip Hardie, Valentina Prosperi, and Diego Zucca, eds., *Lucretius Poet and Philosopher: Background and Fortunes of “De Rerum Natura”*, De Gruyter, Berlin: 251-272.
- Schuessler, Rudolf, 2019, *The Debate on Probable Opinions in the Scholastic Tradition*, Brill, Leiden.
- Schwartz, Daniel, 2019, *The Political Morality of the Late Scholastics: Civic Life, War and Conscience*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Sedgwick, Peter, 2019, *The Origins of Anglican Moral Theology*, Brill, Leiden.
- Smith, Malcolm, 1981, *Montaigne and the Roman Censors*, Droz, Geneva.
- Thuau, Etienne, 2000, *Raison d'état et pensée politique à l'époque de Richelieu*, Michel, Paris.
- Tutino, Stefania, 2018, *Uncertainty in Post-Reformation Catholicism: A History of Probabilism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

- Walters, Lisa, 2020, "Epicurus and Gender in the British Newcastle Circle: Charleton, Hobbes and Margaret Cavendish", in Lisa Hopkins and Tom Rutter, eds., *A Companion to the Cavendishes*, Arc Humanities Press, Leeds: 181-189.
- Wilson, Catherine, 2008, *Epicureanism at the Origins of Modernity*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.