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CHAPTER 8
The sceptics
Michael Frede

INTRODUCTION

When we speak of 'scepticism' and of 'sceptics', we primarily think of a philosophical position according to which nothing is known for certain, or even nothing can be known for certain. There are certain ways in which we go about things when we try to find out the truth about something or other. But these ways at best are such that, in following them, we come to believe something which actually is true, but they are never such that what we come to believe, given the way we came to believe it, is guaranteed to be true. Hence, we never know for certain whether what we come to believe to be true actually is true. We perhaps hope that it is, or even are confident that it is, but it might be not.

This, though, is not what those ancients who called themselves 'sceptics' *(skeptikoi)* for the most part meant by 'scepticism'. To the contrary, the very term 'sceptic', at least sometimes, was meant to suggest, among other things, that a sceptic is not going to claim that nothing can be known. *'Skepsis'* is a word which in Greek ordinarily was used to refer to one's looking at or considering or reflecting on something. But it also came to be used to refer to one's inquiry into a matter, and thus became, along with *'zêtêsis',* a term to refer to any kind of inquiry, but in particular the kind of methodical inquiry philosophers and scientists are engaged in. And it surely is no accident that ancient sceptics not only were called, or called themselves, 'sceptics', but also 'zetetics' (DL IX, 69; *Pyrrh.* I, 7). Given the formation of the words, a sceptic or zetetic should be a person who is prone or inclined to inquire into things, or shows particular ability or persistence in doing so. So a sceptic should be somebody who is not going to content himself with any conclusion, until the inquiry has run its full course and all possibilities have been explored. As Sextus Empiricus, himself a sceptic, tells us at the end of the second century AD in his introduction to scepticism, the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism,* we talk of 'scepticism', because sceptics inquire (*Pyrrh.* I, 7). We would like to know why the sceptics think of themselves as inquisitive in a way which singles them out. Sextus begins his account of scepticism (*Pyrrh.* I, 1–4) explaining

precisely this. He says that of those inquiring into something, there are (1) those who at some point think they have found the answer; there are (2) those who give up the inquiry, claiming that the question or problem cannot be resolved; but there are (3) also those who think that the question so far has not been resolved, and thus go on inquiring. The suggestion is that both the first and the second group, each in their own way, give up on the inquiry, before it has come to an end. The first group of inquirers are so eager to have an answer to the question that they jump to a conclusion, though it is not warranted by the inquiry so far. The second group of inquirers similarly terminate the inquiry, before it has come to an end, with a rash verdict, namely the verdict that the matter cannot be resolved, though not everything that could perhaps be said about the matter has been taken into consideration. It is only the third group of inquirers who insist, like the second group, that the matter has not yet been resolved, but also insist that not all possibilities to resolve it have yet been explored and that hence any final verdict is out of place.

Many interpreters do not take this self-characterization of the sceptic seriously; they might even regard it as disingenuous. For, according to these interpreters, the sceptic surely must believe, whatever he says, that no question can be resolved, that the truth cannot be known; and hence it is disingenuous of the sceptic to claim that he continues to look for an answer to the questions which have arisen or arise. But this criticism seems to be guided by an unjustified preconception of what a sceptic is; it fails to take into account the fact that the sceptic is quite right in insisting that, though at any point in our inquiry we may be able to say that the question has not been resolved, there seems to be no point in our inquiry at which we can say that it cannot be resolved, given that we have not considered everything which could be brought to bear on the issue. So the sceptic perhaps thinks that no question has been resolved so far. And he may have little expectation that any questions will be resolved. But it is a big step to go beyond this to claim that no question can be resolved. And, as we will see, there is a further consideration which will possibly discourage a sceptic from taking this step.

In any case, Sextus identifies the three kinds of inquirers as (1) the dogmatics, properly so called, those who believe that they have found the answers to at least some questions, for instance the Peripatetics, or Epicureans, or Stoics; (2) the Academics, who believe that the questions one inquires into cannot be resolved, that the truth cannot be grasped or known (they are dogmatic in a wider sense in that they at least claim that nothing can be known for certain); (3) the Pyrrhoneans, who will claim no such thing, but will go on with the inquiry. So at least Pyrrhonean sceptics reject any suggestion that they claim that nothing can be known for certain.

But we also have to take into account that Pyrrhoneans in general, and hence also Sextus, have some difficulty in justifying their own existence by

claiming that their position is radically different from that of the Academics. As we will see, Pyrrhonean scepticism, the kind of scepticism Sextus Empiricus is an exponent of, arose as a reaction against the particular form Academic scepticism had taken in the first century BC. At that time Academics claimed that nothing can be known for certain, as we can see from Cicero's *Academica*. And it was in part for this reason, as we can see from Photius' report (*Bibliotheca* c. 212, 169b 38 ff.), that Aenesidemus, the founder of Pyrrhonean scepticism, rejected the Academic scepticism of his time. But we can also see that this had not always been the position of Academic sceptics, and that Sextus himself is aware of this (cf., for example, *Pyrrh*. I, 226; 232). So, both Pyrrhoneans and Academics down to a certain time refused to claim that nothing can be known for certain.

It is also easy to see why they would refuse to make such a claim. If the way we come to believe something is questionable in that there is no guarantee that, given the way we have come to have this belief, the belief is true, because at any point on the way we may have taken the wrong turn, then our having taken this way not only does not guarantee that our belief is true and hence allows us to claim that we know, it does not even provide any justification for just having the belief. In any case, the argument of the Pyrrhoneans and the early Academics, like Arcesilaus, is that for any reason you offer in support of your belief to justify it, there is a reason to the contrary to undermine your justification, and thus your belief is unjustified, even if it should happen to be true. Thus Pyrrhoneans and early Academics not only do not claim that nothing can be known, they do not make any claims whatsoever. They do not make any claims whatsoever because they think that the questions that these claims purport to answer have not been settled, and that, short of settling them, one has no justification for any claim as to how they should be answered. Hence sceptics in antiquity also are called 'aporetics' (DL IX, 69; cf. *Pyrrh*. I.7) and 'ephectics' (ibid.). However far we have got in an inquiry, as long as the question is not settled, they are at a loss as to how to answer the question. And hence they suspend judgement, refrain from taking a position on the matter. Now, there is also a question as to whether anything can be known for certain or not. Hence it would be curious, if sceptics who refused not only to assume that any question was definitively settled, but even to assume that one could take any position on a question which was not settled, of all questions would make an exception for this question, and claim that nothing can be known for certain. They not only do not believe that they know that nothing could be known for certain, they do not even take any kind of a position on this question, so as to claim that nothing can be known. This, then, is the standard understanding of scepticism in antiquity.

Nevertheless, it is easy to see, at least in broad outline, how the term 'scepticism' came to be understood in the way it standardly is

understood nowadays. There were, towards the end of the history of Academic scepticism, sceptics who did claim that nothing can be known for certain, and who, quite generally, were ready to espouse beliefs or opinions, provided it be understood that they did not know for certain that these beliefs are true. It was these Academics who prompted Aenesidemus to restore scepticism in the form of Pyrrhonean scepticism. But this late form of Academic scepticism which is attacked by Aenesidemus is represented in Cicero's *Academica*. In fact, it is the form of Academic scepticism espoused by Cicero himself. It also is the form of scepticism attacked by Augustine in his 'Contra Academicos'. And given the enormous authority and influence both Cicero and Augustine had, it is not surprising that it was this position which came to be associated with the term 'scepticism'; and this all the more so, as the rivalling view that a sceptic should not even have any belief as to the answer to the questions which arise, plausibly seemed so untenable, given the needs of ordinary life.

Hence, to study ancient scepticism in its own historical setting, we will have to consider Academic scepticism and Pyrrhonean scepticism, even if most of these sceptics in their scepticism were not even prepared to commit themselves to the claim that nothing can be known. But, we first of all will have to have at least a brief look also at some earlier philosophers, especially given that the Academics themselves appealed to them as their precursors. And we will also, before we can turn to Academic scepticism, have to look at a philosopher in the generation before Arcesilaus who was some sort of sceptic, namely Pyrrho. We will have to do this not just because Pyrrho is a figure of considerable interest in his own right in the history of scepticism understood in a broader sense. His position also is relevant, because, though Arcesilaus himself did not appeal to Pyrrho as a precursor, already some of Arcesilaus' contemporaries believed they could claim or suggest that there are important similarities between Pyrrho's and Arcesilaus' position (DL IV, 33). Moreover, when Aenesidemus in the first century BC tried to revive a more radical scepticism, he at least claimed to be articulating a position which went back to Pyrrho. Hence scholars for a long time were quite prepared to believe that Pyrrho had been at least a proto-Pyrrhonist. And, to the extent that one was prepared to believe this, it also was difficult to resist the temptation to believe that the striking similarities between Pyrrhonean scepticism and Arcesilaus' position, which Sextus Empiricus himself acknowledges (*Pyrrh.* I, 232), were in part due to Pyrrho's influence on Arcesilaus.

ARCESILAUS' PRECURSORS

Arcesilaus obviously felt that he somehow had to explain why it should be thought to be appropriate that he, given his radical scepticism, should be the scholarch of Plato's Academy, the guardian of the venerable tradition

going back to Plato and beyond to Socrates. It is reasonably clear that Arcesilaus did make an effort to explain in which way his work was in the best tradition of the Academy. We will discuss this, when we come to deal with Arcesilaus in detail. But it also seems that even without the efforts of Arcesilaus himself, at least later Academics tried to explain that Arcesilaus' scepticism could rely on a tradition of sceptical thought going back to philosophers from Xenophanes to Metrodorus of Chius (cf. Cicero, *Ac. Post.* I, 44; *Ac. Pr.* II, 13 ff.; 72 ff.). And, indeed, we find enough evidence for some form of scepticism or other in the modern sense of the term among these earlier philosophers, that Sextus Empiricus, possibly partly in light of such Academic claims, thinks it necessary to argue, for instance, that Democriteanism should not be confused with scepticism (*Pyrrh.* I, 213 ff.). Such appeals to Presocratic predecessors, of course, are easier to understand if they come from later Academics who did believe that nothing can be known for certain, rather than from Arcesilaus, who would have had to argue that these philosophers had taken a first step in the direction of scepticism, but had failed to take the further step or further steps, just as he is supposed to have claimed to have gone a step beyond Socrates in not even allowing himself to say that he knows that he knows nothing (*Ac. Post.* I, 45).

It is easy to see why sooner or later doubts would arise about the possibility of knowledge, if not of any knowledge whatsoever, then at least of any knowledge which went beyond the trivial and which for that very reason one might aspire to, a deeper knowledge and understanding of why the world works the way it does. I do not have the space to consider how these doubts actually arose, for instance with Xenophanes (cf. DK B18; B34) or Alcmaeon (cf. DK B1). Such doubts were unavoidable, once Parmenides had claimed that reality is not at all as it appears to us in perception and as, on the basis of this, we think about it. For, according to Parmenides, thought shows that there is no motion, no change, no coming-into-being, no plurality, no diversity. So the senses are utterly unreliable, and hence also all belief based on observation. But, one had to ask, why should we believe that reason can be relied upon? The problem became acute with Democritus. Democritus thought (cf. Aristotle, *De generatione et corruptione* 325a 23 ff.) that in order to explain why, if reality is so different from what it appears to be, it nevertheless appears in the way it does, one at least has to assume that there is motion. So he assumed that in reality there are just atoms moving in a void, and that everything else, including colours and tastes, are just a matter of belief and convention (DK 69). But in saying this Democritus makes reason rely on the senses, to then in turn reject their judgement. For the only reason we have for saying that in reality there are many atoms moving, is that we perceive a changing manifold. So Democritus (DK B125) lets the senses complain, 'you wretched mind, you first take the evidence we offer and then overthrow us. But our overthrow is your downfall.' For, if we cannot trust the senses

beyond their suggestion that we are dealing with a changing manifold, atoms moving in a void, we will never know in any particular case what we are dealing with, except atoms in the void (DK B6, 7, 8, 9, 10). And even this is questionable, as it relies on our perception of a changing manifold.

It is clear that Democritus must have used language like 'a thing is no more sweet than it is bitter' (cf. DK B156). Given what we have said, this should mean that in reality it is neither. And this is how Sextus Empiricus interprets this sort of language in Democritus (*Pyrrh.* I, 213). But there was another interpretation, the one Sextus Empiricus rules out. Already Democritus is claiming that, if different beings have conflicting perceptions or beliefs concerning something, one should say that the thing is no more this than that, because either it is neither, or it is utterly unclear which of the two it is. This will become important when we turn to Pyrrho.

Obviously under the influence of Democritus, a generation or two later, Metrodorus of Chius will conclude 'None of us knows anything, not even this whether we know or do not know' (*PE* XIV, 19, 9, DK B 1). Obviously, the addition 'not even this…' already involves a minimal refinement which presupposes some reflection on the bland claim 'none of us knows anything', for instance the kind of reflection we find in *Lucretius* IV, 469 ff. that somebody who believes that nothing is known also must think that this itself is not, or even cannot be, known. More intriguingly, Cicero (*Ac. Pr.* 73), like Eusebius, refers to the beginning of a book by Metrodorus, but then does not quote the remark quoted by Eusebius, but rather what looks like a further comment on the bland statement that we do not know anything. Unfortunately the translation of this comment is controversial, too. But it seems to run like this: I deny, he says, that we know whether we know anything or know nothing; we do not even know what it is not to know or to know; nor do we know whether there is anything or rather nothing. This would suggest that Metrodorus was aware of the possibility that the answer to the question whether anything is known also might depend on what we take knowledge to be. And, most tantalizingly, there might be the thought that there is no reality for us to know, against which the beliefs we have, following appearances in the conventional way, could be measured. If this is what Metrodorus was thinking about, we already have a rather developed state of the question whether anything can be known for certain.

With Metrodorus we also are within a generation or so of Pyrrho. Eusebius, having quoted Metrodorus as saying that we know nothing, not even this, whether we know or not, goes on to say that Metrodorus had prepared the way for Pyrrho (*PE* XIV, 19, 9). And there is no doubt that Pyrrho belongs to the group of philosophers influenced by Democritus that includes, for instance, Anaxarchus of Abdera, of whom Pyrrho is said to have been a student (DL IX, 61) and an associate (for example DL IX, 63).

PYRRHO

Pyrrho lived roughly from 365 to 275 BC. His main philosophical concern was ethical. He seems to have argued that everything was utterly indifferent, neither good nor bad, neither just nor unjust, and to have tried to live a life which dispenses with such value-judgements, but hence also is not burdened by the anxieties such beliefs cause us. His attempt to live such a life gave rise to a number of anecdotes, but the doctrine concerning the absolute indifference of things fell into oblivion, or was just remembered as a curious possible doctrine. In any case, Cicero in the *De finibus* repeatedly (for example V, 23), but also in the *Tusculans* (V, 85), speaks of it as a doctrine which had long been abandoned. It seems to be a fair judgement that Pyrrho would have disappeared almost without a trace from the history of philosophy if there had not been something more to his position, namely a side to it which made him appear to later Pyrrhoneans as their precursor. It is telling that the first thing Diogenes Laertius has to say, when he turns to Pyrrho's philosophy, is that Pyrrho was the first to introduce the idea of the *akatalêpsia* of things, of their unknowability, and of the suspension of judgement. So, supposedly, Pyrrho did not just say that nothing can be known, he also took the further step, crucial for the standard understanding of scepticism in antiquity, that the appropriate moral to draw from this is not just that our beliefs are mere opinions, but that one should suspend judgement altogether and have no beliefs.

But we have to proceed with utmost caution. Pyrrho himself did not leave any philosophical writings. There are anecdotes about him, some of them early, for instance those which were drawn from Antigonus of Carystus' biography of him (cf., for example, DL IX, 62). There are some important doxographical notices about him, some of which, certainly the most important one, goes back to Timon, a student of Pyrrho's, whose testimony, though, has to be treated with caution, as it is only too obvious that he tries to present Pyrrho as a philosophical hero by far superior to, for instance, Pyrrho's and his own Athenian contemporaries, including Arcesilaus.

Let us consider the first story, told by Diogenes Laertius (IX, 62) to show how consistently Pyrrho followed his doctrine in his life, a story drawn from Antigonus and taken by scholars to be particularly revealing: Pyrrho did not avoid anything or beware of it, faced everything: wagons, if it so happened, or precipices, or dogs, or whatever else of this kind. He entrusted nothing to his perceptions and was only saved because his acquaintances were following him around. Now the story could be interpreted in the following way: it is not that Pyrrho did not realize and believe that a wagon was coming his way or that a few steps separated him from a precipice. But he thought that everything was entirely indifferent and that hence it did not matter a bit, one way or another, whether he would be run over or not, or fall down the precipice or not. Moreover, by hard practice, he had learnt to take an attitude towards things which

corresponded to what they are like, namely an attitude of indifference. It is not just that he thought they were indifferent, that they did not matter, he also had brought it about that, because they did not matter, they did not matter to him. And this he did not find easy, as another anecdote shows (DL IX, 66). He was reproached for being scared of a dog. He answered that it was difficult to shed humanity—indeed a fight and struggle—but that one could try to become indifferent, first by practising, but then, if needed, by thinking about things. Apparently many thought that Pyrrho had attained a remarkable and admirable degree of indifference and imperturbability. But all this has nothing to do with scepticism. To the contrary, it would seem that Pyrrho tries to be indifferent, because he believes things to be utterly indifferent. Nevertheless, the interpretation which is put in Diogenes Laertius on the story about precipices is that Pyrrho did not entrust anything to the senses. That is to say, he withheld belief as to what he saw, even if it was a wagon coming his way, or a precipice in front of him. The story is interpreted as if the other story about the dog who scared him had the moral that it is so difficult to learn not to believe that a dog is pursuing and attacking one, when in fact the moral clearly seems to be that it is so difficult to learn, in theory and in practice, that it does not matter whether a dog is attacking one. But where does the sceptical interpretation come from, and is there any justification for it?

Let us next look at what Diogenes Laertius IX, 61 refers to as evidence to explain in which way Pyrrho was the first to introduce suspension of judgement, before, in IX, 62, he proceeds to tell the story about wagons and precipices as evidence that Pyrrho followed this theory in real life. Diogenes refers to an otherwise unknown Asconius of Abdera as his source. The explanation is that according to Pyrrho things in truth, in the nature of things, in reality, are neither good nor bad, and that human beings only act the way they do out of convention and habit, whereas things are no more this than that. It should be immediately clear that Pyrrho is not saying that we do not know whether something is good or not, or bad or not, and hence should suspend judgement. For he clearly is saying that in reality they are neither good nor bad, and that it is just in people's belief that they are just or unjust. This does not seem to have anything to do with scepticism. There is no suspension of judgement even just concerning values, it seems, except in the sense that Pyrrho will refuse to believe that things are good or bad. So why does Diogenes Laertius, or his source, adduce this as evidence for Pyrrho's scepticism?

This time, though, there is one element in the account which might provide a clue: Pyrrho's supposed claim that each thing is no more this than that, that is, presumably, no more good than bad, no more just than unjust, and so forth. To begin with, the parallelism to Democritus is striking. Democritus, too, had said, for instance with reference to sensible qualities, that things are not red or green, that they are red or green just in conventional belief, that they are no more red than green. And there was an

interpretation of the 'no more this than that' phrase, rejected by Sextus, which would have turned Democritus into a sceptic. So perhaps Pyrrho could be interpreted as saying, or even meaning to say, that depending on how you look at them, things appear to be good or bad, but either they are completely indifferent or there at least is no way to tell whether they are good rather than bad, or bad rather than good.

But the obvious parallel to Democritus might also invite the thought that Pyrrho assumes that things are completely indifferent in every respect, not just as far as their evaluation is concerned, but also as far as their phenomenal characteristics are concerned, and that he was just particularly interested to make this point concerning the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly, and such characteristics, though he took the point to hold also for phenomenal characteristics. But in this case, again, we do not get suspension of judgement in the appropriate sense. It is not true that we suspend judgement as to whether what we see is a wagon about to run us over or not. For, on this view, we believe that there is no such thing as a wagon about to run us over. To believe otherwise would already be to believe that things are not indifferent. So, again, we would need a different interpretation of the 'no more this than that' phrase. But, on the face of it, the evidence Diogenes Laertius provides rather seems to suggest that Pyrrho did not understand indifference in this general way, but as being limited to evaluative predicates; and it also rather suggests that Pyrrho, if he used the 'no more this' phrase, did not understand it in the sense that things might be indifferent, insofar as we cannot tell whether they are good or bad; for he seems to have thought that they actually were neither good not bad, and, for this reason, to have assumed that, if we think that they are good or bad, this must have its source, rather than in the things, in our conventional way of thinking about them.

With this we can turn to our most important testimony concerning Pyrrho's thought. It is preserved in Eusebius' *Praeparatio evangelica,* XIV, 18, 2–4, which is mainly drawn from Timon.

According to Timon, if one wants to attain *eudaimonia,* one has to focus on these things: (1) what are things like in their own nature; (2) which attitude we should have with regard to them; (3) what is going to happen to one if one has this attitude. Timon then goes on to give us Pyrrho's answers to these questions. This at least suggests that these questions, their sequence, and their purported point reflect Pyrrho's thought. And, given what we have said so far, the thought behind them would seem pretty clear: if you want to have a good life, first of all you have to be clear about the fact that it is not things in themselves which are good or bad. Hence, secondly, you should not have an attitude towards them as if they were good or bad. Thirdly, if you manage to have the right attitude towards them, you will be rid of all your anxieties and be happy. These questions in their sequence in any case do not suggest any scepticism. To the contrary, they suggest that you can find out what things really are like, as opposed to

what people say they are like. They suggest that it only seems reasonable to take an attitude towards things which is based on what things really are like, rather than on what they are customarily believed to be like. And they suggest that one can reasonably expect a tangible benefit from taking such a reasonable attitude.

Now the answers Pyrrho actually gives to the first two questions, according to Timon, are these: (1) things in themselves are indifferent and cannot be judged *(anepikrita);* (2) hence our perceptions and our beliefs concerning them are not true or false; hence one should put no trust in them, but remain without belief and unmoved, and think in each case that the thing is no more this way than not this way, or that it both is and is not this way, or that it neither is, nor is not this way; (3) Timon says that the answer (presumably Pyrrho's answer is meant here) is that the result will be first speechlessness, and then imperturbability.

Now, this report deviates from our expectations in various ways. And it does so systematically in the sense that most of the deviations correspond to the second understanding of the ambiguous 'no more this than that' phrase. 'Indifference' now does not mean 'neither this nor that', but rather 'neither this nor that, or at least we cannot tell which one'. Hence the inference now is not that perceptions and beliefs cannot be trusted, because they are false, but because we cannot say either that they are true or that they are false. Nor will we just say in each case that the thing is no more this than that, meaning that it is neither, but something a great deal more complicated. Indeed, this is Timon's understanding of the phrase 'no more', which in his *Pytho* he claimed to indicate that one did not determine anything to be the case, but withheld assent (DL IX, 76). The other major deviation is that Timon understands the indifference not to be restricted to evaluative predicates.

Given the complexity of the evidence, it may turn out to be impossible to reconstruct a reliable view of Pyrrho's, as opposed to Timon's, position. In fact, it seems to me that the way forward is, to begin with, to leave aside Pyrrho and reconstruct Timon's position in its own right, in order then to see what Pyrrho's position may have been. It is clear enough, at least in outline, what Timon's position was. He did think that things were indifferent in the sense that they were neither this nor that, or, if they were, we could not tell whether they were this or that, and that hence all we could do is to follow appearances, not worrying whether things actually are this or that.

ACADEMIC SCEPTICISM

ARCESILAUS

Arcesilaus of Pitane (316/15 BC–241/40 BC) became head of the Academy around 273, to govern it for more than 30 years. He is the founder of

Academic scepticism. Under his scholarchate the Academy turned sceptic in the ancient sense of the word. Though initially there was some resistance to the new direction the school took with him, this direction was consolidated, it seems, under his successor Lacydes. There is no reason to insist that Arcesilaus was in no way influenced by Pyrrho. Arcesilaus must have been familiar with Pyrrho's thought through Timon. He was well read. He went out of his way, it seems, to refer to sceptical elements in the thought of earlier philosophers, and so would have had no difficulty acknowledging Pyrrho's scepticism. But there is, at the same time, plenty of reason to insist that one has to be able to understand Academic scepticism as a development within the Academy. Arcesilaus would not have managed to become, or to retain his position as, scholarch, if he had not been able to present himself with some plausibility as continuing the tradition of Socrates and Plato. It was his opponents who had an interest in presenting him as constituting a break in the tradition of the school, as somebody who relied on a tradition alien to the spirit of the Academy, for instance on Pyrrho.

It is rather difficult to reconstruct Arcesilaus' thought with the kind of detail that his position would, no doubt, deserve. Nevertheless, there does seem to be enough evidence to reconstruct Arcesilaus' position in rough outline. It seems, for instance, that we can rely on the evidence that suggests that Arcesilaus appealed to Socrates, and to a lesser extent to Plato, for his scepticism, but also on the evidence according to which Arcesilaus' position was formed in part in opposition to the Stoic Zeno's epistemology. In order to understand this, it may help to briefly consider the historical position Arcesilaus found himself in.

As is well known, Socrates had assumed that whether we attain the good life depends on whether we attain wisdom, the knowledge of what is good and what is bad and related matters. Also, notoriously, Socrates did not believe that he himself had attained this wisdom. Indeed, he thought that if he had any claim to any kind of wisdom, it lay in precisely this, that he did not pretend to have a knowledge he did not have, a pretence which obviously would stand in the way of making any effort to attain real wisdom. Hence Socrates in his search for the truth questioned others to see whether they knew more than he did, and to free them, if necessary, from the false conceit of knowledge. There was a method, later known as the Socratic *elenchus,* which admirably suited this purpose. It involved a questioner and a respondent. The questioner would elicit a thesis from the respondent. He would then ask a series of yes-or-no questions of the respondent, in answer to which the respondent would commit himself to a position on these questions. But the questioner would ask these questions in such a way that the answers to them, if possible, would form the premisses of an argument the conclusion of which would contradict the original thesis. The respondent, having given the answers he did, could not honestly fail to respond to the appropriate final question but by answering

it in contradiction to his original thesis. The way Socrates is presented in Plato, Socrates was a formidable dialectician who always managed to reduce his respondents to contradiction, thus showing that they were ignorant on the matter in question. For somebody who knows will not contradict himself on a question within the area of his expertise.

It is important to draw attention to several features of this practice. The 'refuted' interlocutor not only has been shown not to know the truth, he also has been put into a situation in which he no longer feels in a position to answer the original question at all. He is, as it is called, in an *'aporia'*. He will have had some reason for the thesis, and he has now been revealed to also have reason for asserting the contradictory. And torn between these two opposing reasons, he no longer rationally can assert either the thesis or its contradictory, let alone claim that he does so as a matter of knowledge. And, if this is at least part of the point of the practice, it should be clear that the argument advanced against the thesis cannot be understood as a proof that the thesis is false. Otherwise there would be no *aporia*.

As to the questioner, we should note that he can engage in this questioning without knowing the truth concerning the thesis or the questions he asks. He can do this without even having a mere belief as to the truth concerning his questions. He certainly does not commit himself to a view in questioning the respondent. The answers are all the respondent's, and so is the argument. It is the respondent who assumes that he is faced with an argument which forces him to contradict himself. Now, if the questioner does think, as Socrates did, that he does not know the answers to the questions he asks, he also should think that he himself would not be able to withstand questioning, if properly questioned, without being made to contradict himself. And thus he would think himself to be in a genuine *aporia* as to what to answer to the questions he asks. It is not only that he thinks that he does not know, he also thinks it unwise even to just make a claim on the matter, which upon questioning would turn out to be indefensible and futile.

Now philosophers after Plato (who in writing dialogues constantly reminds us of Socrates and his practice, but also himself manages to avoid committing himself to any position, since it is others who in the fiction of a dialogue commit themselves to the positions which get discussed in the dialogue) unlike Plato increasingly forget Socrates' caution. They begin to produce ever more, and ever more extravagant and speculative, theories, built on mere belief and producing nothing but more mere opinions. Both Epicureanism and Stoicism are in part reactions to this situation which these philosophers try to remedy by developing an epistemology which is supposed to show how we can overcome mere opinion and attain true knowledge and wisdom. In fact, for the Stoics Socrates, in his single-minded quest for practical wisdom and his refusal to content himself with mere opinion, is a paradigm of a philosopher. But, they think, Socrates was mistaken in thinking that his kind of elenctic questioning or, more

generally, his kind of dialectical argument, however much one excelled in it, would ever lead to knowledge. Argument based on mere belief will just lead to more mere belief. What we need to realize is that, in addition to mere belief and knowledge, there is cognition. Cognition, unlike mere belief, which at best just happens to be true, is bound to be true, given the way it has come about. It still falls short of knowledge in that, unlike knowledge, it can be destroyed by rational means, for instance by dialectical questioning. One can have clearly realized something to be the case, only later to be talked out of it on the basis of false assumptions incompatible with it, which one also holds. That cognition is different from mere opinion we can see from perception. If one clearly perceives something to be the case, one's belief that it is the case surely is not just a matter of mere opinion. More specifically the Stoics suggested that nature in its providence provides us with the ability to form impressions of things, the so-called cognitive impressions, for instance perceptual impressions, which, given the way they come about, cannot fail to be true. If we, then, accept these impressions, we will have cognition, rather than mere belief, and in cognition, unlike mere belief, we will have a solid basis for knowledge.

This, then, is the situation Arcesilaus found himself in. We readily understand why Arcesilaus was as scandalized by the endless production of more empty philosophical opinion as the Stoics and the Epicureans were. But we also understand why Arcesilaus might have decided to curb, or put an end to, empty philosophical speculation by reverting to the Socratic *elenchus* to test the philosophical theses proposed, or rather by applying to philosophical theses a scrutiny which in substance amounts to the same as a Socratic *elenchus*, though in outward form it differs from Socrates' questioning. Arcesilaus did not go to the market to question his fellow citizens, but rather asked students in his school to propose a philosophical thesis which he then would argue against. Or he would take a thesis which had its adherents, and then himself would produce the arguments for and against. And, in arguing against it, he might not entirely rely on premisses endorsed by the advocates of the thesis in question, but also on premisses they at least could not just dismiss, especially since Arcesilaus also was prepared to provide arguments for those premisses which his opponents might not want to endorse.

This procedure, though in format it somewhat differs from Socrates' questioning, still has the same crucial features of the *elenchus*. Arcesilaus can reduce the adherents of a thesis to complete *aporia*, without having to claim any knowledge for himself, indeed without even committing himself to a position on the matters raised. In fact, we should expect Arcesilaus, too, to claim to be at a complete loss himself, and not to make any claims, knowing well that his claim would not be able to resist similar questioning, either. Thus it is easy to understand, against the background of Socrates' elenctic practice, a continued tradition of various forms of dialectical

argument in the Academy, and Arcesilaus' concern over his philosophical colleagues' disregard for Socrates' strictures against mere opinion, how Arcesilaus might decide to avail himself in a Socratic spirit of a variety of forms of dialectic to stem the tide of speculative dogmatism. We thus would understand why Arcesilaus would be a sceptic concerning philosophical theses or beliefs, that is to say, why he would not only refrain from claiming any knowledge on philosophical matters, but even refuse to take any stand on the matters at issue. He could see himself as somebody who is at loss for an answer in these matters. It is tempting to think that the term 'aporetic', as an alternative name for a sceptic (*Pyrrh.* I, 7; I, 221), has its origins in this Academic context.

There is one respect, though, in which Arcesilaus does not just resume what he takes to be the tradition of Socrates and Plato, abandoned by Speusippus, Xenocrates, and their followers down to Zeno and the Stoics. It is not just their questionable speculations which seem to make Socratic questioning more indicated than ever. There is a deeper problem, made obvious by the attempts of the Epicureans and the Stoics to show what Socrates and his interlocutors would have had to do to gain the wisdom Socrates was after. The question was whether there was not another diagnosis for Socrates' failure to attain the wisdom he thought we ideally should have, or we would have to have, to guarantee us a good life. Perhaps it turns out that this wisdom is a matter of realizing that one has not attained it, that one may not attain it, but that it is worth while to make every effort to attain it, even if one does not attain it. For obviously Socrates down to the end of his life did not regret his rather single-minded effort to attain something which, by his own admission, he had not attained (cf. Aenesidemus' remark in Photius, *Bibliotheca* c. 212, 169b 27–9, for a parallel).

Tradition, though, presents Arcesilaus not just as a sceptic in a much stronger sense. It presents him as an unqualified sceptic, as a sceptic on any question, matter or issue, however trivial it may be. He is supposed to have counselled complete suspension of judgement or belief. There is nothing in the evidence concerning Socrates which suggests such a radical scepticism. It is true that Socrates must have said something to the effect that his own claim to wisdom, if any, would just be this: that he was aware of the fact that he did not know anything. But nobody would naturally infer from this that he claimed not to know anything about anything. One takes him naturally to refer to his scepticism concerning the issues discussed by philosophers of nature, but primarily to his ignorance concerning the questions he is presented as discussing in Plato's early dialogues, ethical questions. Socrates also is often presented as not letting on what he himself believed, but, however we interpret this, we do not think that it means that Socrates had no beliefs as to, for instance, the gate of the city one would enter if one came from Larissa. Arcesilaus' position, it seems, is much more radical; it is a position of complete suspension of belief. To understand how

this comes about, or at least how the appearance of it comes about, one has to take into account that the dialectical situation has radically changed. Socrates had to discuss such questions as whether and how virtue can be acquired. Arcesilaus also had to discuss such questions as to whether and how real knowledge can be acquired, in particular the knowledge which Socrates was after and which constitutes wisdom and virtue. Arcesilaus had to discuss the epistemological theses of the Epicureans, but in particular those of the Stoics which were meant to show that and how we could break out of the circle of mere opinion, attain knowledge, and in particular the knowledge which Socrates was after. These theses crucially involved the assumption that perceptions constitute the secure basis on which all knowledge rests. A dialectical response to these theses could not but involve arguments to the effect that knowledge is not attainable, or that even if we perceive something, there is no reason to suppose that the belief which we have on the basis of our perception is more than mere opinion, but cognitive, a solid basis of knowledge. And such a dialectical response cannot but also call all our beliefs into question, to the extent that they are based on perception and the experience which it gives rise to.

Now, obviously Arcesilaus did also attack these epistemological theses. In fact, what is very conspicuous and striking about the evidence concerning Arcesilaus we have, is precisely this that, though Arcesilaus in his teaching addressed whatever philosophical theses his audience was ready to propose, his own thinking seems to have been very much focused on Zeno's attempts to show how knowledge and thus ultimately wisdom were possible. A crucial part of Zeno's theory was this: to believe something is to give assent to an impression which represents something as being a certain way; some impressions deserve assent, and some do not; an impression deserves assent if it has its origin in something which is the case and represents matters precisely as they are the case. So your impression that this book is green deserves assent, if your impression has its origin in a fact and if it precisely and accurately represents this fact. Tradition has it that Zeno, pressed by Arcesilaus, went one step further. He stipulated that impressions, in order to deserve our assent, had to represent things in such a clear and distinct way that they could not possibly be false. That is to say, if the book is red, but you have the impression that it is green, then your impression lacks the kind of clarity and distinctness which it would have, if the book were green and you saw it under normal conditions. Such an impression Zeno calls cognitive, because assent to it constitutes a cognition, and not just a mere opinion. And cognitions are the basis of all our knowledge.

The debates between Stoics and Academics from Arcesilaus' time onwards were focused on the question whether there are such cognitions and cognitive impressions. Academics found a plethora of arguments to question the existence of such impressions which by their very character are guaranteed to be true. For instance, they referred to vivid

hallucinations, which seem, at least to those affected, to have the same character as impressions we have under normal conditions; also to the possibility that God or gods might induce an impression in you which in no way differs from the kind of impression you would have if you saw something under ideal conditions, but which nevertheless was false (Cicero, *Ac. Pr.* 49–50). It is difficult to determine which of these arguments go back to Arcesilaus.

But it is reasonable to assume that at least this much of the argument goes back to Arcesilaus. Suppose there are two men, twins, who look exactly alike. They also are dressed exactly alike. The visual conditions are ideal. You have the impression, looking at one of them, that Castor has a white dress on. This impression has its origin in a fact, rather than just being the product of an abnormal state of your mind, and it represents the fact with as much faithfulness as you could possibly desire. But what you see, under ideal conditions, actually is Pollux with a white dress on, who looks exactly like Castor with a white dress on. The Stoic response is that there are no two things which are not distinct, and that distinct things do not exactly look alike. Arcesilaus' answer is to question whether there are no two things which are exactly alike, and the Stoics have no way to definitely settle this question in their favour. We should note in passing that this indicates that Academic arguments do not have to rely exclusively on premisses accepted by the opponent. In order for the argument to count as dialectical, it suffices, if a premiss cannot just be dismissed by the opponent. In any case, it seems in response to arguments like the one concerning the twins that Zeno stipulates that an impression, in order to be cognitive, has to be clear and distinct in such a way that it could not possibly be false. Hence, given that Castor and Pollux are distinct, the impression that Castor has a white dress on, if it is clear and distinct, cannot have its origin in the fact that Pollux is standing in front of one with a white dress on. For the impression, to be clear and distinct, will have to represent Castor as having a look which Pollux, being distinct, can never have.

Once this further stipulation is made, though, Arcesilaus argues that there is no impression, under however ideal circumstances it may have been obtained, such that one could not find an impression exactly like it which was false. And so he produced examples of impressions which we clearly would not trust to be true, because they are formed under abnormal conditions, but which arguably are exactly alike the impressions we form under ideal conditions. Hence, the Stoics had to argue that no impressions formed under abnormal conditions can have the character of clarity and distinctness which impressions obtained under normal conditions have, without, though, being able to settle this question. And, as this question was not settled, Arcesilaus felt free to assume that there are no cognitive impressions, that is to say impressions which could not possibly be false, given their character as impressions.

Now, presupposing these arguments, Arcesilaus could argue in the following manner. A wise man will not give assent to impressions which do not deserve assent, that is to say a wise man will not hold mere opinions. But there are no impressions which deserve our assent because they are cognitive. Hence a wise man will not give assent to any impression. For to do so would be to hold a mere opinion.

So Arcesilaus does argue that it is wise not to give assent to any impression, and, by implication, that it is wise not to have any beliefs whatsoever. This argument is the major source for the assumption that Arcesilaus advocated total suspension of judgement. But this argument does not constitute any evidence for this assumption. It is just another dialectical argument. That it contains a premiss not shared by the Stoics does not mean that it is not dialectical. In fact, it rests on a number of assumptions, for instance the assumption that there are no cognitive impressions that one could wisely assent to, which themselves are the conclusions of dialectical arguments which rest on assumptions of which it is difficult to see why Arcesilaus should commit himself to them, or even could himself commit to them, if he wanted to argue non-dialectically that one should always suspend judgement. It rests on the Stoic notion of cognitive impressions and the Stoic assumption that only cognitive impressions deserve assent. This particular argument, then, is just another dialectical argument to whose conclusion Arcesilaus is in no way committed. Its point is to put the Stoics into the awkward position to have to acknowledge that it is not clear, as they assume it is, that wisdom presupposes the existence of cognitions and cognitive impressions, as without them we would never attain knowledge. If the Stoics are so determined to defend the existence of cognitive impressions as they conceive of them, it is because they think that there is no other way in which we will be able to escape mere opinion and attain knowledge and wisdom. But the argument presents us with an alternative: we can avoid mere opinion by suspension of judgement, and perhaps this is what wisdom consists in, at least the wisdom attainable by us.

There is, apart from this argument that a wise man will suspend judgement, another major reason which might make one think that Arcesilaus actually advocates universal suspense of judgement. Obviously Arcesilaus' opponents challenged Arcesilaus' conclusion, claiming that life without belief is impossible. We should note that this claim can be understood in two ways. It might be the claim that a genuinely human life, a good life, is not possible without some assumptions about the nature of the world and about what is good and what is bad. This is what both Epicureans and Stoics claimed. This is what seems to have motivated late Academic sceptics to allow for beliefs. And this prompted yet later ancient philosophers to espouse views about the world and what is good, even if the epistemic status of these views seemed dubious even to them. But it also might be the more radical claim that life is impossible, if you do not allow

yourself even such trivial beliefs as the belief that a wagon is coming your way, rather than just such beliefs as 'losing one's life is a bad thing'. But let us assume that the claim was the more radical claim. Now it is clear that Arcesilaus did accept the challenge by arguing that the sceptic in practice would follow what is reasonable *(eulogon)*, without thereby giving assent to anything, making any judgement as to what is true or false (*Math*. VII, 158). It is tempting to infer from this that Arcesilaus, as he accepted the challenge, must have thought that he actually was committed to the view that one should never give assent to anything. But, though it is tempting to think this, to think so is to overlook the fact that Arcesilaus may not have felt committed to the thesis that one always should withhold assent (which, in any case, would have involved some kind of contradiction), but may have felt that the dialectic of this argument forced him to defend the possibility of a life without assent. For the argument to the effect that a wise man will always suspend judgement will not constitute a threat to the Stoic position, if its conclusion is not dialectically sustainable. The assumption of a life without assent is no threat to the assumption that there must be cognitive impressions, if there is to be wisdom, if it cannot be dialectically defended. The conclusion that it is wise always to withhold assent contradicts the Stoic thesis that it is wise sometimes to give assent, namely when one has a cognitive impression. This contradiction is no threat to the Stoic thesis, if the contradictory just can be dismissed. Arcesilaus' answer as to how one might wisely live without assent is no more than a dialectical move to ensure that the argument to the effect that it is wise to always suspend judgement retain its dialectical force.

Such an interpretation of Arcesilaus' arguments as being dialectical seems to me to be the best explanation of the evidence. To adopt such an interpretation is by no means to adopt the view that all Arcesilaus was concerned with was to expose the questionability of each and any philosophical thesis. Socrates clearly was concerned with the beliefs which guide us in what we think and what we do in daily life. The Stoics had a similar concern. The point of Stoic doctrine was to convince one, for instance, that only wisdom and virtue are a good, and that hence in real life one should not get excited, or anxious, over the mere thought that one had a lot of money in the bank. We should assume that Arcesilaus had a similar concern. And part of this concern must have been that what we think and what we do in everyday life is questionable to the extent that it is guided by beliefs which philosophically are questionable, like the beliefs which the Stoics want us to guide our lives by, for instance the belief that only wisdom and virtue are a good, or that we should only believe something if we have a corresponding clear and distinct impression, because only this will guarantee cognition. A prerequisite for our being able to see how questionable these beliefs are, is that we are disabused of the idea that we, or some authorities, know them to be true. To disabuse us of this idea, and

at the same time to show how questionable these beliefs are, dialectical arguments are the ideal means.

CARNEADES

There is no clear evidence of any significant philosophical development in the Academy in the period between Arcesilaus and Carneades. The situation is dramatically different once we come to Carneades. According to Apollodorus (DL IV, 65) he was born in 214/13 BC; according to another tradition (*Ac. Pr.* 16) some five years earlier. He died in 129/28 BC. He succeeded Hegesinus as scholarch (DL IV, 60), certainly before 155 BC, when he was a member of an Athenian embassy to Rome whose other members, the Peripatetic Critolaus and the Stoic Diogenes, were scholarchs. That Carneades' scholarchate marked a new period in the history of the school is reflected, for instance, by the fact that, according to Sextus Empiricus (*Pyrrh.* I, 220), a third and New Academy (as opposed to the Old Academy of Plato and the Middle Academy of Arcesilaus) begins with Carneades. There is a good deal of evidence concerning Carneades' philosophical activity, and the evidence is a good deal better than the evidence we have for Arcesilaus. Though Carneades, like Arcesilaus, did not leave any writings, he had in Clitomachus an able successor who was a voluminous writer and who tried to defend Carneades' position, as he understood it, though there was a dispute about the correct interpretation of Carneades' position among Carneades' students. Moreover, Cicero, himself an Academic sceptic and our main source for Academic scepticism mainly through his *Academica,* was near enough in time to Carneades to know people who had listened to, or even had been students of, Carneades, for instance his Academic teacher Philo. Thus, whereas Arcesilaus already by the time of Cicero had become a shadowy figure of the distant past, interpreted and reinterpreted on the basis of very little hard evidence to suit the interests of his Academic successors and their opponents, the evidence we have concerning Carneades is much more direct, more detailed, and more vivid.

There are certain obvious differences between Arcesilaus and Carneades. Whereas Arcesilaus seems to have focused very much on Stoicism, and hence on Stoic epistemology, Carneades cast his net wider. Carneades also discussed ethical questions in a way which has left a mark in our evidence. And it seems, to judge from his discussion of the end of life, that he made an effort not just to attack particular actual theses on a given topic, but to think of them systematically as different possible theses to hold on a particular question, which would open up the way for a discussion of new possible theses which had not yet been espoused.

Another striking difference between Arcesilaus and Carneades is this. In the evidence concerning Arcesilaus we repeatedly find the claim that Arcesilaus thought not only that one could argue for and against any

thesis, but that the arguments would balance each other out, would be of equal force *(isostheneia),* and hence would lead to suspension of judgement. There are obvious difficulties about this thought, if we want to avoid construing it as a dogmatic claim. Perhaps it is no more than the thought that if we look at dialectical arguments, for instance Socrates' arguments, it seems that for any thesis an equally plausible case always can be made on the other side of the question. Now, conspicuously, in the evidence concerning Carneades such a reference to the equal force of arguments on both sides is missing. There still is the assumption that there are arguments on both sides, but there is not the additional suggestion that they will balance each other out. This might reflect an attempt to avoid what might seem like a dogmatic claim. But it also might reflect the thought that, however much we argue on both sides of a question, there still is the possibility that, in the end, we find one view a lot more plausible than the other. And one reason for this might be that we have a view or a belief quite independently of any arguments we have to justify this view or belief. If I see a green book and believe that the book is green, it is not on the basis of an argument with the conclusion that this book is green that I have this belief. If challenged to produce an argument, I could try to do so. But there will be an argument to the contrary. And this might convince me that my argument is not conclusive, in fact that I have no justification for my belief. But it might still seem to me—I might still have the impression—that the book is green. I might still think that it is plausible that the book is green. And this might be so, not because I am stubborn and not open to reasoning. For I have understood and granted that my argument is not conclusive. But neither is the argument on the other side, and I did not have the belief on the basis of an argument in the first place. There are at least three different kinds of cases we need to distinguish here. There are beliefs which are induced by nothing but an argument. We would not have these beliefs, unless we had arguments to support them. Correspondingly, such beliefs will disappear, once we see, in the light of arguments to the contrary, that we have no justification for our belief. But there also are beliefs which we hold, not, or not just, on the basis of arguments, but, for instance, by appeal to authority, for instance the authority of scientists. Now, one might also successfully question whether one was rationally entitled to these beliefs. But then there are beliefs which one not only does not have for a reason, but of which it seems unreasonable to demand that one should only have them, if one has an argument to support them, though it may not be unreasonable to demand, given the appropriate circumstances, a justification for the belief. A case in question is the belief that the book in front of me is green. That I will not be able to come up with a conclusive argument to prove that the book is green, does not necessarily mean that it is just a reflection on my rationality, if I continue to have the impression or even the belief that the book is green. Whatsoever the arguments on either side, it still seems to me to be highly

plausible that the book is green, especially if the arguments on the other side do not appeal to any features of the particular situation to cast doubt on my belief.

There are two kinds of evidence to suggest that in the case of Carneades such considerations may not be irrelevant. First, Cicero (*Ac. Pr.* 67) reports that Carneades advanced an argument which is an exact counterpart to the argument of Arcesilaus, which we discussed above, that the wise man will never give assent. Carneades' argument, however, in addition to the first premiss, that if the wise man ever gives assent, he will have mere opinions, took as a second premiss the denial of Arcesilaus' conclusion, to infer the denial of Arcesilaus' second premiss, and thus to conclude that even the wise man sometimes will have opinions. This again can be interpreted as a merely dialectical argument. Even if the first premiss will not be accepted by the Stoics, they cannot just dismiss it, because they can only reject it by relying on the questionable assumption that there are clear and distinct impressions. Without this assumption, on their own view, they would have to grant that even the wise man will sometimes have mere opinions. But, if cognitive impressions were just introduced to avoid this conclusion, not much progress seems to have been made. In fact, Arcesilaus' and Carneades' argument as a pair seem to confront the Stoic with the choice to assume either that the wise man will never give assent to anything or that he will sometimes hold mere opinions, unless they can produce reason to believe that there are cognitive impressions which substantially goes beyond the claim that otherwise we will never get beyond mere opinions.

But some Academics obviously interpreted Carneades' argument, as we can see from the passage in Cicero, not as a merely dialectical argument, but as expressing Carneades' view, just as they took the conclusion of Arcesilaus' argument to express Arcesilaus' view. As a result we would have a very substantial disagreement between Arcesilaus and Carneades. And the kinds of considerations adduced earlier would explain why one at least interpreted Carneades in this way. There are impressions and beliefs such that the bearing arguments can have on these impressions and beliefs is intrinsically limited, even if there is some bearing, as in the case of the belief that this book is green.

Secondly, there is all the evidence according to which Carneades distinguished different kinds of impressions. To begin with, just as Arcesilaus had said, in order to evade the argument that life without belief is impossible, that the sceptic will follow what seems reasonable *(eulogon),* without giving assent to an impression, so Carneades said that the sceptic will follow what seems plausible *(pithanon),* without giving assent. The term *'pithanon'* was rendered by Cicero as *'probabile'*. It is crucial that this term not be misunderstood. Cicero translates the term in this way, because Cicero himself believes that, if impressions have a certain kind of plausibility, are well considered, one can approve of them even as a sceptic, in a sense assent to them, as long as one keeps in mind that it is not certain

whether they are true. And the reason why Cicero thinks this, is that he also thinks that impressions we have on the basis of due consideration of the matter are more probable in the sense of being more likely to be true. But, unless we take Carneades' argument that the wise man will sometimes have mere opinions to express his own view, we should assume that by 'plausible' Carneades does not mean 'something which is likely to be true'. For Carneades, plausibility to whatever degree is one matter; truth and probability are another matter. And for Carneades, evidence, similarly, is one thing; truth another (cf. *Ac. Pr.* 34). However evident it might seem to you that this book is green, this does not mean that it is true that it is green. For something to be plausible, or even evident, it suffices that something strikes you as being this way, however much you think about it and take the arguments to the contrary into account.

In fact, Carneades talks about the various ways in which we can test our impressions (*Ac. Pr.* 33; 36; *Math.* VII, 175–89; *Pyrrh.* I. 227–9). There is some confusion in our sources concerning these tests. But it seems to me that Carneades' idea is simply this. In the case of perceptual impressions, for instance, the Stoics themselves seem to take the view that an impression is guaranteed to be true, if it has come about in the right way, namely under normal conditions. So, one thing you can do to test an impression, is to check the conditions under which it arose or arises. Obviously, this is not in the spirit of the Stoic theory. For, according to Stoic theory, cognitive, that is to say clear and distinct, impressions are criterial, and hence, to rely on further evidence to establish their cognitivity, would be to give up on their status as criteria. Nevertheless, we can check impressions in this way, as the Stoics themselves assume we do. If the object is too far away, we move closer to establish normal conditions. But we can also test impressions for coherence with other impressions of the same object which we already have or might obtain. For any given impression to be tested we can use both tests. Obviously it does not matter in which order we do so. What does matter is that the further impressions we have, or obtain, on either test to use them as evidence, can themselves be subjected to both tests, which involves the use of further evidence which again can be evaluated critically. It is clear that this procedure, for however long we follow it, will never guarantee that the impression to be tested at the outset is true, because for this the evidence against which we test it would have to be guaranteed to be true. So this test will not allow us to establish an impression as cognitive, unless we already assume that we can decide that certain impressions are cognitive without some such test. But how then do we know that they are cognitive? If the answer is that they are clear and distinct or evident, we will again argue that evidence is no guarantee for truth.

There is another way, though, to understand Carneades' remarks about differences between impressions according to whether they pass certain tests. They can be understood as part of Carneades' answer to the question

as to what one does in life, if one universally suspends judgement. The answer may be that one does what everybody else does. One follows one's impressions, and depending on how important and how urgent the matter is, one will test one's impressions to the extent that this seems possible and worth while, so as to content oneself in the end, for the purposes at hand, with an impression of which one knows, though, that it is not guaranteed to be true, since one always could continue the test. Such a response again could be understood dialectically. But it also could be interpreted as an observation by Carneades as to what people, including sceptics, actually do, it being understood that this in no way conflicts with their scepticism. The fact that an impression passes such a test up to some level does not mean that it is true, and need not be taken to mean that it is true by somebody who relies on such an impression for practical purposes.

So there are at least two aspects of Carneades' arguments which might make one wonder whether Carneades did not allow for the possibility that, even as a sceptic, one might have an impression which one accepts concerning the matters one perceives, or even concerning the matters which are the subject of philosophical debate. Whether this, then, should be called a 'belief' or not, in part is a matter of terminology, ancient and modern, in part a matter of how we should conceive of beliefs.

One thing, though, is rather clear. Carneades cannot unequivocally have said that a sceptic may have beliefs concerning matters at issue in philosophy. For otherwise his own students would not have disagreed as to whether this had been his view. And, if Carneades himself had such beliefs, he clearly managed remarkably well never to unequivocally commit himself to such a belief. For Clitomachus, his long-time follower, could claim that he was never able to find out what Cameades' view was.

CLITOMACHUS AND PHILO

Whatever Carneades' own view on the matter of beliefs may have been, it became a subject of controversy among Carneades' students: not only what Carneades had thought on the matter, but also what one as a sceptic should think about it. Metrodorus, later followed by Philo of Larissa, took the position that the sceptic can have beliefs, even concerning philosophical matters, as long as one is clear that there is nothing to guarantee the truth of these beliefs. This was to become the dominant position in the Academy under Philo. But it was Clitomachus who succeeded Carneades as scholarch, and Clitomachus took a very different view.

Clitomachus is the first sceptic we know of to distinguish two senses of 'withholding assent', and hence, by implication, two senses of 'assent' (*Ac. Pr.* 104). In the first sense of 'withholding assent' one will never in any way assent to anything. In the second sense one will withhold assent, if one refuses to answer questions in such a way as to approve or disapprove of anything, to say or deny anything. The way this is put is somewhat

confusing and has raised doubts as to the text. But the explication which follows seems to make it clear enough what is meant. 'Assent' can be either understood in the sense of 'unqualified assent', or it can be understood in the sense of the assent involved when one accepts a perceptual impression or in a discussion answers questions with 'yes' or 'no', depending on whether one finds something plausible or not. Hence, if it is said that the wise man will withhold assent, this can be understood in two quite different ways. It can be understood in the sense that the wise man will never give his unqualified assent to anything. But it also can be understood as meaning that the wise man will never give his assent in the sense involved in accepting a perceptual impression or in answering questions. And Clitomachus seems to claim that the way one should understand the remark that the wise man always withholds assent is in the former sense, rather than in the latter. So, according to Clitomachus, there must be a qualified sense of assent, in which even a sceptic will give assent, both in everyday life, when, for instance, it comes to things one perceives, but also in discussions.

Such a distinction of two kinds of assent, and, correspondingly, of two kinds of senses of 'withholding assent' or 'suspending judgement', seems crucial to the further history of scepticism in antiquity. The distinction was drawn in different ways, but it seems subsequently to have been drawn by everybody, by Academics and then by Pyrrhonean sceptics. It allowed them all to continue to insist that a sceptic does universally suspend assent or judgement, namely unqualified assent, while at the same time allowing for assent in some qualified sense. This is the position of the pre-Roman Philonean Academics in Cicero, *Ac. Pr.* 148. It is the position of Aenesidemus, when he says in his *Pyrrhonean Discourses* that Pyrrho does not determine anything dogmatically, because of the arguments on both sides (DL IX, 106). The claim is not that Pyrrho does not determine anything unqualifiedly, that is to say that Pyrrho does not say anything, one way or the other, in whatever way or sense of 'determining' you wish. The claim rather is that Pyrrho does not say anything, one way or the other, dogmatically. For, as Aenesidemus continues, Pyrrho will follow the phenomena, that is to say accept and rely on what he cannot help but think about things, given how they appear to him. This seems to correspond to the distinction drawn by Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrh.* I, 13, between two senses of 'dogma', of which only one is rejected. In fact, Sextus, too, explicitly says here, and will repeat in I, 15, that the sceptic will assent in certain cases in a certain way, namely when he is affected by the appearance of things in such a way that he cannot help but think about them in a certain way.

Now, to see more clearly what Clitomachus may have in mind, we should first see in which way he could intend to draw the distinction so as to yield a position which differs from that of Metrodorus and Philo, with whom, as we know, he disagreed. Perhaps we have to begin with the fact

that on the Stoic view we just have assent to impressions. There may be a distinction between the sense in which children, or even animals, might be said to assent to impressions, and the sense in which mature, rational human beings assent to impressions. So there is a Stoic distinction in place, which a sceptic could make use of. But, as to mature human beings, in Stoicism there is just one kind of assent, namely an assent to a rational impression which constitutes a belief, more precisely, depending on the impression, a cognition or a mere opinion. In every case, in the case of mature human beings, assenting to an impression involves taking it to be true. Let us call such an assent to an impression which involves taking the impression to be true an unqualified assent. When a sceptic says that he withholds assent he means to say that he withholds unqualified assent, that is, he does not take an impression to be true. Now, Philoneans seem to think that we are able to refine our impressions in such a way that they are true, or if not true, pretty much like the truth or likely to be true, though we cannot tell in any case whether they are true. So, they might give qualified assent in the sense that they accept an impression, not in the sense that they take it to be true, but in the more complex sense that they take it to be, if not true, pretty close to the truth, or at least likely to be true. And one would understand why they thought that such an assent still would constitute a belief or an opinion. For they might agree that, if we have an opinion, this does not mean that we believe that what we, for the purpose at hand, take to be the case, actually is true, let alone that we are certain that it is true. There is a certain tension here, but this may be largely due to our use of the word 'belief', as opposed to the Greek word *'doxa'*. But we certainly understand what it means to take something to be the case for the purposes at hand, or to go on the assumption that something is the case, without committing oneself unqualifiedly to the view that it actually is the case.

Now Clitomachus, to have a different view of the matter, just has to hold on to Carneades' understanding of the plausible, or at least his interpretation of Carneades' understanding. An impression may be plausible or even evident, but, however plausible it is, this does not mean that it is true, or even that it is pretty much like the truth or likely to be true. So one can take an impression to be highly plausible, but this, quite straightforwardly, does not mean that one gives assent to it in the unqualified sense in which this involves taking it to be true. And, if one is a Clitomachean, rather than a Philonean, one does not even take it to be likely to be true. So, what then is the qualified sense in which one as a Clitomachean might give assent to an impression? Here we should also take into account that it is characteristic of the Metrodorean and Philonean position that even a wise person may have opinions, whereas Clitomachus denies this. So the kind of assent Clitomachus allows for should be such that giving assent does not amount to having an opinion. This we can achieve, if we distinguish between a view and an opinion. Having a view is just having an impression one contents oneself with, perhaps after having

considered the matter carefully, if it needs careful consideration. So this is the view one has, but however carefully one has considered the matter one does not even have the slightest inclination to think that it is true. Nevertheless, this is one's view. Having a view, even having a carefully considered view, does not involve believing that it is true, nor even that it is likely to be true, or pretty much like the truth. Pyrrhoneans later, in their attempt to create a distance between themselves and the Academics, will interpret Carneades and Clitomachus along Philonean lines. Just as a Philonean might be strongly inclined to think that something is true, as long as he does not unqualifiedly take it to be true (*Ac. Pr.* 148), so Pyrrhoneans will suggest that the followers of Carneades and Clitomachus, unlike Arcesilaus, follow the plausible with a strong inclination to take it to be true (*Pyrrh.* I, 230). But, though this is true of Philo and the Philoneans, it is not true of Carneades and Clitomachus. If, then, we assume that Clitomachus relied on such an austere notion of a view, such that having a view did not even entail believing it to be probably true, or being inclined to believe it to be true, we also understand why Clitomachus would have thought that a view, construed thus austerely, did not amount to a belief or an opinion. And so he could continue to say that the sceptic will have no beliefs or opinions, though he will have views, that is to say accept or give assent to impressions in this qualified sense.

Now the views a Clitomachean sceptic may have, according to Cicero, *Ac. Pr.* 104, explicitly were said to be of two kinds: they are the kinds of views one relies on in everyday life, like, for instance, perceptual views concerning the colour of things. But they are also views concerning the matters under discussion, for instance philosophical views. No matter how much one argues about the existence of motion or places, one might in the end still have the impression that things move and that they move to some place. This does not mean that one believes that there is motion or that there are places, but it does mean that, if one is asked what one thinks, one would say that one thinks that things move to some place.

Now Clitomachus also seems to claim, though, that he is interpreting Carneades. In any case, in the debate about Carneades' position, referred to in Cicero, *Ac. Pr.* 78 (cf. 108), Clitomachus claims that Carneades just agreed dialectically that the wise man sometimes will have opinions. But how will this be compatible with Clitomachus' claim that he never found out what Carneades' view was? Even, if we distinguish between a view and an opinion, there still will be the problem why Carneades avoided revealing his view, if, according to Clitomachus, there is nothing wrong for a sceptic not only to have a view, but also to say what it is. Perhaps Carneades in fact did not think that there was anything intrinsically wrong with saying what one's view is, but still systematically refrained from doing it, since he thought that it would be of no help to anybody to tell them his view, indeed it might be of some harm, because it might be thought that there was something authoritative about his views.

Against this background we can be brief about Philo of Larissa who succeeded Clitomachus as scholarch around 110 BC, and presided over what looks like the collapse of the Academy as an institution in the wake of Sulla's capture of Athens in 87 BC in the course of the Mithridatic War; Philo actually had already taken refuge in Rome where he continued to teach for almost another decade.

To understand the conflicting notices about Philo we have first of all to keep firmly in mind that Philo at least twice changed position in a radical way. He started out as a follower of Clitomachus and Carneades. He then adopted the kind of position for which he was best known, which he taught as scholarch in Athens, and to which he also converted Cicero. But finally, in his Roman days, he again switched position quite radically, to the surprise and, it seems, dismay of some of his earlier followers. For what he taught now, it seems, was no longer that the truth about things ultimately is beyond our firm grasp, that nothing can be known for certain. He now taught that things naturally can be known, that it is just that we do not have a criterion of truth of the kind the Stoics were claiming we had, which would allow us in any individual case to be certain that we actually did have knowledge of this particuiar matter. So there are lots of things we know, for instance the colours of things, but also many other things. For we are by nature constructed in such a way as to generally get things right, for instance in perception. It is just that we can never be sure in a particular case whether we got it right (*Pyrrh.* I, 235; *Ac. Pr.* 18). This view still can be called 'sceptical', in that it still involves the assumption that one should never give unqualified assent, since one never knows in a particular case whether what one assents to is true.

What infuriated some (cf. *Ac. Pr.* 11–12) was that each time Philo changed his position he rewrote the history of the Academy so as to make it appear that his new position had been the true position of the school all along. The first change was accompanied by a reinterpretation of Carneades, and perhaps also of Arcesilaus. The second change again was presented as in line with the teaching of the Academy from its very beginnings. Philo apparently argued that the position that nothing can be known, which by now had become identified with the Academic position, due to Metrodorus and his own teaching, was a position Arcesilaus had developed only relative to the Stoic doctrine of cognitive impressions and the conception of knowledge which goes with it (*Ac. Pr.* 18; *Pyrrh.* I, 235). So, it is relative to a conception like the Stoics have that nothing can be known. But Arcesilaus had never meant to argue that nothing can be known in any sense, Philo now claimed.

Philo's final turn seems not to have gained him any new followers who could have carried on the traditions of the sceptical Academy. His most important student, Antiochus, had decided already, in reaction to Philo's dogmatic and probabilistic scepticism, to declare the history of the Academy from Arcesilaus onwards an aberration, and to return to the doctrine of the

Old Academy, which he set out to distil out of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. There was some attempt to revive the Philoneanism of the pre-Roman period (*Ac. Pr.* 11), but there was no philosopher of sufficient stature to carry on this tradition. Academic scepticism of one form or another continued to have its adherents, for instance figures as diverse as Plutarch and Favorinus of Arelate. But it had ceased to exist as a school.

PYRRHONEAN SCEPTICISM

AENESIDEMUS

It is generally agreed nowadays that Pyrrhonean scepticism, whatever its precise relations to Pyrrho may be, owes the particular form in which we know it, primarily through the works of Sextus Empiricus, to Aenesidemus. It also seems that Aenesidemus must have written in the first century BC; recent scholarly opinion has moved away from a date late in the century, primarily to accommodate Cicero's silence on Pyrrhonism, to a date early in the century which, among other things, would best fit Aenesidemus' remarks on his Academic contemporaries.

What motivated Aenesidemus in his work is clear enough. Aenesidemus objected to the turn the sceptical Academy had taken under Philo. In his view, Academics had become virtually indistinguishable from Stoics, holding philosophical views, in fact more or less the same views, for instance in ethics, except that the Academics, equally dogmatically, claimed that, of course, nothing can be known. Photius, who reports this (*Bibliotheca* c. 212, 169b40 ff.), also talks as if Aenesidemus had been, or even had presented himself, as originally an Academic (169b33).

Aenesidemus wrote a good deal, for instance an *On Inquiry* (DL IX, 106), or an *Outline of Pyrrhonism* (DL IX, 78), but a major work of his was the *Pyrrhonean Discourses,* in 8 books (DL IX, 106), and we are fortunate in that for this work we at least have the short abstract made of it by Photius in his *Bibliotheca* (c. 212). The first book constituted some kind of introduction, presumably rather like the first book of Sextus Empiricus' *Outlines of Pyrrhonism;* it dealt at length with the difference between Academic scepticism and Pyrrhonism, but also gave a brief outline of the Pyrrhonist position as a whole. Books II to V dealt with questions of cognition and questions of nature, while the remaining three books were devoted to ethics. Obviously in the last book Aenesidemus argues against the claim that there is such a thing as the end of life, but in particular also against the claim that *eudaimonia* constituted the end (Photius, *Bibliotheca* c. 212, 170b31 ff.). Nevertheless in the introductory book, he holds out as a promise for those who follow the Pyrrhonean way that it will lead to *eudaimonia* (ibid. 169b27).

Scepticism in the ordinary, modern sense had been supported from the fifth century BC onwards by a number of observations which turned into

commonplaces, for instance the observation that different people perceive the same things in different ways. Aenesidemus, it seems, collected them under ten headings as ten tropes, or modes of argument, one might avail oneself of in trying to question any given claim in order to achieve suspension of judgement. Obviously Pyrrhoneans set great stock on these tropes. Their discussion takes up paragraphs 36–163 of the first book of Sextus' *Outlines of Pyrrhonism.*

Pyrrhonism after Aenesidemus enjoyed a long history, though there is no indication that it ever gained a large following. DL IX, 116 provides us with a list of Pyrrhoneans which takes us to the beginning of the third century AD with Saturninus, another Empiricist doctor. But, though the school has a history of almost three centuries, we get no sense of a philosophical development. There are a good number of Pyrrhoneans we can identify and attach this or that fact or view to, but this never adds up to a distinctive philosophical profile. Obviously the doctrine of tropes was developed. The list of ten tropes was rearranged. A clever scheme of five tropes was introduced by Agrippa (DL IX, 88–9; *Pyrrh.* I, 164–77) whom we, though, cannot further identify. As Barnes has shown, they were almost certainly based in part on a reflection on Aristotle's remarks at the beginning of the *Posterior Analytics* about the need for first principles which do not require any proof, if there is to be demonstrative knowledge. For three of the five modes are the modes of infinite regress, of circularity, and of hypothesis, to which are added the modes of disagreement and of relativity. The modes apparently are meant to form a system such that in any discussion of any question they will jointly guarantee that one is able to neutralize any dogmatic claim.

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS

If we are quite well informed about Pyrrhonism, it is because two writings by its last major exponent in antiquity, Sextus Empiricus, have come down to us: the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* in three books, and the *Adversus Mathematicos* in eleven books. The former consists of two parts: a general exposition of Pyrrhonean scepticism in book I, and arguments against dogmatic positions in logic, physics and ethics in the last two books. The *Adversus Mathematicos* is entirely adversarial. The first six books criticize the doctrines within the liberal arts, apart from dialectic, the last five books criticize the philosophical doctrines in dialectic or logic, physics and ethics. Sextus Empiricus seems to have written before AD 200.

In Sextus Empiricus there is at least superficially a clear demarcation between dialectical arguments and remarks, on the one hand, and remarks *in propria persona,* as it were, on the other. There is an attempt on a large scale to systematically neutralize all major dogmatic theses in philosophy by dialectical arguments to the contrary. And there is at least some attempt to do the same for the liberal arts. These arguments often are layered in the

sense that they not only question the thesis, but also the crucial notion involved in the thesis, arguing that it is ill-formed or at least controversial, such that it is not even clear what the dogmatic wants one to assent to. But it is clear that according to Sextus as a Pyrrhonean one not only suspends judgement concerning theses in philosophy or in the arts, but concerning any claim whatsoever, even concerning things which manifestly appear to be the case, the phenomena (*Pyrrh.* I, 8). Since there are conflicting phenomena or arguments advanced against particular claims of whatever kind, obviously these arguments are not to be understood as proving the claims to be false, but as showing them to be questionable. They are dialectical.

Now, as to the remarks make by the sceptic *in propria persona,* for instance the remarks made by Sextus Empiricus in *Pyrrh.,* book I, they are not to be understood straightforwardly, either, that is to say as claims to the truth. Sextus, right from the outset, in *Pyrrh.* I, 4, puts a rider on whatever he is going to say: he is just reporting his impressions, how things strike him at the moment, in the way an Empiricist doctor reports on his medical cases *(historia)*. Sextus, towards the end of *Pyrrh.* I, in 187–209 (cf. DL IX, 74–7), has a long section on how particular sceptical phrases have to be understood, namely non-dogmatically, as not involving any claim to the truth.

But within these remarks thus qualified by a general caveat, Sextus also tries to explain how this scepticism of unlimited scope still leaves room for the sceptics' having certain impressions or views, rather than others, for instance the impressions or views Sextus reports them as having in book I of *Pyrrh.* And they obviously are not restricted to reports of perceptual impressions or views, but include thoughts and reflections, for instance as to what philosophers are trying to do, what they have done, and whether they have succeeded in what they have been trying to do. After all, as Sextus points out, we are beings who not just naturally perceive, but also think about things (*Pyrrh.* I, 24). And perceiving or thinking about things, there are certain impressions which one seems to be stuck with. However much you think about motion, in the end it still leaves you with the impression that things move. And Sextus is even willing to say that the sceptic gives his assent to such impressions, as he cannot help but have them (*Pyrrh.* I, 13; 19). He does not seem to be particularly concerned whether we call this an 'impression' or a 'belief' (*Pyrrh.* I, 13), as long as it is understood that there is nothing dogmatic about it, that such an acceptance of, or assent to, an impression does not in the least involve the assumption that it is true. Such impressions, which a sceptic cannot help but have, will offer him enough guidance to pursue his life.

The suggestion had been, in particular the Stoic suggestion had been, that a rational, a meaningful, a good life is impossible unless one has the right view about the world and about what is good and what is bad. This is why philosophers had tried to acquire wisdom. In the light of this

assumption a sceptical life seems to be bound to be a failure, since it is not guided by such views. In fact, scepticism has the inherent tendency to eliminate such views, as one can help having them. So where does this leave the sceptic?

Sextus suggests that it turns out that it is the sceptic who will achieve, precisely because of his scepticism, what dogmatic philosophers had set out to achieve, namely peace of mind to the extent that this is a matter of our views or beliefs, and a minimum of suffering to the extent that this is unavoidable (*Pyrrh,* I, 25 ff.): in short happiness to the extent that this is attainable. The reason is this: the sceptic discovers that one can well live without having settled all the questions the dogmatic philosophers thought one had to have settled to have a good life. And the sceptic also discovers that being unencumbered by all these beliefs one actually can do without, one is no longer worried about things in the way one used to worry about them, when one had these beliefs. One may still worry about an illness, but one does not have the additional anxiety generated by the assumption that illness is an evil, or by assumptions as to what one might have to face, if one is going to die from this illness.

It would be a mistake, though, to think that a good life thus conceived of, namely a life unencumbered by self-imposed worries and concerns generated by dogmatic beliefs, was the end or ultimate aim of the sceptic in the sense in which philosophers talk about the end of life. It is not that the sceptic becomes a sceptic to attain this sort of life. It is that, having become a sceptic, he finds himself with this sort of life as a benefit, as it were. Nor is it the case that the sceptic all of a sudden turns into a dogmatic philosopher and claims that this is the good life, that this is the end which we should all aim at in all that we are doing. He is just making an observation, namely the observation that a sceptical life, far from being a disaster, in fact turns out to be the sort of life dogmatic philosophers in fact may have been looking for.

This life, the way Sextus imagines it, is not at all like the life of Pyrrho as suggested by the anecdotes about Pyrrho. It, at least on the face of it, is a rather conventional life (*Pyrrh.* I, 23–4). We follow the impressions we cannot help but have, given the way we perceive and think about things, we eat when we are hungry, we accept the traditional customs even in religious matters, and we exercise whatever art or craft we have learned. All this is possible, without being dogmatic about anything.

Needless to say, this attitude, however attractive it may seem to us, by the end of the second century AD increasingly seemed utterly unattractive, as people more and more obsessively were looking for the knowledge, or at least a set of beliefs, which would save the soul and which would provide some understanding of, and comfort in, a world in which one increasingly felt helplessly exposed to dark and obscure forces, which at any point might cruelly interfere with one's life, however piously one had followed the traditional customs of one's community. In any case, after the beginning of

the third century AD we no longer hear of any Pyrrhoneans. There lingered on still, at least in the West under the influence of Cicero, a kind of enlightened scepticism, which is represented by Caecilius in Minucius Felix's *Octavianus,* and which at one point attracted Augustine. But, with the conversion to Christianity, the days of even such vestiges of scepticism were counted, too.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in this chapter.

Ac. Post. Cicero, *Academica Posteriora*

Ac. Pr. Cicero, *Academica Priora*

DK Diels, H. and Kranz, W., *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker,* 6th edn, Berlin, Weidmann, 1951

DL Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* [6, 1]

Math. Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos (Against the Professors)*

PE Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*

Pyrrh. Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhôneiai hypotupôseis (Outlines of Pyrrhonism)*

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