EPICURUS *and the* Epicurean Tradition

Edited by
Jeffrey Fish
and Kirk R. Sanders

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EPICURUS AND THE EPICUREAN TRADITION

Epicureanism after the generation of its founders has been characterized as dogmatic, uncreative and static. But this volume brings together work from leading classicists and philosophers that demonstrates the persistent interplay in the school between historical and contemporary influences from outside the school and a commitment to the founders' authority. This interplay begins with Epicurus himself, who made arresting claims of intellectual independence, yet also admitted to taking over important ideas from predecessors, and displayed more receptivity than is usually thought to those of his contemporaries. The same principles of autonomy and openness figure importantly in the three major areas of focus in these essays: theology, politics and the emotions.

JEFFREY FISH is Associate Professor of Classics at Baylor University. He is the editor of Philodemus' *On the Good King according to Homer* (in preparation) and is the author of several articles related to the Herculaneum papyri and ancient Homeric scholarship. With Kirk Sanders he is co-editing *The Oxford Handbook of Epicureanism*.

KIRK R. SANDERS is Assistant Professor of Philosophy and the Classics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has authored numerous articles on ancient philosophy, and with Jeffrey Fish is currently co-editing *The Oxford Handbook of Epicureanism*.

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JEFFREY FISH AND KIRK R. SANDERS

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Note on Abbreviations

We have retained throughout the volume the original titles for Latin works. Titles of Greek works when cited in full are given in English translation. Abbreviations for Greek and Latin works generally follow those given in the prefaces of the ninth edition of *A Greek English Lexicon* (edited by Liddell, Scott and Jones, LSJ; Liddell et al. 1996) and the single-volume *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (OLD; Glare 1982) respectively. Any deviations (e.g., the use of specific titles for individual treatises within Plutarch's *Moralia*, etc.) should be self-explanatory.

In the case of Epicurus' works, the following abbreviations have been employed:

Ep. Hdt. = *Letter to Herodotus*
Ep. Pyth. = *Letter to Pythocles*
Ep. Men. = *Letter to Menoeceus*
KD = *Key Doctrines*
VS = *Vatican Sayings*
Nat. = *On Nature*

The titles of works by Philodemus of Gadara are given in English translation in the main body of the text. In their first occurrence within any given chapter, these are also accompanied by their traditionally assigned Latin titles: e.g., '*On Death* (*De morte*)'. Within the notes, the following traditional titles and abbreviations are employed for citation references:

Ad [cont.] = *To the [Friends of the School]*
Adv. [soph.] = *Against the Sophists*
De adul. = *On Flattery*
De dis = *On the Gods*
De elect. = *[On Choices and Avoidances]*
De ira = *On Anger*
De libert. dic. = *On Frank Criticism*
De morte = *On Death*

De mus. = *On Music*
Oec. = *On Household Management*
Piet. = *On Piety*
Rhet. = *On Rhetoric*
Sign. = *On Signs*

Titles of modern works are unabbreviated, with the exception of DK (= Diels and Kranz 1951), LS (= Long and Sedley 1987), SVF (= von Arnim 1903–5), and Us. (= Usener 1887).

Contributors

DAVID ARMSTRONG is Professor Emeritus of Classics at the University of Texas at Austin. He is the author of the monograph *Horace*, as well as various articles on Latin literature and ancient literary criticism. He is co-editor of *Vergil, Philodemus, and the Augustans*, and is currently collaborating on a new edition of Philodemus' *On Poems* 5.

ELIZABETH ASMIS is Professor of Classics at the University of Chicago. She is the author of *Epicurus' Scientific Method* and articles on Plato, Philodemus, Lucretius, Epictetus, Seneca and Marcus Aurelius.

MICHAEL ERLER is Professor Ordinarius in Classics at the University of Würzburg. He is the author of *Platon* and editor of *Epikureismus in der späten Republik und der Kaiserzeit*. He contributed the chapters 'Epikur', 'Die Schule Epikurs' and 'Lukrez' to *Die hellenistische Philosophie* in the Überweg series *Die Philosophie der Antike*, as well as 'Römische Philosophie' to *Einleitung in die lateinische Philologie*. He is also the author of numerous articles on Plato, Platonism, Epicurus, Epicureanism and Greek drama.

HOLGER ESSLER has held research fellowships at the University of Würzburg, Oxford University, and the University of Naples. He has written extensively on the Herculaneum papyri, and is currently completing a new edition, with commentary, of the third book of Philodemus' *On the Gods*.

JEFFREY FISH is Associate Professor of Classics at Baylor University. He has written on the Herculaneum papyri and Augustan poetry, and is co-editor of *Vergil, Philodemus, and the Augustans*. He is currently completing an edition, translation and commentary on Philodemus' *On the Good King according to Homer*.

DAVID KONSTAN is the John Rowe Workman Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Classics and Professor of Comparative Literature at Brown University, and Professor of Classics at New York University. Among his books are *Before Forgiveness: The Origins of a Moral Idea*, *A Life Worthy of the Gods: The Materialist Psychology of Epicurus* and *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature*.

KIRK R. SANDERS is Assistant Professor of Philosophy and the Classics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has published on a variety of topics and figures in Hellenistic philosophy, and is currently completing a translation of Xenophon's complete Socratic writings.

DAVID SEDLEY is Laurence Professor of Ancient Philosophy at the University of Cambridge, where he is also a Fellow of Christ's College. Among his books are *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (with A. A. Long), *Lucretius and the Transformation of Greek Wisdom* and *Creationism and Its Critics in Antiquity*.

VOULA TSOUNA is Professor of Philosophy at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is the co-author of *[Philodemus]: [On Choices and Avoidances]*, and author of *The Epistemology of the Cyrenaic School* and *The Ethics of Philodemus*, as well as of numerous articles on Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Jeffrey Fish and Kirk R. Sanders

The influential historiographer of philosophy Eduard Zeller, in his monumental *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, criticized the 'philosophical sterility' and 'intellectual torpor' of the Epicurean school, which, he claimed, remained more than any of its rivals confined throughout its history to the utterances of its founder.[1] In his abridged *Grundriß der Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie*, Zeller went so far as to assert that none of Epicurus' successors 'made any attempt worth mentioning' to the development of the school's doctrines.[2] A survey of much more recent histories of Hellenistic philosophy confirms that these stereotypes, which find antecedents already in antiquity,[3] have proven persistent.[4] As a consequence, studies of Epicurean philosophy remain disproportionately studies of Epicurus' philosophy. The present collection represents an attempt to help correct this imbalance and the misperceptions that sustain it. The essays contained herein explore various aspects of the interplay between tradition and innovation within Epicureanism.

That interplay begins with Epicurus himself, who was both heir to a rich philosophical tradition and the founder of a new philosophical school. The opening essay by Michael Erler, 'Autodidact and student: on the relationship of authority and autonomy in Epicurus and the Epicurean tradition',

[1] See Zeller 1923: 390–3. An English translation, based on an earlier edition of the same work, can be found in Zeller 1870: 394–6.

[2] Zeller 1883: 245–6. This particular claim was posthumously excised from the work's thirteenth (and final) edition by W. Nestle, who rewrote much of the material on Epicureanism; it is therefore absent from the most recent, English translation (= Zeller 1931); however, see Zeller 1890: 257.

[3] See, for example, the comments of Numenius preserved in Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 14.5.3: 'The later Epicureans as a rule never expressed opposition either to one another or to Epicurus on any matter worth mentioning. On the contrary, they even condemned innovation as indecent, or rather impious' (ὑπῆρξέ τε ἐκ τοῦ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον τοῖς μετέπειτα Ἐπικουρείοις μηδ' αὐτοῖς εἰπεῖν πω ἐναντίον οὔτε ἀλλήλοις οὔτε Ἐπικούρῳ μηδὲν εἰς μηδέν, ὅτου καὶ μνησθῆναι ἄξιον· ἀλλ' ἔστιν αὐτοῖς παρανόμημα, μᾶλλον δὲ ἀσέβημα, καὶ κατέγνωσται τὸ καινοτομηθέν).

[4] Cf. the descriptions of the Epicurean school in Long 1986a: 11; Ferguson 1990: 2261; Hossenfelder 1995: 101; and Everson 1997: 190.

explores how Epicurus balanced these two contrasting roles. Critics both ancient and modern have viewed Epicurus' repeated, emphatic declarations of his own independence and originality as transparent attempts to mask the extent of his indebtedness to various predecessors. Erler instead situates Epicurus' admittedly outré claims within a larger literary and philosophical debate focused on the proper relationship between innovation and commitment to established authority. In staking out a position that sought to give both authority and innovation their proper places, Epicurus also established guidelines that would govern the ways in which subsequent generations of Epicureans related to their own tradition.

Later Epicureans admittedly harboured an almost religious reverence toward the school's founding fathers, a group that included, in addition to Epicurus himself, Metrodorus, Polyaenus and Hermarchus. Lucretius even goes so far in the proem to Book 5 of his *De rerum natura* as to proclaim Epicurus divine: *deus ille fuit, deus*.[5] Direct criticism of or open disagreement with any of 'The Men' (οἱ ἄνδρες), as these four were collectively known, was out of the question.[6] With the possible exception of some of Epicurus' earliest writings, which the author himself explicitly recognized as flawed,[7] their collective written works assumed canonical status within the school.[8] Such reverential attitudes are not, however, unique to the Epicureans among Greek philosophical schools. Similar things could be said of the role Zeno of Citium and the statements or writings attributed to him play for later Stoics, or even of Plato and certain of his dialogues for the later Academy. Indeed, David Sedley has argued convincingly elsewhere that a quasi-religious commitment to the authority of a founding figure, or figures, is itself the principal source of cohesion and identity for philosophical movements generally during the Hellenistic period.[9]

Moreover, as the history of Christianity (to cite only one obvious example) amply illustrates, deep-rooted allegiance to the same authority figures and canonical texts precludes neither intense exegetical disputes among the faithful nor substantive doctrinal innovations over time. The depiction of Epicurus and his colleagues as authors of a system so comprehensive,

[5] Lucr. 5.8.

[6] On the special status enjoyed by Epicurus, Metrodorus, Polyaenus and Hermarchus, see esp. Longo Auricchio 1978.

[7] See Sedley 1973.

[8] There were also apparently at least some disagreements among later Epicureans about the authenticity of certain works attributed to the founders of Epicureanism, including the still much-debated *Letter to Pythocles*; see, for example, fr. 25 in Angeli and Colaizzo 1979: 80.

[9] Sedley 1989: 97.

richly detailed, and internally consistent as to leave room for subsequent generations to indulge in only occasional, niggling disagreements about relatively trivial matters, fits poorly the ancient evidence. (The realm of physics, where Epicurus himself borrowed many details of his system wholesale from the pre-Platonic atomists Democritus and Leucippus, may constitute a relative exception.) The debate among Epicureans as to whether Epicurus' denunciation of rhetoric was intended to be universal or restricted to its political and forensic branches has been well documented.[10] The intended scope and precise meaning of Epicurus' disparaging comments regarding attempts either to compose or to theorize about poetry were subjects of similar controversy.[11] And in *De finibus*, Cicero reports disagreements among contemporary Epicureans even on issues of central concern to their ethical theory. According to Torquatus, Cicero's Epicurean spokesperson in the dialogue, members of the school differed as to whether the claim that pleasure is the good requires proof – and if so, of what sort[12] – as well as regarding the proper basis for friendship.[13] While it is typical in such debates for all sides to champion their own fidelity and to insist upon their opponents' heresy,[14] this fact only highlights the difficulty or danger in applying labels such as 'orthodox' and 'heterodox' to disputants within a developing and evolving tradition,[15] as was Epicureanism throughout the Hellenistic period.

Issues of continuity and faithful exegesis are among the many at stake in the ongoing debate between so-called 'realist' and 'idealist' interpretations of Epicurus' pronouncements on the gods. In broad terms, realist interpretations maintain that Epicurus regarded the gods as genuine atomic compounds possessed of the properties that correspond to our concept (*prolêpsis*) of them. Idealist interpretations, by contrast, claim that Epicurus did not mean to attribute a mind-independent existence to his gods, but rather intended them as some form of 'thought-constructs'.[16] Proponents of an idealist interpretation necessarily see the realism vis-à-vis the

[10] See ibid., esp. 107–17; Chandler 2006.

[11] On many aspects of which, see the essays collected in Obbink 1995.

[12] Cic. *Fin*. 1.29–31.

[13] Cic. *Fin*. 1.65–70. On this issue see Warren 2004 and ch. 6 by Armstrong in this volume.

[14] A passage from Philodemus' *On Anger*, a text that receives a good deal of attention in the present volume, affords one particularly striking example. In col. 45,15–16, Philodemus expresses his indignation at Epicureans who 'wish to be faithful to the books' (ἐπὶ τοῖς βυβλιακοῖς εἶναι θέλουσιν) and yet disagree with him on the sense intended by Epicurus and Metrodorus in their use of the word θυμός.

[15] Cf. Dillon 1988: 125.

[16] The chapters by Sedley and Konstan in this volume (= ch. 3 and ch. 4 respectively) catalogue the principal figures and works on each side of the debate.

gods evident in, for example, Lucretius' *De rerum natura* and Cicero's summary of Epicurean theology in *De natura deorum* as departures, intentional or otherwise, from Epicurus' own stated views. The publication in 1987 of A. A. Long and David Sedley's *The Hellenistic Philosophers* was instrumental in reviving the idealist interpretation, which had earlier achieved a measure of popularity among commentators in the nineteenth century. In the present volume's 'Epicurus' theological innatism', Sedley himself seeks to offer further, indirect support for such a reading by focusing on one previously overlooked aspect of the debate, namely, the origin of our concept of the gods. In regard to concept formation generally, Epicurus is an acknowledged empiricist: our *prolêpseis* are products of repeated sense impressions; 'a memory of that which has frequently appeared from outside' (μνήμην τοῦ πολλάκις ἔξωθεν φανέντος), in the words of Diogenes Laertius (DL 10.33). According to Sedley, however, our concept of the gods represents an important exception. Epicurus, he argues, regards this particular *prolêpsis* as innate, the product of a universal human predisposition to form idealizations of the good life. But if our concept of the gods – unlike, say, that of horses or cats – does not result from any direct empirical encounter with external, living beings corresponding to the concept, neither can it afford any evidence of their independent existence. A central, epistemological prop of the realist interpretation is thus called into question. David Konstan's 'Epicurus on the gods' attempts to meet this challenge head on. In this vigorous defence of a realist reading, Konstan attempts to explain both the empirical origins of our *prolêpsis* of the gods and the compatibility of one of its central features, the gods' indestructibility, with the basic tenets of Epicurean physics.

Developments in the study of the Herculaneum papyri have proven especially important in opening up exciting new avenues for the study of the Epicurean tradition. Herculaneum, a Roman resort town located not far from present-day Naples, was buried by the same volcanic eruption of Mt Vesuvius in AD 79 that destroyed the neighbouring city of Pompeii. As with Pompeii, excavation of Herculaneum began in the mid-eighteenth century. Among the first and most important finds was a large villa that likely belonged to L. Calpurnius Piso, father-in-law to Julius Caesar and an important figure in the life of first-century Rome in his own right.[17] (He served, for example, as consul in 58 BC.) Inside this villa were found, in addition to large numbers of artistic treasures, the remains of a vast library

[17] On Piso as the villa's likely owner, see Sider 2005: 5–8; cf. Capasso 1991: 43–64.

of papyri, the surviving fragments of which are now housed at the *Biblioteca Nazionale* in Naples. Those papyri recovered to date are almost entirely philosophical in nature and Epicurean in origin. They include the only extant copies, partially preserved, of books from Epicurus' own magnum opus, *On Nature*.[18] Most of the hundreds of other works now identified were otherwise completely unknown to us.[19] Of these, by far the largest number were authored by a previously obscure Epicurean philosopher of the first century BC named Philodemus.

Prior to the rediscovery of Herculaneum, the only writings attributed to Philodemus known to have survived antiquity were some thirty-odd epigrams.[20] While his philosophical writings – which may never have been, strictly speaking, 'published'[21] – were first discovered over two centuries ago, it is only as the result of much more recent developments that they have finally begun to attract the attention they deserve.[22] The first of these developments was the establishment in 1970 of the *Centro Internazionale per lo Studio dei Papiri Ercolanesi* (CISPE) under the direction of Professor Marcello Gigante. This was followed in 1971 by the appearance of the pioneering journal *Cronache Ercolanesi* with Gigante as editor and the initiation of *La Scuola di Epicuro*, a series of editions of Herculaneum papyri produced under the sponsorship of CISPE.[23] CISPE opened access to the papyri themselves to a broad range of international scholars; *Cronache Ercolanesi* and *La Scuola di Epicuro* helped disseminate these scholars' discoveries to an ever wider audience.[24]

[18] For a discussion of the work, see Sedley 1998a: 94–132.

[19] Details regarding the various papyri can be found in the latest catalogue of Herculaneum papyri, Del Mastro 2005, and in earlier printed catalogues, Gigante 1979; Capasso 1989; and Del Mastro 2000.

[20] These have been collected, together with an introduction and commentary, in Sider 1997, along with a recently discovered papyrus listing the opening words of a few dozen more.

[21] So Sedley 1989: 105; cf. also Obbink 2004: 73–84.

[22] The early attempts at editions of Herculaneum texts were by no means entirely fruitless (see Capasso 1991 for their general history), but the fact that many of them proved unreliable helped to cast a shadow of scepticism over the entire field of Herculaneum papyrology. The unreliability of earlier editions was often a result of their complete dependence on the pencil transcriptions (disegni) produced at the time of each papyrus' unrolling, or on published etchings derived from these, rather than on an autopsy of the fragments themselves.

[23] For a brief history of CISPE and a summary of Marcello Gigante's many contributions to the study of the Herculaneum papyri, see Arrighetti et al. 2002.

[24] Important contributions have also been made under the direction of Mario Capasso in *Papyrologica Lupiensia* (1991–present) and in various other publications. Among the most ambitious projects presently under way in Herculaneum papyrology is the Philodemus Translation Project, directed by David Blank, Richard Janko and Dirk Obbink, which promises editions of all of Philodemus' aesthetic works. The first volumes of the projected series have already appeared, editions of *On Poems* 1 and *On Poems* 3–4, (= Janko 2000 and Janko 2010 respectively).

About Philodemus very few biographical details are known with any degree of certainty.[25] He was born in Gadara, a famous Hellenistic city located in the south of modern-day Syria, sometime between 110 and 100 BC, and died, presumably in Italy, sometime between 40 and 35 BC. In his youth, he studied philosophy at the Epicurean Garden in Athens under Zeno of Sidon, the school's scholarch, or leader, at the time.[26] He appears to have emigrated to Italy sometime between 80 and 70 BC. Once in Italy, Philodemus befriended Piso, under whose patronage he rose to prominence in contemporary Roman philosophical and literary circles. Cicero, despite his general disdain for Epicurus and Epicureanism, refers to Philodemus in *De finibus* as a 'most excellent and learned' man.[27] Even Cicero's earlier, blistering attack on Piso delivered before the Roman Senate in 55 BC (= *In Pisonem*), includes praise of Philodemus as 'refined' – at least when not in Piso's company[28] – and credits him with being an accomplished philosopher and poet.[29] Cicero, Philodemus and Piso all figure prominently in Jeffrey Fish's 'Not all politicians are Sisyphus: what Roman Epicureans were taught about politics'. Drawing upon Cicero for support, scholars have tended to dismiss the philosophical commitments of Piso and other Roman statesmen as largely ornamental, while pointing to Philodemus' accommodation of political participation as evidence of his own heterodoxy. Against such claims, Fish argues that Cicero's discussions of Epicurean views on politics are no less suspect than elements of his forensic rhetoric, and that Epicureans had from the start offered the benefits of their philosophy to politicians.

Fish's argument is nicely complemented by David Armstrong's essay, 'Epicurean virtues, Epicurean friendship: Cicero vs the Herculaneum papyri', which connects misconceptions regarding politics to ones regarding related Epicurean attitudes toward virtue and friendship. Armstrong argues that inaccuracies, distortions and omissions in relevant reports by Cicero are once again largely to blame for these misconceptions, including the widespread belief that Epicurus' most enthusiastic declarations on friendship and virtue are sharply at odds with his core ethical commitments. At the end of Book 2 of *De finibus*, Cicero has Torquatus, the dialogue's Epicurean spokesman, express a desire to defer to an authority

[25] Sider, 1997: 3–12, offers a clear and concise biography. The most detailed account of Philodemus' life and works to date is that of Erler 1994: 289–362. For an excellent account in English, see Asmis 1990: 2369–406.

[26] On whom, see also Erler 1994: 268–72 and Kleve and Del Mastro 2000.

[27] Cic. *Fin.* 2.119. [28] Cic. *Pis.* 68.

[29] Ibid., 70. On Cicero's portrait of Philodemus in this particular speech, see esp. Gigante 1983a: 35–54 and Griffin 2001.

such as Philodemus rather than reply himself to Cicero's preceding litany of criticisms. It therefore seems especially fitting that Armstrong seeks to correct some of the deficiencies in Cicero's account of Epicurean ethics by appealing extensively to evidence from a variety of Philodemus' rediscovered works.

The issue of Cicero's reliability as a source also figures prominently in Holger Essler's 'Cicero's use and abuse of Epicurean theology'. The relationship between Cicero's *De natura deorum* (*ND*) and the Epicurean treatise *On Piety* (*De pietate*), of which Philodemus is widely considered the most likely author,[30] has already received substantial scholarly attention.[31] Essler turns his attention to possible connections between the Epicurean portion of Cicero's dialogue and another, lesser-known work by Philodemus entitled *On the Gods* (*De dis*). The comparison proves especially instructive regarding the overall structure of Philodemus' treatise, whose surviving fragments can in isolation seem a jumble of tangentially related arguments and observations. Also revelatory is what Essler's analysis suggests about Cicero's possible methodology for constructing the critique of Epicurean theology that comprises the second half of *ND* 1. Essler builds a circumstantial case that Cicero mined the works of Epicureans authors such as Philodemus for passages explicitly addressing criticisms of Epicurean theology, and then proceeded to incorporate those same criticisms into his own polemic without including, or frequently even acknowledging, the associated Epicurean response.

Philodemus' rediscovered ethical writings are the particular focus of the essays by Elizabeth Asmis, Voula Tsouna and Kirk Sanders. Central to each is Philodemus' *On Anger*, the only substantially extant treatise by an Epicurean concerning an emotion. The development of any general theory of the emotions is itself quite likely to have been an innovation of later Epicureanism; certainly we have no evidence that Epicurus dealt with the emotions in any systematic fashion. Nevertheless, the theory of 'natural' and 'empty' emotions that underpins Philodemus' discussion of anger has long been recognized as an attempt to extend Epicurus' classification of desires to a new, related context.[32] (Insofar as the Epicureans regard both beliefs and desires as essential to emotions, such an extension is perfectly reasonable.) Epicurus' classificatory schema for desires, however, is in fact tripartite: not only are natural desires opposed to empty ones, but the

[30] On the issue of authorship, see Obbink 1996: 88–99.

[31] In addition to Obbink 1996, see vol. 1 of Pease 1955–8; Dyck 2003.

[32] See, e.g., Annas 1989: 145–64; Procopé 1993: 363–86. For Epicurus' classification of desires, see *Ep. Men.* 127–8; cf. *KD* 29.

genus of natural desire is itself subdivided into two species, 'necessary' and 'non-necessary'. In 'The necessity of anger in Philodemus' *On Anger*', Asmis suggests that reading an analogue of this further distinction between necessary and non-necessary desires into Philodemus' analysis of natural anger may help to resolve otherwise intractable difficulties associated with his discussion of the anger experienced by a sage.

Anger was a popular topic in ancient literature.[33] Tsouna's 'Philodemus, Seneca and Plutarch on anger' compares and contrasts Philodemus' treatise with two subsequent, ancient works on the same subject, Seneca's *De ira* and Plutarch's *On the Control of Anger*, in an effort both to clarify certain philosophical issues common to all and to suggest avenues for further investigation. Despite the shared subject matter, Tsouna reveals how each of the authors in question pursues a distinct agenda in his discussion of the emotion. Differences in the three philosophers' underlying commitments are no doubt part of the explanation. But Tsouna suggests that distinct social and psychological factors may have played an equally important role in determining the outlook of each respective author.

The distinction at the heart of Philodemus' *On Anger* also figures prominently in Sanders' 'Philodemus and the fear of premature death'. Drawing attention to analogous features in *On Death*'s discussion of death-related fears and the treatment of anger in *On Anger*, he argues that Philodemus divided fear, like anger, into 'natural' and 'empty' species. Armed with this distinction, Sanders attempts to show how Epicureans could, and did, accept certain fears of death, including the fear of premature death (once properly understood), as perfectly rational. The picture that emerges from his analysis is of an Epicurean thanatology more nuanced and accommodating than previously recognized.

Collectively, these nine original contributions afford both an excellent overview of the state of the art in Epicurean studies and an indication of its future directions. The breadth and variety of approaches represented herein convey the vitality not only of contemporary scholarship concerning the Epicurean tradition but also of that tradition itself. One hopes that they will also help put to rest the lingering, popular misconception of Epicureanism as a philosophical tradition that stagnated with the passing of its founders.

[33] See, e.g., Harris 2001: 3–16.

CHAPTER 2

Autodidact and student: on the relationship of authority and autonomy in Epicurus and the Epicurean tradition

Michael Erler

1 INTRODUCTION

Ancient criticism of Epicureanism was characterized by a paradox. Some opponents reproached Epicurus' zeal for originality, which, they emphasized, was actually intended to cover up his own dependence on his predecessors, and so was self-contradictory.[1] On the other hand, opponents complained about the lack of originality and rigid dogmatism of later Epicureans, who allegedly advanced no positions of their own but instead endeavoured to refer everything back to their master, Epicurus: *referre ad unum*, as Seneca puts it.[2] Similar criticisms of Epicurus and the Epicurean tradition are to be found in many modern commentators, though this tendency has been somewhat mitigated in certain recent discussions.[3] It has been acknowledged, for example, that the Epicurean tradition allowed for flexibility and individual emphases.[4] There have also been attempts to qualify Epicurus' claims to originality by noting that such pronouncements are largely restricted to contexts involving his own critical engagements with specific educational figures, as for example his dispute with his schoolteacher over Hesiod's Chaos,[5] while elsewhere Epicurus is perfectly open about his familiarity with his predecessors' doctrines.[6] Whatever the weight of such considerations, however, they fail to eliminate the impression that Epicurus' claims to independence were somehow extraordinary. Both his general attitude and the magnitude of his self-confidence are evidenced by the passage from a letter to Eurylochus in

I would like to thank Jeffrey Fish and Kirk Sanders, who translated this essay, for their many helpful suggestions.

[1] See Cic. *ND* 1.72–3; and Numenius fr. 24.33–6 des Places 1973. For further charges of incoherence, see, e.g., Cic. *Tusc.* 5.26 and Lact. *Div. inst.* 7.3.13; on the latter, see the comments of Ogilvie 1978: 84–7.

[2] Sen. *Ep.* 33.4.

[3] See, e.g., Laks 1976, esp. 68–9; and Sedley 1989.

[4] See Angeli 1988, esp. 86; Sedley 1989; and Erler 1992a.

[5] Cf. Sedley 1976b: 135.

[6] Cf. Gigante 1981, 1992 and 1999.

which Epicurus, in the context of criticizing his own teacher Nausiphanes, proclaims himself to have been 'his own pupil' (ἀκοῦσαι . . . ἑαυτοῦ).[7]

Epicurus' followers apparently viewed him similarly. No doubt his decidedly reserved stance vis-à-vis the attainments of traditional Greek *paideia*, including poetry and rhetoric, influenced their conception of him as a man eminently and uniquely qualified for the pursuit of philosophical truths.[8] Lucretius in particular saw in Epicurus an autodidact who discovered on his own initiative and from his own resources the *ratio vitae*, singling him out for praise as someone who 'sought and found within his own breast,[9] and left behind for us' knowledge of the physical world (5.4–5), or 'the recognized majesty of nature' (*maiestas cognita rerum*; 5.7).[10] Clearly, Epicurus' profession to be self-educated was not merely a feature of his own self-understanding but also a key element in the image that subsequent members of his school constructed of him.[11]

In the following discussion, I shall take seriously Epicurus' claims to independence and attempt to show how despite their extraordinary nature, they may also be seen as part of a tradition concerned with the relationship between self-education (τὸ αὐτοδίδακτον) and outside instruction (διδαχή). By examining these traditional aspects as well as the contemporary context, I hope also to show that there is no conflict between Epicurus' claims and his observed willingness to learn from his predecessors. Originality was for Epicurus less a matter of being closed off from tradition than of standing in a proper relationship to it. To this end, he established straightforward guidelines that allowed him as founder of a school to appropriate material from existing philosophical and literary traditions while still maintaining a critical distance from them, and that allowed his students room for personal emphases, notwithstanding their own firm commitment to school dogma. As practised by the Epicureans, what Seneca labels *referre ad unum* did not preclude a certain free rein. Rather than being contrary to Epicurean dogma, such freedom was in fact integral to it.

2 THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND LITERARY CONTEXT

With his claim to independence in doctrinal matters, Epicurus clearly wished to position himself in a debate that played out during the Hellenistic

[7] DL 10.13; cf. S.E. *Adv. math.* 1.1–5 (= Nausiphanes 75A 7 Diels and Kranz 1951).

[8] For Epicurus' criticism of traditional *paideia*, see, e.g., Ath. 13.588a (= fr. 117 Us.) and DL 10.6 (= fr. 163 Us.).

[9] Epicurus and his followers, like many other ancient Greek philosophers, believed the physical location of the mind to be in the chest.

[10] Cf. Lucr. 1.62–77 and 3.1–17.

[11] On autodidactism in Epicurus, see Balaudé 1994: 17–28.

period not only in philosophy but also in literature generally, regarding the proper stance toward an antecedent tradition that could occasionally seem stifling and even cause for despondency. An illustrative example of such an attitude can be found in an epigram of the tragedian Astydamas, composed on the occasion of a victory in 340 BC: 'Would that I had been born in their day or they in ours, those men reputed to take the prize in delightful speech, so that I could truly be judged their rival in the race. But as things stand, they precede me, and envy no longer follows them.'[12]

Others followed a more progressive strategy of accepting the authority of their predecessors and using it in effect to shield and justify their own literary contributions. This strategy produced a tension regarding the appropriate proximity or distance to one's principal role models and reference-texts. Consequently, *arte allusiva* – the use of allusion to evoke role models and relevant literary paradigms while simultaneously attempting to create distance from them by various means – became a hallmark of Hellenistic poetry.[13] Similar appeals to acknowledged models as a means both of legitimization and of carving out space for individual expression are observable in philosophical contexts as well. In pledging loyalty to the Socratic legacy and drawing upon Platonic and Xenophontic conceptions of Socrates to legitimize central Stoic doctrines, the Stoics, for example, clearly attempted to appropriate the Socratic-Platonic tradition for their own ends.[14] Their efforts in this regard did not in any way result in doctrinal stagnation but rather created space for the development of their own theories.

Already in Plato's portrait of Socrates one finds an almost paradigmatic expression of an attitude towards 'ancient' tradition and wisdom that combines general acceptance with critical restraint. Tradition is acknowledged but not thereby exempted from scrutiny.[15] Whatever of the traditional survives such scrutiny is in turn transformed by admixture with various innovations. The driving forces of respect and critical distance vis-à-vis the tradition are balanced against one another, with each receiving greater emphasis at different times and according to varying temperaments. Independence in this regard manifests itself not in a radical attempt for novelty

[12] Astydamas TGF 1 60 T 2a Snell; εἴθ' ἐγὼ ἐν κείνοις γενόμην ἢ κεῖνοι ἅμ' ἡμῖν, / οἳ γλώσσης τερπνῆς πρῶτα δοκοῦσι φέρειν. / ὡς ἐπ' ἀληθείας ἐκρίθην ἀφεθεὶς παράμιλλος· / νῦν δὲ χρόνῳ προέχουσ', οἷς φθόνος οὐχ ἕπεται. On the relationship between tradition and innovation within Hellenistic literature generally, see Fantuzzi and Hunter 2004 and Erler 2008.

[13] See Pasquali 1994: 275–82.

[14] See, e.g., Cic. *ND* 2.18, on which see also DeFilippo and Mitsis 1994, esp. 260–5; cf. Erler 2001a, esp. 215–23; and Erler 2008.

[15] Cf. Erler 2003a.

(καινοτομεῖν), but rather in the claim to have transformed the traditional into something new and improved.[16] Such an approach, which, as I shall show, perfectly matches Epicurus' own, is also a natural target for polemics that bemoan either an opponent's excessive rigidity or his pursuit of innovation.

It should be noted first that Epicurus' insistence on his own independence belongs to a tradition well attested in both philosophy and literature. Within the philosophical realm one is reminded of Heraclitus' famous dictum, 'I sought out myself' (ἐδιζησάμην ἐμεωυτόν).[17] Beyond its obvious connection to the Delphic maxim 'Know thyself', these words were also understood in antiquity as a claim to originality.[18] Parmenides, with his divine narrator's admonition to 'judge by reason the very contentious counter-argument spoken by me (ἐξ ἐμέθεν ῥηθέντα)',[19] also merits mention in this connection. So too do those followers of Heraclitus of whom Plato writes in the *Theaetetus*: 'There are no pupils and teachers among these people. They just spring up on their own (αὐτόματοι ἀναφύονται), one here, one there, wherever they happen to catch their inspiration; and no one of them will credit another with knowing anything.'[20] There is an unmistakable element of Platonic irony at work here, but it should nevertheless be kept in mind that one way in which Plato's Socrates distinguishes himself from the Sophists is through his understanding of learning as a kind of 'self-education'. He regards the process of learning not as the overflowing of knowledge from a fuller vessel into an empty one, but rather as a kind of self-extraction.[21]

Passages emphasizing self-education are also to be found in poetry. One may recall in this connexion Hesiod, for whom 'the best man is he who thinks of everything by himself' (οὗτος μὲν πανάριστος, ὃς αὐτῷ πάντα νοήσει).[22] The Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* ultimately elevates self-education to a divine attribute when it permits Hermes to say to Apollo, 'But it is up to you to learn whatever you please' (σοὶ δ' αὐτάγρετόν ἐστι δαήμεναι ὅττι μενοινᾷς).[23] Such declarations became objects of subsequent philosophical

[16] For criticism of attempts at innovation by Arcesilaus, see Plut. *Adv. Col.* 1121E–1122A, on which see also Shields 1994: 342–3.
[17] Heraclit. DK 22B 101 = Plut. *Adv. Col.* 1118C.
[18] Cf. Heraclit. DK 22A 1 = DL 9.5; also PFlor. 115 B1 (= anon. comm. in Hippocr. *De alimento*, Manetti 1985: 17).
[19] Parm. DK B7.5–6.
[20] Pl. *Tht.* 180C (tr. M. J. Levett, revised by M. Burnyeat).
[21] See Erler 1987: 68–73; cf. Stenzel 1961: 154–5. On the opposite image, i.e., that of wisdom flowing into oneself from another, see Socrates' ironic comments at Pl. *Symp.* 175D–E.
[22] Hes. *Op.* 293–5; see the note of West *ad loc.* (= M. West 1978: 231).
[23] Hom. *Herm.* 489; cf. Hieronymus 1970: 36.

discussion. The Stoic Zeno, for example, cites the Hesiodic verse quoted above but tellingly inverts its commitment to independence over outside instruction with his statement that 'he is best who follows good counsel from another, but that man is fine also who thinks of everything by himself' (κεῖνος μὲν πανάριστος ὃς εὖ εἰπόντι πίθηται· ἐσθλὸς δ' αὖ κἀκεῖνος ὃς αὐτῷ πάντα νοήσῃ).[24] Epicurus, by contrast, shares Hesiod's predilection for the independent-thinker.

Especially relevant in this regard is another Homeric passage, one which also played a role in later philosophical debates, but which suggests that independence in the relevant sense does not preclude the acceptance of knowledge from external sources, thereby anticipating the framework found in Epicurus. The passage in question appears in *Odyssey* Book 22, where the bard Phemius must prove his worth to Odysseus. In the course of slaying the suitors, Odysseus also turns his weapon on Phemius, who had been forced to entertain the suitors at Odysseus' palace in Ithaca, and who hopes to save himself by proving that sparing his life would be to Odysseus' advantage. To this end, Phemius adduces two separate considerations: he is 'self-educated' (αὐτοδίδακτος δ' εἰμί), and he has been divinely endowed with the gift of song (θεὸς δέ μοι ἐν φρεσὶν οἴμας / παντοίας ἐνέφυσεν).[25] This recourse to divine inspiration is a natural corollary of any bard's self-conception,[26] but as such it does not distinguish Phemius from the general class of bards, and so cannot constitute an argument to spare him in particular. In order to make such an argument, he needs to show that he could benefit Odysseus in a way distinct from other bards. Phemius' claim to self-education is presumedly intended in this vein. The adjective αὐτοδίδακτος seems an unlikely choice for referring to instruction by the Muses. Phemius must here have in mind his ability to adapt the information supplied by the Muses in a way suitable to any given occasion.[27] Being 'self-educated' in this sense concerns the way in which the content received from the Muses is put to use. Elsewhere in the *Odyssey*, Alcinous considers the bard Demodocus divine because the gods have given him the ability to entertain 'in whatever way his heart spurs him to sing' (ὅππῃ θυμὸς ἐποτρύνῃσιν ἀείδειν).[28] Skilful selection and the ability to adapt material to different circumstances are therefore prime qualifications for Phemius to invoke in order to prove his specific utility, and exceptional value, to Odysseus.

[24] SVF 1.235. [25] Hom. *Od.* 22.347–8. [26] Cf. *Od.* 8.480–1; Hes. *Th.* 23–4; and Maehler 1963.
[27] Cf. *LfgrE* s.v. ἀοιδός; see also Fernández-Galiano in Russo et al. 1992: 279.
[28] Hom. *Od.* 8.44–5; cf. 1.346. There is an echo of this attitude at Aesch. *Ag.* 991–2; see also the scholion *ad loc.* in O. Smith 1976.

This understanding of the passage is apparently endorsed by Aristotle in a discussion pertinent to our inquiry. *Rhetoric* 1.7 is concerned with various *topoi* employed within deliberative rhetoric in order to show that one of two possibilities is better and more advantageous. Among these *topoi* is the argument according to which 'that which is natural [lit. "self-generated"] is a greater good than that which is acquired, since it is harder to come by' (καὶ τὸ αὐτοφυὲς τοῦ ἐπικτήτου· χαλεπώτερον γάρ).[29] Aristotle rests the entire weight of this argument on a reference to our *Odyssey* passage: 'hence the poet, too, says "I am my own teacher" (ὅθεν καὶ ὁ ποιητής φησιν "αὐτοδίδακτος δ' εἰμί")'.[30] The reference to autodidacticism – here that of Phemius – in such a context implies a privileging of self-education over outside instruction. Moreover, Aristotle's use of the term 'self-generated' (αὐτοφυές) calls to mind Epicurus' own claim, as recorded by Sextus Empiricus, to have been αὐτοφυής.[31]

These various philosophical and literary references provide a framework for evaluating Epicurus' high esteem for 'self-education'. At the same time, it should already be clear that the issue in this context is not one of a conflict between self-education and outside instruction but only of their hierarchy.

3 EPICURUS AS AUTODIDACT

Epicurus' claim to be an autodidact is rendered clearer and more compelling not only by setting it against the relevant philosophical and literary background, but also by situating it within the context of his own philosophy. Such a claim conforms well to Epicurus' general epistemology and to his specific thesis of the immediacy (ἐναργεία) of knowledge resulting from sense-perception.[32] The conviction that genuine knowledge can result from immediate access to empirical data through the senses leads logically to Epicurus' insistence on heeding Nature directly. Reason can of course serve to build upon people's direct interactions with their surroundings, but this interaction should not be hindered by spurious considerations.[33] The significance of direct sense-perception is further reflected in Epicurus' doctrine of *prolêpsis*,[34] which can be understood partly as a response to 'Meno's paradox' (i.e., the question of how one can seek what one does not

[29] *Rh.* 1365a29–1365a30; cf. *Top.* 116b10–12. [30] *Rh.* 1365a30.
[31] See S.E. *Adv. math.* 1.3. [32] On the principle of *enargeia*, see Asmis 1984: 92–3, 153–54.
[33] See Epic. *Ep. Hdt.* 75.10–11; cf. Porph. *Marc.* 30, p. 209 12 Nauck (= fr. 489 Us.); Furley 1977: 10–11; and Erler 2002a, esp. 167–73.
[34] On which, see now the discussions of Sedley, ch. 3, and Konstan, ch. 4, of this volume.

know), and to Plato's own proposed solution, namely the theory of recollection (*anamnêsis*).[35] It is presumably no accident that this very doctrine of *anamnêsis* was sometimes linked with Phemius' claim to be self-educated;[36] however, Epicurus' assertions of independence and his attitude toward tradition can be viewed not only as a response to the particular conception of 'learning' inherent in Plato's theory of recollection but also as a product of Epicurus' own philosophical self-conception. The so-called 'cradle argument', with its rejection of the need for argumentation to validate direct observation, shows, for example, that Epicurus learned directly from Nature the hedonism that constituted the very foundation of his ethics.[37] It is therefore understandable why he put less value on all putative, indirect sources of knowledge (e.g., traditional *paideia*) and viewed syllogistic reasoning with suspicion.

Many commentators, both ancient and modern, have found it particularly difficult to reconcile Epicurus' claim to be an autodidact with his thorough knowledge of his philosophical predecessors' doctrines. A close look at three specific passages by or about Epicurus will help us to better understand this apparent paradox.

Sen. Ep. 52

The first passage is found in Letter 52 of Seneca's *Epistulae Morales* (*Ep.*). There Seneca discusses how to liberate oneself from foolishness (*stultitia*) and addresses the popular Stoic theme of moral progress. According to Seneca's testimony, Epicurus himself distinguished three classes of people. First are those who find their way to the truth of their own accord and without outside assistance (*ex se impetus fuit*, *qui se ipsi protulerunt*; 52.3), for whom Epicurus reserved his highest praises. Second are those who require assistance from others (*indigere ope aliena*; ibid.). While these people are personally incapable of leading, they do at least allow themselves to be led willingly. The third group consists of those who need the help of, as Seneca puts it, an 'enforcer' (*coactore*; 52.4), since they must be forced along the right path. For people in this group, pedagogical coercion is an absolute necessity.[38]

[35] On the doctrine of recollection and Epicurus, see D. Scott 1995.

[36] See Luschnat 1961/2.

[37] For a detailed discussion of the cradle argument, see Brunschwig 1987. Cic. *Fin.* 2.31 suggests that many later Epicureans were unwilling to forego the validation thought to be supplied by rational argumentation.

[38] Cf. Roskam 2005: 71–2; Hadot 1969: 49–52.

There are two related passages in which Seneca, without reference to Epicurus, treats of the differences found among people striving for wisdom. In the course of *Ep.* 95, Seneca at one point turns to a discussion of especially talented individuals (*quidam ex hominibus egregiam sortiti indolem*; 95.36). These are people who require no lengthy training but immediately absorb everything they hear. They are able to chart their own course and to be independently productive. More common, however, are those people who need assistance and are only able to make their way under the guidance of others. With such people one must, as Seneca so vividly puts it, scrape away the spiritual rust or tooth decay (*robigo animorum effricanda est*). Elsewhere, in his treatise *De beneficiis*, Seneca contrasts the few individuals capable of self-guidance with those who require someone else to lead them.[39] As with the threefold division attributed to Epicurus in *Ep.* 52, the twofold division in these two passages is based on criteria such as self-guidance and the ease or difficulty with which one is led, which itself has less to do with the subject-matter in question and more to do with one's native endowment (*ingenium*) and inner drive to pursue philosophical investigation.[40]

According to Epicurus, an individual's openness to philosophy is determined by his *diathesis* ('disposition'), which is the authority that allows people to recognize nature's limits, as in the cases of anger and love, and to opt for what is natural, and therefore acceptable.[41] Although he places no age-restrictions on the practice of philosophy,[42] he does maintain that only those individuals with the appropriate atomic make-up are actually suited to philosophize.[43] His own natural talent for philosophy was regarded as exceptional. Lucretius (3.1043–4) compares it with the rising sun, which outshone the stars of natural, human talents. Epicurus' own brother Neocles expressed the belief that their mother had carried within herself atoms that, when combined, would naturally produce a sage; and that there never had been, nor would there ever be, anyone wiser than Epicurus.[44] Of

[39] Sen. *Ben.* 5.25.5. It is worth recalling in this regard a similar distinction found in Philodemus of Gadara's *On Frank Criticism*, which itself derives from the lectures of the Epicurean scholarch Zeno of Sidon, between people who are easily led and those who cause trouble; see, e.g., *De libert. dic.* col. 5a,7–10.

[40] Cf. *Ep.* 52.7.

[41] Cf. Grilli 1983: 93–109, esp. 104. On the meaning of *diathesis*, see Diog. Oin. fr. 111,7–11 Smith (= fr. 144 Arrighetti 1973, fr. 548 Us.): 'It is not nature, which is common to everyone, that makes people noble or ignoble, but their actions and dispositions' (οὐχ ἡ φύσις, μία γε οὖ|σα τῶν πάντων, εὐ|γενεῖς ἢ δυσγενεῖς | ἐποίησεν, ἀλλ' αἱ πρά|ξεις καὶ διαθέσεις). For a competing view of *diathesis*, see Procopé 1993: 375; cf. the contribution of Asmis in ch. 8 of this volume, pp. 161–5.

[42] See, e.g., Epicur. *Ep. Men.* 122.

[43] On the importance of a well-constituted atomic structure, see, e.g., Diog. Oin. fr. 2 11,14 Smith; fr. 3 111, 4–5 Smith.

[44] Plut. *Non posse* 1100A–B = fr. 178 Us.

course, Neocles' praise may be no more than personal encomium, and Lucretius' remark in no way precludes the possibility that someone could come along subsequently to outshine Epicurus. But there can be no doubt that both men saw in their master a paramount talent.

The tripartite nature of the classificatory schema Seneca attributes to Epicurus is also of interest. First, it may be noted that this division is reminiscent in important respects of what Plato has to say in the allegory of the cave. The issue of independence versus the need for outside help in connection with intellectual progress surfaces there in the context of the liberation of people gripped by the illusion inside the cave. Nowhere in the allegory, which is directed at people 'like us' (ὁμοίους ἡμῖν; *Rep*. 515a), is there any indication that someone could free himself and embark of his own initiative on the path to knowledge. An outside stimulus – i.e., a teacher – is essential. The frequent references throughout the allegory to compulsion and force suggest that these will also be necessary elements in dealing with the recalcitrant prisoners.[45] Only Socrates, the philosopher par excellence, appears to have succeeded in pursuing the truth completely independently, such that he was in a position to provide others the necessary stimulus. The allegory of the cave thus leaves the impression that Plato himself recognized only two classes of people, corresponding to Epicurus' first and third groups, respectively: those who arrive at knowledge independently – a class of which Socrates is the sole member! – and those who must be coerced. But the varied cast of characters depicted throughout the Platonic dialogues illustrates just how multifaceted Plato's spectrum really is. It ranges across utterly hopeless cases, individuals with whom Socrates wishes to converse again later, and associates in whom he recognizes a natural *inclinatio ad rectum*. All, however, are in need of outside help in different ways. Already in Plato, then, one finds illustrated and analysed learning-types that correspond to the classes Seneca attributes to Epicurus. Moreover, in the person of Socrates we find a potential model of the self-educated man to which Epicurus could appeal.[46]

An additional cause for interest in Epicurus' classificatory schema is its application to two of his greatest students, Metrodorus and Hermarchus. Epicurus himself assigns Metrodorus to the second of his three classes,

[45] E.g., 'Whenever someone was freed and suddenly *compelled to stand up* (ἀναγκάζοιτο ἐξαίφνης ἀνίστασθαι) . . . ' (*Rep*. 515c); 'If, as we showed him each of the things passing by, we asked him what each was, and *compelled him to answer* (ἀναγκάζοι ἐρωτῶν ἀποκρίνεσθαι) . . . ' (*Rep*. 515d); 'And if someone *compelled him to look at the light itself* (πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ φῶς ἀναγκάζοι αὐτὸν βλέπειν) . . . ' (*Rep*. 515e); 'And if someone *dragged him from there by force* (ἐντεῦθεν ἕλκοι τις αὐτὸν βίᾳ) . . . ' (ibid.).

[46] Cf. Erler 2002b.

as someone with an outstanding, if not entirely first-rate, natural endowment (*egregium hoc quoque, sed secundae sortis ingenium*).[47] By contrast, Hermarchus, an equally prized student and Epicurus' successor as head of the school, is placed in the third class.[48] These rankings, claims Seneca, were more congratulatory of Metrodorus but more complimentary of Hermarchus (*alteri magis gratulatur, alterum magis suspicit*). [49] Although both men achieved wisdom, Hermarchus was due the greater accolades for having accomplished the same result with less pliant material, i.e., a lesser natural endowment.[50]

Metrod. fr. 33 Körte (= Plut. Adv. Col. *1108E)*

Just prior to the paraphrase of Epicurus at the beginning of *Ep*. 52, Seneca had voiced doubt as to whether anyone could attain wisdom as a true autodidact; that is, without any outside help whatsoever.[51] Epicurus' student Metrodorus seems to have shared this concern. In *Against Colotes*, Plutarch credits Metrodorus with the claim that Epicurus would never have found his way to wisdom had Democritus not preceded him.[52] Metrodorus thereby appears to place Epicurus in the second of his own categories, as someone who stands in need of another's guidance. Since this is the same class to which Epicurus had for his part assigned Metrodorus, the pupil would in effect here be putting himself on par with his teacher. In fact, Metrodorus does seem to have been considered Epicurus' near equal. Epicurus' masterwork *On Nature* records a discussion between Epicurus himself and his students about the value of technical-philosophical vocabulary in which Metrodorus is depicted as the master's peer.[53] Cicero even calls Metrodorus 'almost another Epicurus' (*paene alter Epicurus*),[54] although the qualifier 'almost' admittedly suggests at least a slight difference in rank.

Of course, one must keep in mind that Plutarch's own interest in Metrodorus' comment has less to do with Epicurus' native ability as a truth-seeker than with the particular source on whom Epicurus is said to have drawn, i.e., Democritus. The polemical context of the passage must also not be overlooked. Plutarch's goal is to refute Colotes' argument

[47] Sen. *Ep*. 52.3. [48] Ibid., 52.4. [49] Ibid.

[50] It is worth noting that Epicurus here employs one of the common *topoi* of deliberative rhetoric analysed by Aristotle; see Arist. *Rh*. 1365a19; cf. *Top*. 117b28–30.

[51] Sen. *Ep*. 52.2; cf. Roskam 2005: 72.

[52] Plut. *Adv. Col*. 1108E (= Metrod. fr. 33 Körte); on this passage, cf. Clay 1983: 265.

[53] Compare this discussion with Metrodorus' thoughts about philosophical language in Epicur. *Nat*. 28, on which see also Sedley 1973.

[54] Cic. *Fin*. 2.28 (= Metrod. fr. 33 Körte).

that the teachings of Democritus make a pleasant life impossible by turning the argument against Colotes' own teacher, Epicurus; hence Plutarch's desire to establish an identity between the philosophies of Democritus and Epicurus, so that what Colotes imputes to the former will also hold true of the latter.[55] Plutarch accordingly welcomes any Epicurean sources that help to establish Epicurus' proximity to Democritus. These include not only Metrodorus' remark but also Leonteus' letter to Lycophron, in which it is claimed that Epicurus celebrated Democritus as the discoverer of the fundamental principles of Nature.[56] We cannot be certain whether Metrodorus intended with the *testimonium* Plutarch cites to insinuate his own equality of rank with his master. But regardless of how one assesses either Metrodorus' comment specifically or Epicurus' relationship to Democritus generally,[57] it should at least be clear that Epicurus himself saw no inconsistency between this relationship and his own claim to originality as an autodidact.

Epicur. Nat. *14*

A passage from Book 14 of Epicurus' *On Nature* sheds further light on the subject by linking the claim to innovation with competence in selective borrowing. In the passage in question, Epicurus takes up the question of how a philosopher should deal with information received from others, including the doctrines of his predecessors.[58] The development here of an attitude of discriminating reception in regards to the philosophical tradition is something that certainly merits more attention,[59] and which should serve to mitigate negative assessments of Epicurus such as those made by Zeller.[60]

I give first the full text of the passage in question:

[δοκεῖ δὲ τὸ εὖ φιλοσοφεῖν οἰκεῖον εἶ]|ναι, τοῦ συνάψαντος τὸ | σύμφωνον αὑτῶι καὶ ἀκό|λουθον, ἐκείνου δὲ ἀλλότρι|ον, τοῦ κυκήσαντος μετὰ | τῶν οὐκ οἰκείων δογμά|των τόδε τι ὀρθὸν δόγμα, | κἂν πρότερος ἐπιπεσὼν | αὐτῶι τύχηι· συμπεφο|ρημένος γάρ ἐστ[ι]ν οὐχ ὃς | ἂν τὸ δι[ε]σπαρμένον δό|γμα μεθ' ἑτέρω[ν] ἀλλοτρί|ων ἑαυτοῦ δογμάτων εἰ[ς] | [τ]αὐτὸ συ̣ν̣άγηι, ἀλλ' ὃς ἂν |

[55] For a helpful discussion about this and other passages in Plutarch, I sincerely thank Holger Essler.
[56] Plut. *Adv. Col.* 1108E–F.
[57] On Epicurus' relationship to Democritus, see Huby 1978 and Warren 2002: 23–8.
[58] The context suggests above all Democritus, but what Epicurus says is of general application.
[59] Cf. Donini 1988, esp. 17; for a more detailed discussion, see Leone 1984: 99–104.
[60] See Zeller 1923: 373–96; cf. also the comments by Fish and Sanders in ch. 1, the Introduction to this volume, esp. p. 1.

ἀν{ι}ομολ[ογ]ούμεν᾽ ἀλλ[ή]|λοις τινά, [εἴ]τε παρ᾽ α[ὑτοῦ] | εἴτε π̣αρ᾽ ἄ̣[λλ]ων σ̣υντιθῆι.[61]

[Philosophizing correctly is proper] to him who gathers what agrees with and follows upon itself, but alien to him who mixes up this or that correct doctrine with (other) doctrines unsuitable to it, even if he happens to have chanced upon this doctrine first; for it isn't the person who gathers together a received doctrine together with other different doctrines of his own who's muddled, but rather the one who puts together doctrines that disagree with each other, whether they come from himself or from others.

According to this passage, Epicurus considers it entirely proper to borrow from the ideas or tenets of others. Rather than precluding the possibility of supplementing one's own doctrines with another's, Epicurus established criteria to govern the process. In particular, he advocated the fundamental requirements of coherence and consistency, ἀκολουθία καὶ συμφωνία.[62] One must be careful to incorporate only what proves to be both internally consistent (τὸ ἀκόλουθον) and coherent with Epicurean teaching (τὸ σύμφωνον). Failure to abide by these constraints can result in an incoherent jumble of doctrines. His attitude bespeaks a 'dialectical'[63] relationship with his philosophical predecessors and with the teachings of other schools generally. In his own doctrine, Epicurus strove for precisely that ἀκολουθία denied of him by his opponents.[64] He in no way declined critical engagement with his predecessors as a matter of principle, but any acceptance of the ideas of others was conditioned on those ideas being in harmony with his own, established doctrine.

It is noteworthy that Epicurus employs the same vocabulary to describe the handling of philosophical exemplars that one finds recorded in Plutarch in connection with Leonteus' appraisal of the relationship between Epicurus and Democritus.[65] In the reception of other people's doctrines, Epicurus flatly forbids 'mixing up' anything incongruous. A 'mixed-up' or 'muddled' individual (συμπεφορημένος), however, is not simply someone who wishes to combine or supplement doctrines of his own with those of another, but

[61] Epicur. *Nat.* 14, col. 40,1–17 Leone. The words δοκεῖ δὲ τὸ εὖ φιλοσοφεῖν are part of a supplement proposed by Philippson. Leone notes Philippson's supplement (which concludes with [ἴδιον εἶ]ναι in place of Vogliano's [οἰκεῖον εἶ]ναι, accepted by Leone) in her *ap. crit.*, but does not include it in the text proper. Still, her accompanying translation of the passage ('[Il modo corretto di practicare la filosofia sembra, infatti, essere proprio] di chi . . . ') confirms that she understands something similar to have preceded the first line of the column's extant text.

[62] Cf. Diog. Oin. fr. 121 I,6 Smith.

[63] Cf. Leone 1987: 51.

[64] See Lact. *Div. inst.* 5.3.1 (= p. 343, 10 Us.), Cic. *Tusc.* 5.26, and *Fin.* 2.31; cf. Demetrius Laco *Opus incertum* col. 59,2 Puglia (1988); Leone 1987: 61 n. 105.

[65] See above, note 56 of this chapter, p. 19. Cf. Arrighetti 1979, esp. 8–9; and Leone 1987: 53 n. 17.

someone who introduces a doctrine, whether his own or someone else's, that proves incongruous with the pre-existing body of accepted doctrine. Epicurus demands logical consistency. Since a given doctrine and its opposite cannot enjoy equal validity, it is unacceptable to commend both by turns. Anyone who does so, or who introduces an inconsistency, earns from Epicurus the labels 'solecist' or 'muddled', since he taints even that part of his teaching which is correct.[66]

Consequently, Epicurus maintains that a philosopher needs the ability to select judiciously from a given body of material. Socrates provides a model in this regard as well. Though represented in the allegory of the cave as an autodidact, Socrates appears in various other Platonic dialogues as someone open to outside instruction. He often, for example, invokes certain views of the 'ancients' – e.g., poets or wise men of previous generations – in support of doctrines that not infrequently seem in complete agreement with Platonic thinking. Even so, nothing passed down by tradition gains acceptance without first being analysed, scrutinized and justified.[67] Self-initiative and self-education remain fundamental. Like Socrates, Epicurus does not oppose familiarity or engagement with others' doctrines, nor even profiting thereby. On the contrary, he both advocates and engages in selective borrowing even from those with whom he disagrees, as seems to have been the case, for example, with Anaxagoras.[68] His originality manifests itself in his particular selection of material to adopt and the way in which he adapts that borrowed material to his existing doctrine.

This borrowed material may even include general concepts. The remote and carefree nature of the Epicurean gods offers a case in point. To be sure, the characterization of the gods' existence as completely untroubled, with no care for or influence on human destiny, both reflects the transposition into the theological realm of the Epicurean ethical goal of ἀταραξία and creates a distance between humans and gods that is distinctive for a classical philosopher. Nevertheless, Epicurus' deism, which finds analogues and antecedents in Euripidean tragedy and even certain propensities evident in Menander's comedies, can also be seen as simply an extreme expression of a cultural tendency that was already current.[69] What is new is not the concept

[66] Epicur. *Nat*. 14 col. 43,1–7 Leone; cf. also col. 41,2–15 Leone, and Leone 1987: 60–6. Forms of the participle συμπεφορημένος had already been employed with similarly negative connotations prior to Epicurus; see, e.g., Pl. *Phlb*. 64e (on the translation of which, see Frede 1997: 84 n. 98); cf. *Phdr*. 253e and *Leg*. 693a4, 805e5.

[67] See, e.g., Pl. *Men*. 81b (on which, see also Erler 2003a, 2003b, 2003c); *Phdr*. 274c–275b.

[68] DL 10.12 (= fr. 240 Us.); cf. Epicur. *VS* 24.

[69] With Epicur. *VS* 1, cf., e.g., Eur. *Tr*. 1280–1 and Men. *Epit*. 1083–6.

itself, but its application: the gods' remoteness becomes for Epicurus not a ground of complaint, but rather a guarantee of human happiness and an occasion for contemporary reflection about human interactions.

A similar balance of tradition and innovation can be seen in the Epicurean theory of the soul's mortality. Plato attests to the relative popularity of such a view over belief in the soul's immortality,[70] for which he has Socrates argue. In this case as well, what is innovative is not the thesis itself, but the use to which it is put. In the hands of Epicurus, for whom all philosophy was essentially therapeutic, the soul's mortality becomes an argument against fear and in favour of happiness in this life.

One could list other examples of the novel ways in which Epicurus utilizes elements of the Socratic method, such as the *elenchos* ('refutation') or philosophical *parrêsia* ('frank criticism'), but I shall let these suffice. It is noteworthy, however, that Epicurus engaged in similar selective borrowing from the literary tradition, despite his strident criticism of its philosophical relevance. For example, he employs poetic forms to propagate his doctrine, crafting many of his aphorisms in conscious imitation of well-known verses so as to facilitate their memorization. Even this appropriation of traditional poetic structures evinces an innovation of sorts, insofar as the familiar verses evoked are put to a new use, namely, assisting the student in memorizing philosophical dogma.[71]

4 THE EPICUREAN TRADITION

Relevant aspects of the later Epicurean tradition also come into clearer focus against the combined background of Epicurus' claims to originality, his insistence upon 'self-education', and his requirements for the appropriate handling of material from outside the school. As the unquestioned discoverer of the truth, Epicurus served as a guide, leading the way for all of his followers. His authority was unchallenged, his teaching dogmatic in character, and his writings recognized as canonical. Consequently, textual exegesis assumed central importance within Epicureanism. Nevertheless, it became clear that with the death of Epicurus and his immediate circle, a new era had begun. Philodemus reports that there was complete concord between Epicurus and his disciples,[72] but that following the death of Epicurus' last direct pupil, a multiplicity of competing interpretations of his

[70] See, e.g., Pl. *Phd.* 70a; According to Arist. *SE* 176b16–17, the question of the soul's immortality was an open one for most people.

[71] See Epicur. *VS* 9, on which cf. Erler and von Ungern-Sternberg 1987.

[72] Phld. *Ad* [*cont.*] frr. 90, 107 Angeli; cf. Erler 1993.

works arose. Accordingly, the goal became to produce an accurate reading that would serve to defend the master's texts both against the polemical assaults of other schools and against misunderstandings from within the Epicureans' own ranks; to avoid doctrinal innovations that could create unrest among Epicurus' followers; and to demonstrate the coherence of Epicurean doctrine in the face of allegations to the contrary.[73]

Philodemus himself complained that even many fellow Epicureans had said and written 'muddled things', and that many had expressed personal opinions (ἴδια) out of harmony (ἀσύμφωνα) with Epicurus' doctrines.[74] The basis for his complaint was not the addition of personal opinions per se, but the fact that some of these opinions failed to harmonize with Epicurus' own dogma. Philodemus' comment offers indirect confirmation that, despite the recognition of Epicurus' intellectual leadership, neither original research nor individual contributions were off limits, provided that one adhered to Epicurus' rules concerning consistency and coherence with established doctrine. Indeed, as a result of both critical engagement with other philosophical schools and necessary adaptation to new cultural contexts, there arose within the Epicurean tradition a propensity for making fine distinctions that can accurately be characterized as innovative, albeit a kind of innovation firmly rooted in the Epicurean doctrinal system, and which can be understood in effect as the development of Epicurean potential.[75]

By way of illustration, one need only consider the distinctions contained within the framework of later Epicurean teachings on the emotions. There one finds analyses reminiscent of other schools (as in the case of anger and the Peripatetics, for example), but which can nevertheless be legitimately viewed as developments of authentic Epicurean doctrine.[76] The later Epicurean school's more liberal attitude towards certain aspects of traditional *paideia* also merits mention in this regard. This more accommodating attitude allowed the use of literary and historical sources from outside the school for educational purposes. Literary examples prove to have potential therapeutic value insofar as they make it possible to visualize, as it were, different patterns of behaviour. Such examples can therefore serve as points of departure for reflection on proper and improper behaviours associated

[73] Cf. Cic. *Fin.* 2.31.99; Demetrius Laco *Opus incertum* col. 59 Puglia.
[74] Phld. *Ad* [*cont.*] col. 2,10–17 Angeli; cf. Erler 1993.
[75] Cf. Longo Auricchio and Tepedino Guerra 1981; Erler 1994, esp. 283–6.
[76] For detailed discussions of Epicurean views on anger and their relation both to the positions of other philosophical schools and to Epicurus' own teachings, see Asmis, ch. 8, and Tsouna, ch. 9, of this volume.

with various emotions. In fact, examples that illustrate different behaviour patterns play a significant role for Epicureans like Philodemus, who wants his readers to form their own opinions about the emotions and act accordingly. In *On Signs* (*De signis*), for example, Philodemus expressly states that other people's experiences and research, including the doctrines of other schools, are both appropriate and potentially profitable material for use in philosophical investigation.[77] This claim serves to justify, and even to methodologically ground, the openness to literary culture for which Philodemus argues, against some resistance from inside his own ranks, in the work preserved in *PHerc.* 1005 (= *To the* [*Friends of the School*]). Treatises such as *On the Good King according to Homer* (*De bono rege*), *On Anger* (*De ira*) and *On Death* (*De morte*) demonstrate that Philodemus had at his command an expert knowledge of poetry and prose literature. The last of these three treatises suggests that he may even have harboured literary ambitions of his own as a prose writer. Be that as it may, each of these treatises illustrates just how useful literature can be if handled appropriately, i.e., if read through the lens of Epicurean philosophy. In each, Philodemus deals at considerable length with literary material that helps his audience to evaluate behaviour, to draw corresponding conclusions about character and to corroborate and reinforce their own conceptions by comparison with philosophical – i.e., Epicurean – ones.

Lucretius' didactic poem, *De rerum natura*, offers an especially interesting example of the freedom permitted others within the confines of Epicurus' authority and his claims to originality. Naturally, Lucretius recognizes Epicurus not only as his philosophical guide but even as a kind of mortal god: the first (*primus*) to dispel religious delusions, offer an explanation of Nature and point the way to the good life.[78] Lucretius further acknowledges that Epicurus achieved these insights of his own accord, thereby endorsing Epicurus' representation of himself as an autodidact with a legitimate claim to originality.

Lucretius presents himself, on the other hand, as a student following faithfully in Epicurus' footsteps.[79] This self-representation corresponds to an individual in the second of Epicurus' classes, according to the schema reported by Seneca: Lucretius is able to make progress toward (scientific) knowledge because he has someone else, in this case Epicurus, leading the way. Like every follower or admirer of Epicurus, Lucretius does not claim

[77] Phld. *Sign.* cols. 16,29–17,3; col. 32,13–18 De Lacy; cf. Erler 2003b.

[78] See, e.g., Lucr. 3.1–30, 5.1–58, 5.335–7, 6.24–7.

[79] Lucr. 3.4: 'now I plant my own footsteps firm in the impressions left by you' (*inque tuis nunc ficta pedum pono pressis vestigia signis*).

to be self-educated with respect to philosophical matters. Nevertheless, one certainly finds in Lucretius a claim to originality. In terms that echo his praise of Epicurus, Lucretius also hails himself as a pioneer.[80] He is the discoverer of a path previously unrecognized by any poet. Epicurus may be responsible for the content, but Lucretius claims to have discovered the most suitable form in which to convey it.[81] This discovery serves as the basis for his own claim to be an innovator and 'autodidact', a claim that is in no way undermined by his commitment to Epicurus' philosophical authority. When Lucretius justifies his particular innovation in terms of its 'appropriateness', he is referring not merely to the fulfilment of some poetological imperative (πρέπον) but also to the requirement that any personal contribution (ἴδιον) be consistent (σύμφωνον) with Epicurus' doctrine. As suggested by the famous simile in which Lucretius likens his poem's seemingly harsh contents to bitter absinthe that his own honey-sweet poetic stylings help to go down more easily,[82] this appropriateness also comprises the same functional adaptation of poetry already observable in Epicurus' own writings. Whatever objective critique of Lucretius' claim to originality one might make, the subjective criteria that define 'self-education' within the confines of Epicurus' doctrinal system are certainly satisfied. Lucretius shows himself to be a student of Epicurus who both follows faithfully in his master's footsteps and at the same time feels compelled to contribute something of his own to the path. Taking a cue from Epicurus, Lucretius reconceives the traditional relationship between self-education and outside instruction. The two are not at odds. Rather, self-education takes place within the framework established by Epicurean tradition, which itself expands to incorporate compatible innovations.

In the person of Memmius, Lucretius' poem also has, as it were, its own student, whom the poet's persona (the poetic 'I') sets before the readers' eyes as the putative audience for his teachings. If Lucretius belongs to Epicurus' second class of wisdom-seekers, his poem's addressee affords an example of the third class. For such people, the impulse to 'self-education' seems utterly lacking. Memmius himself clearly ranks among those 'who must be compelled along the right path'.[83] As a student, he requires

[80] On Lucretius' claim to originality, see esp. 1.926–7; cf. 3.417–20; 5.336–7.

[81] While there are passages that may seem to suggest a claim to a measure of originality with respect to content as well (see, e.g., 1.398–417), it is far from clear that such is ever Lucretius' intention. Whatever the case, it is enough for my purposes that Lucretius be recognized as an innovator in terms of form.

[82] Lucr. *DRN* 1.936–47 (= 4.11–22).

[83] For representative passages in Lucr. 1 alone offering insight into Memmius' character, see ll. 51–3, 80–2, 102–3, 140–5, 265–70, 331–3, 370–1 and 410–11; cf. Sen. *Ep.* 52.4.

constant encouragement from his teacher. His ignorance has made him sick and filled him with fear, like a child afraid of the dark.[84] This in turn affects his receptivity to the medicine offered by the poem's arguments. He offers resistance, raises doubts and displays distrust toward its teaching. Lucretius even expresses fear that his student may, out of superstition, turn away from the truth. It has been asked why Lucretius chooses to put such a comparatively weak student front and centre for his audience.[85] But one must not overlook the fact that the poem puts not only the student but also his teacher on display. Taken together, Lucretius' depictions of the independent, proactive 'author' and the passive, reactive student who stands in need of constant direction and admonishment illustrate the spectrum of intellectual receptivity that Seneca credits to Epicurus. At the same time, Lucretius is able to provide a clear example of the flexibility in approach permissible within an Epicurean framework, and even endorsed by Epicurus himself.

5 CONCLUSION

The examples above should suffice to show that Epicurus' claim to originality does not conflict with openness to other viewpoints, and that strict adherence to Epicurus' doctrinal system precludes neither flexibility nor individual emphases among his followers. Even with Diogenes of Oinoanda, who holds especially fast to Epicurean dogma, one finds a receptivity to contemporary language and attitudes, as when, for example, he imagines an Epicurean utopia embracing the entire known world.[86] Nevertheless, the rules of ἀκολουθία and συμφωνία laid down by Epicurus, and which serve as hermeneutic guides, remain in force. Disregard for these rules is what properly comprises 'dissidence' within Epicureanism. During the first century BC, Platonism experienced its own disputes over what constituted illicit innovation as opposed to legitimate preservation. Antiochus of Ascalon's response was to appeal to early Platonic dogma. Similar disputes arose within Epicureanism at around the same time, as Philodemus' complaints about incongruous additions to Epicurean doctrine show.[87] But again, it was the incongruity, and not merely the act of making an addition, that Philodemus considered cause for complaint.

[84] See Lucr. 2.55–61 (= 3.87–93, 6.35–41); cf. Erler 2003c.

[85] See Beer 2009, which makes comparisons between Lucretius' pedagogical relationship to Memmius and the various guidelines for student–teacher interactions found in Philodemus' *On Frank Criticism*.

[86] See, e.g., fr. 56 I,6–12 Smith.

[87] Phld. *Ad* [*cont.*] col. 2,6–16 Angeli.

A passage from his *On Household Management* (*Oeconomicus*) (= *PHerc.* 1427) offers confirmation. There Philodemus writes:

εἰ δέ τινα καὶ τῶν παρὰ Χεν[ο]φῶντι | καὶ Θεοφράστῳ συν[ε]χωροῦμεν οὐκ | ἀδόκιμα κ[αὶ] φιλοσόφοις εἶναι, | προσποιητέον κἀκεῖνα, μᾶλ[λον] | αἰσχυνο[μέ]νοις ἐΐ τι πα[ραπ]έμπομεν | ὠφέλιμον ἤτο[ι] μεταφέρομεν παρ' | ἄλλων.

But if we have conceded that some of the propositions advanced by Xenophon and Theophrastus (*sc.* about household management) are not unworthy of consideration for philosophers too, we must then add them to our own discussion, as we are more ashamed of dismissing something useful than of borrowing it from others.[88]

This attitude, of course, accords perfectly with what I have argued was Epicurus' own.

With his claim to be self-educated and his strict rules for handling information from outside sources, Epicurus not only positioned himself among competing schools by harkening back to a tradition; he also established the framework for the subsequent reception of his teaching. The fact that this framework allowed for additions and developments, as for instance in the means used to convey philosophical knowledge, belies the image of the Epicurean tradition as inflexible. Seneca's phrase *referre ad unum* retains its validity, but only if understood as the description of a thoroughly dynamic process according to which even someone firmly rooted in Epicurus' doctrine can merit the appellation 'self-educated'. Such a combination of flexibility and commitment to authority is not restricted to Epicureanism. A similar attitude is evident in ancient Platonism. Even a figure like Plotinus denies any inclination to originality. He conceives of himself as a mere exegete of Plato. Like Philodemus, Plotinus feels that the desire to bring forth something utterly new and idiosyncratic (καινοτομεῖν) constitutes a cardinal error. He is instead concerned to demonstrate agreement between his own outlook and Plato's, and to refer anything original to Plato's doctrines.[89] Something similar could have been said by any Epicurean. Like the Platonist tendency to reference (ἀνάγειν) everything to Plato, the later Epicurean practice described by Seneca as *referre ad unum* should not be understood in purely negative terms. Genuinely original contributions are permissible, provided that they are in accord with the master's doctrine. Clearly, a school's founders and their followers face different circumstances and expectations. A founder needs to be innovative; a

[88] Phld. *Oec.* col. 27,12–18; on this passage, cf. Fortenbaugh et al. 1992: 504–5.
[89] See Plotinus 5,1 (10) 8,10; 6,2 (43) 1,4–5.

follower to adapt in light of criticism. Founders may be faulted for lack of innovation; students for being either excessively independent or obstinate. Ultimately, however, polemics of this sort tear apart two characteristics that for Epicurus belong together: independence and the receptivity to outside influences.

CHAPTER 3

Epicurus' theological innatism

David Sedley

Epicurean theology has come to be viewed as a battleground between two parties of interpreters, the realists and the idealists. Realists take Epicurus to have regarded the gods as biologically immortal beings living outside our world, to whom we have cognitive access in thought thanks to *simulacra* – wafer-thin films of atoms – that travel from them and enter our minds. Idealists take Epicurus' idea to have been, rather, that gods are our own graphic idealization of the life to which we aspire, and that the simulacra identified with them are simply those on which, by the standard Epicurean process of visualization (more on this below), we choose to focus our minds in order to enjoy the image of such perfection.

Plato had assigned god a double role: world governor and object of human emulation. Epicurus argued vehemently against the first role, but endorsed the second.[1] Naturally enough, to fulfil a governing role god would need to be an objectively real being. But once that role was eliminated and god's relevance to us was reduced to that of an ideal model, the need for him to exist objectively was likely to seem less pressing. Idealism takes Epicurus to have recognized this fact and reduced the gods to projections of human thought, representing our natural goal: models of a tranquil life free from the fear of death. The gods of popular religion will typically be distorted versions of these same ideals, people having projected onto them their own mistaken moral ideals, such as the wielding of power. True piety starts with a return to the underlying conception.

The idealist interpretation has a venerable history, having been first sketched by the Kantian F. A. Lange in 1866. But – and here I have to confess to a role – it seems to have been particularly the publication in 1987 of Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* that brought it back into

For comments on earlier drafts, my thanks to James Warren, Voula Tsouna and various participants in the Mackinac conference, especially David Konstan and Michael Wigodsky.

[1] For Epicurus' debt to Plato in this regard, cf. Erler 2002b.

contention. Since 1987 there have been a number of attempted refutations of the idealist thesis,[2] whereas that same thesis, despite finding some valued support,[3] has received little systematic defence.[4] In this paper I want to set about rectifying the imbalance, not by tediously replying point by point to the critics, but by developing an aspect of the idealist thesis that received no more than passing treatment in the 1987 account, namely the innateness of religious belief.

Velleius, Cicero's Epicurean spokesman in *De natura deorum*, defends his school's theism by appealing to the universal human consensus that there are gods (*ND* 1.43–5), but he also builds in a striking extra premise concerning innate knowledge:

(1) Epicurus alone saw that, first of all, there are gods, because nature itself had imprinted the idea (*notio*) of them on everybody's mind. (2) For what race or nation of human beings is there that does not, without being taught, have a sort of 'preconception' of the gods? Epicurus' word for this is *prolêpsis*, meaning a kind of delineation of a thing preconceived by the mind, without which nothing can be understood, inquired into or debated. (3) The power and utility of this reasoning we have learnt from that heaven-sent book of Epicurus about the yardstick and criterion. (4) As a result you can plainly see that that which serves as the foundation for our present inquiry has been signally laid. (5) For since belief in them has not been instituted by some authority, custom or law, and the unanimous consensus about it stands firm, it must be seen that there are gods. (6) For we possess implanted, or rather innate, cognitions of them (*quoniam insitas eorum vel potius innatas cognitiones habemus*). (7) But what the nature of everybody agrees about must necessarily be true. It must therefore be conceded that there are gods. (8) Since this is more or less a matter of agreement among all people (*fere constat inter omnis*), not just philosophers but the uneducated as well, (9) we admit a further point of agreement (*fatemur constare illud etiam*), namely that we have a 'preconception' (as I called it before) or 'prenotion' of the gods (for new things need new names, just as Epicurus himself named *prolêpsis*, which had never previously been so called) – we have, as I say, a *prolêpsis* such as to make us consider the gods everlasting and blessed. (10) For the same nature which gave us our 'delineation' of the gods themselves also engraved it in our minds that we should consider them everlasting and blessed (*insculpsit in mentibus ut eos aeternos et beatos haberemus*).[5]

[2] Notably Mansfeld 1993; D. Scott 1995: 190–201; Giannantoni 1996; Schwiebe 2003; Babut 2005; and Wigodsky 2004. See now also David Konstan, ch 4 of this volume.

[3] Dirk Obbink has favoured the idealist interpretation in his various publications on Epicurean theology, including 1989, 1996 and 2002. See also, most recently, O'Keefe 2010.

[4] The main exception has been Purinton 2001. He defends a version of idealism, albeit importantly different from LS in some details (for one of which, see note 46 of this chapter, p. 46). For another reading sympathetic to idealism, cf. Woodward 1989.

[5] Translations and internal numeration of passages are my own unless otherwise indicated.

Consider first section 6: 'we possess implanted, *or rather innate* (*vel potius innatas*), cognitions of them'. The self-correction makes little sense unless we understand the description of the knowledge as 'innate' to be substituted because in Cicero's view it is the more correct of the two. It would be untrue to Cicero's clearly signalled intentions to suggest that the substituted word *innatus* is itself being used loosely here, even though in other contexts it may well be.[6] Knowledge of the gods then really is, on Cicero's understanding of his material, inborn rather than implanted in us subsequent to birth. Whether his understanding is correct is a separate question, and it is the main purpose of my paper to argue that it is.

If confirmation were needed that 'innate' is what the text both says and means, it is available from the slightly earlier *De finibus*, where, according to Cicero, the ancients

> saw that . . . we also possess a certain implanted, or rather innate, desire for knowledge (*insitam quandam vel potius innatam cupiditatem scientiae*), and have been born (*natosque esse*) for human society and for the fellowship and communality of mankind.[7]

The innateness of our desire for knowledge, emphasized here by the speaker's self-correction, 'implanted, or rather innate', emphatically parallels our explicitly inborn (*natosque esse*) inclination towards social living.[8] There should therefore be little doubt that by introducing the expression 'implanted, or rather innate' Cicero means precisely to draw attention to cases where literal innateness is intended.[9]

[6] David Konstan has drawn my attention to Cic. *Top*. 69, which recommends comparing items (probably goods) that are *innata atque insita* with those that are *assumptis atque adventiciis*. It is hard to determine how the terms within either pair are related, but the very economical style of the passage suggests that they are not mere synonyms, and it seems rather that in each pair the second term is broader than the first: (a) and, more generally, (b). I take the latter pair to be (a) things actively acquired by the individual, and (b) those which have in one way or another (not excluding (a)) accrued. I suggest that the first pair are (a) things innate in the individual and (b) those which have, in one way or another (not excluding (a)), become part of that individual's nature. Whether or not one opts to read it this way, I doubt if the passage can provide evidence against 'innate' as the strict meaning of *innatus* in Cicero.

[7] *Fin*. 4.4. That the last clause refers to literal innateness is further confirmed at 5.66: 'human nature is so constituted at birth as to possess an innate element of civic and national feeling' (*cum sic hominis natura generata sit ut habeat quiddam ingenitum quasi civile atque populare*; tr. Rackham).

[8] Cf. also the repetition of the same point at *Fin*. 5.48, supported there by reference to the irrepressible inquisitiveness of children. Appeal to children's behaviour is typical of arguments for innate moral characteristics (cf. below on the cradle argument).

[9] Asmis 1984: 69, arguing against literal innateness, draws attention to the pairing of *innata* and *insita* at Cic. *Ver*. 2.5.139, where Cicero is saying that his concern to defend the interests of the Roman people, as distinct from his brief to represent those of the Sicilians, is *non recepta sed innata*. This, said by a Roman, can comfortably be understood as referring to literal innateness. The fact that he also goes on to use the contrast of *delata ad me* and *in animo sensuque meo penitus adfixa atque insita*

The passage from Velleius' speech falls into two main phases, both bearing on the innateness of religious belief. The first phase (1–8) is concerned with an existential thesis: gods exist. The second (9–10) is descriptive, adding the gods' essential properties: immortality and blessedness.

There is a sharp separation between the existential argument and the descriptive one, the former being announced with a *primum* ('first of all', (1)), indicating its logical or methodological primacy. Although in what follows that *primum* is never formally reciprocated with a *deinde*, the transition to the second phase of the argument is clearly enough marked at 8–9.[10] For the pairing, we may compare part of Epicurus' own theological summary at *Letter to Menoeceus* 123–4:

θεοὶ μὲν γὰρ εἰσίν· ἐναργὴς γὰρ αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἡ γνῶσις. οἵους δ' αὐτοὺς <οἱ> πολλοὶ νομίζουσιν οὐκ εἰσίν· . . . οὐ γὰρ προλήψεις εἰσὶν ἀλλ' ὑπολήψεις ψευδεῖς αἱ τῶν πολλῶν ὑπὲρ θεῶν ἀποφάσεις . . .

For although there are gods – the knowledge of them being self-evident – they are not as the many regard them. . . . For the assertions of the many about the gods are not preconceptions but false suppositions . . .

Here too, as in Velleius' speech, an assertion of the gods' existence, based explicitly on an appeal to our cognition of them (and, in view of what follows – οὐ γὰρ προλήψεις εἰσὶν ἀλλ' . . . – implicitly on our *prolêpsis* of them), is joined with a separate, descriptive argument about their essential properties.

Despite Velleius' separation of the two phases of argument, however, a quite extraordinary amount of emphasis is placed by him on the fact that they both equally rely on the criterion of *prolêpsis*, heralded in both phases (2–3, 9) as Epicurus' triumphant contribution to the epistemologist's toolkit. It is first introduced, untechnically, as a *notio* or 'idea' (1), but then technically specified as a *prolêpsis* (2), with a citation of its source in Epicurus' epistemological treatise the *Canon* (3), and with some speculative rehearsing of a range of alternative Latin translations (2, 9).

Greek usage of *prolêpsis* does not normally give it an ordinary propositional content. Typically, we have a *prolêpsis* or natural conception, not *that* something is the case, but either *of* X, or, more fully, *of* X *as* F. Nothing

does not suffice to reduce the meaning of *innata* to that of *insita*. Cf. also Cic. *Tim.* 40, where the circular motion of the rational soul is described as *innatam et insitam*. Cicero has added these epithets to what he found in the *Timaeus* at 42c5, but he well knew that the rotation in question was indeed innate, having been implanted by the demiurge when creating the soul: hence both 'innate' and 'implanted' are intended.

[10] Thus Pease 1955–8: vol. 1, *ad loc.*

in the present passage contradicts that usage. Nevertheless, in both phases of the argument the *prolêpsis* of the gods is invoked as bringing with it propositional implications. In the first phase, the universal *prolêpsis* of the gods brings with it the universal 'belief' (*opinio*; 5) that there are gods. And in the second phase the *prolêpsis* of the gods, implicitly as everlasting and blessed, is such as to make us 'consider' (*putemus*; 9) the gods everlasting and blessed. It seems that, methodologically, no important distinction is being made for present purposes between the *prolêpsis* itself and the associated belief.

The first phase obtains its conclusion that there are gods from the following set of premises:

I All human beings have a *prolêpsis* of gods (1–2).
II The *prolêpsis* of gods has been given to us by nature (1).
III The associated existential belief, that there are gods, has not been culturally imposed on us, and therefore it too, by implication, is natural (5–8).
IV Cognition of the gods is innate (6).
V All human beings believe that there are gods (7–8).
VI What everyone naturally agrees about must be true (7).

The argument, although nowhere formally constructed, is an inference from a criterion of truth, the *prolêpsis* of gods (I–IV), to the existence of gods. The criterial status of *prolêpsis* in this argument is clearly alluded to in 3, and the missing extra premise may well be that, *prolêpsis* being itself a kind of cognition,[11] there could not be a *prolêpsis* whose object was non-existent.

Difficulties, however, have been generated by the additional strand of argument announced in V–VI, whereby the existence of gods appears to be established by a different criterion, universal consensus. As Dirk Obbink has pointed out,[12] universal consensus is nowhere named by the Epicureans as a criterion of truth. Obbink himself concludes, on this and other grounds, that the additional motif of universal consensus is Cicero's own inept addition to what is otherwise a body of authentic Epicurean material.

It is not my principal concern to defend the authenticity of this strand in the argument, but I believe the case is nevertheless worth making here.

[11] Epicurus at *Ep. Men.* 123, quoted above, seems to make the *prolêpsis* of gods either identical to, or at any rate inclusive of, our self-evident γνῶσις of them. In the doxographical passage at DL 10.33, quoted below, *prolêpsis* is called a kind of κατάληψις, with substitution of the fashionable Stoic term. Cicero's *cognitio* may correspond to either or both of these. For *prolêpsis* as a kind of *cognitio* see also Cicero as quoted in note 23 of this chapter, p. 39.

[12] Obbink 1992: 201.

For if Cicero has to be admitted to have tampered with his material in this regard, the suspicion will be increased that he has done the same by adding the innateness motif, and the passage's evidential value on the latter score will be weakened.

A natural reading of the passage is that it relies on a virtual equivalence between, on the one hand, a *prolêpsis*, and, on the other, any belief that that *prolêpsis* automatically brings with it. If the *prolêpsis* is universally shared, so must be the belief.

All *prolêpseis* are natural, but not all can be assumed to be universally held, because any that are empirically obtained will depend on one or more contingencies. No doubt everybody has the *prolêpsis* of a human being, but for geographical reasons not everyone is likely to have that of an elephant, and blind people may lack, among many others, those of colours (cf. Lucr. 2.741–5). Fortunately, however, our passage is not about *prolêpseis* in general, but about an innate *prolêpsis*. And it can easily enough be argued that such a *prolêpsis*, being an integral part of human nature, must be possessed by all human beings.

Conversely, it could be that there are some universally held beliefs which are false, and which therefore cannot be evidence for the existence of a corresponding *prolêpsis*, since a *prolêpsis* is a criterion of truth and therefore by definition true. Perhaps, for example, before the time of Epicurus everybody wrongly believed death to be an evil, and the gods to intervene in human lives. If so, they were not relying on authentic *prolêpseis*, but on faulty inferences (cf. Lucr. 3.870–7, 5.1183–1225). The claim made in our passage, however, is not that all universally shared beliefs are true, but that all beliefs which are universal *because naturally possessed* are true (*de quo autem omnium natura consentit* . . . ; 7). And the fact that the *prolêpsis* of gods is naturally possessed is more or less explicitly argued in 5: belief in the existence of gods (presumably as distinct from beliefs about their detailed characteristics) is a cross-cultural universal, entirely independent of local norms.

On this reading, we can take the natural universality of a belief to be invoked as evidence for the existence of the corresponding *prolêpsis*. Appeal to some such anthropological foundation can in principle enable the Epicureans to make headway in the debate about what in fact are, and what are not, the irreducible features of the *prolêpsis* of god.[13] It does, on the other hand, raise questions about how natural universality could ever be established.[14] Since we cannot hope to interview every human being,

[13] Cf. Plut. *Comm. not.* 1075E. [14] Cf. Obbink 1992: 201.

we are more likely to reach the generalization that everybody believes in gods by *first* establishing that this belief is an innate part of human nature, and proceeding from there to the inference that all human beings must have it. In reality though, as we can learn from Philodemus' *On Signs* (*De signis*),[15] the two approaches could fruitfully feed off each other. How, for example, do we know that all human beings are mortal? First we consider the full range of human beings of whom we already have knowledge, whether directly or by report, and note that, despite all other variations, mortality remains a constant. This in time leads us to the conclusion that human beings *qua human beings* are mortal, in other words that mortality is part of human nature. And from that new premise we can go on to reach the universal generalization that all human beings are mortal. The equivalent methodology for the case of universal theism would be: (a) survey all the anthropological data available, (b) establish on this basis that belief in gods is an innate part of human nature, and (c) infer from this in turn that belief in gods is a natural human universal. Here (b) and (c) are mutually entailing, and it should cause no surprise to find Cicero's Epicurean combining the two in his exposition.

It has also been asked[16] how the Epicureans can square the universality thesis with their critique of others who misconceive the gods. Here, however, it should at least be noted that the consensus argument occurs only in the first, existential phase (1–8), not in the separate descriptive phase, where the gods' essential properties – a subject of much greater disagreement – are established. And as regards the existential consensus about the gods, the only relevant exceptions to it are avowed atheists, a very rare breed in antiquity. As Obbink has shown, Epicurus' strategy for dealing with this tiny handful of exceptions was to brand them as deranged,[17] thus presumably explaining away their actual or apparent departure from a universal of human thought: they are, at least in this respect, not fully human. Velleius is clearly party to that same strategy, because his initial assertions about the universality of belief in gods (1–2) is tempered in 8 by a qualification: it is 'more or less' (*fere*) a matter of universal agreement.

This ruse may appear opportunistic and disingenuous, but it seems to me nevertheless a natural enough move to make when defending the existence of a universal innate belief. Compare a rationalist arguing that the basic laws of logic are impossible for a rational being to disbelieve. If someone were found who nevertheless did turn out to disbelieve them, one might

[15] See esp. cols. 34,29–36,17 = LS 18G. [16] Obbink 1992: 200.
[17] Epicur. *Nat.* 12, as cited by Phld. *Piet.* 519–33 Obbink. See further, Obbink 1989: 215–21.

easily enough conclude that this person is not fully rational. Naturally enough, such a strategy relies on the unbelievers being a vanishingly rare breed. It will carry little weight if, as is the case today, a whole school of logicians manages to get by without the principle of non-contradiction, or, correspondingly, if atheism turns out to be an established position with many adherents. But in its ancient context, Epicurus' strategy for marginalizing atheism makes ready sense.

One may also note that Velleius' argument offers an alternative or complementary strategy for establishing universality. The initial claim in 1 that all human beings share the belief that there are gods is explained in 2 by the reformulation that there is no human *gens* or *genus* which does not have the *prolêpsis* of gods. Whether *genus* refers to nationalities or – less credibly – to human types, this presents the universality thesis in a plausible light. For taken as a whole even the Greek *race*, despite having thrown up a tiny handful of self-declared atheists, can truly be said to believe in gods. Thus the full argument may be that all human races believe in gods, and that even within them there are insignificantly few individuals so mentally deranged as to opt out of the consensus.

I move now to the second, descriptive phase of Velleius' argument. From the consensus that the gods exist, he says, we can go on to establish a further human universal (8–9), namely a *prolêpsis* of the gods which leads us to consider them blessed and immortal beings. The same nature which has given us the *prolêpsis* (here rendered by *informatio*;[18] cf. 2) of the gods has also engraved it on our minds (*insculpsit in mentibus*) that we should believe them to be everlasting and blessed (10).

This too is language tailored to an innate predisposition.[19] One cannot imagine Velleius saying the same about ordinary empirically derived preconceptions; for example, that nature has engraved it on our minds

[18] I am assuming that by *informatio* Cicero is trying to capture the Greek word τύπος, integral to the definition of *prolêpsis* at DL 10.33, and probably echoed in Epicurus' language in *Nat.* 25 (see LS 20C8).

[19] Compare the Stoic Balbus in *ND* 2.12: 'For it is innate in everyone and virtually engraved on their minds (*omnibus enim innatum est et in animo quasi insculptum*) that there are gods.' Following Cicero's corrective and therefore strict use of *vel potius innatas* at 1.44, it seems most unlikely that at 2.12 he should, in an argument whose language so closely echoes that at 1.44–5, fall back on a loose use of the term. Whether the attribution of such a view to the Stoics is correct is a separate question. Balbus goes on almost immediately to cite Cleanthes' fourfold explanation of the entirely empirical origin of religious belief. D. Scott 1995: 198–9, cites this fact as evidence that *innatum* here does not mean innate, but I am more inclined to agree with Sandbach 1930: 48, who despite his doubts about Stoic innatism judges that Cicero has simply failed to smooth over the inconsistency between the two juxtaposed passages; and with Jackson-McCabe 2004: 341–6, who argues convincingly that Cicero is voicing a kind of dispositional innatism that became common in the Stoic theology of the Roman era.

that we should consider horses to be four-legged and birds to have wings. That the innatism of the first phase is still alive in the second need not be doubted.

This time there is no explicit claim that the *prolêpsis* of the gods as blessed and immortal is shared by all human beings. Universality is present only in the somewhat imprecise transition from 8 to 9: since virtually everyone agrees (*constat inter omnes*) that there are gods, we admit a further point of agreement (*fatemur constare illud etiam*), namely that we have a *prolêpsis* which leads us to think the gods blessed and immortal. The transition from one occurrence of *constare* to another looks more like a rhetorical segue than a second *consensus omnium* argument, with the *constare* (this time without *inter omnes*) meaning little more than 'it is a manifest fact'.

If Velleius does not make any assertion of universality this time, that silence should not be taken to mean that the *prolêpsis* in question is not universal. That could hardly be so, given that (a) it cannot fail to be the very same *prolêpsis*, that of gods, which has already been declared universal in 2; and (b) it is not only natural but also, as we have seen, described with the language of innateness. Rather, his silence about its universality is a recognition that no appeal to universal consensus could in this case carry any weight. Whereas the basic existential belief about gods is seen as a genuine cross-cultural universal, open to inspection by simply observing religious conduct across the world,[20] the description of the gods' essential properties is not. This is not because people do not all, deep down, share the same *prolêpsis* of the gods as immortal and blessed, which they certainly must do, but because that *prolêpsis* is in most people so heavily overlain by false beliefs, especially about divine anger and favour towards humans, as not to be readily open to inspection in the way that the basic existential belief is. In most people, the recovery of their innate *prolêpsis* of the gods' true nature will be possible only after a remedial course in Epicurean physics has removed the thick encrustation of false beliefs.

I conclude, then, that Velleius in the passage under discussion is fully and explicitly committed to the thesis that all human beings have a – literally – innate *prolêpsis* of god. Moreover, there have been plentiful signs that his argument can be traced back to Epicurus, and nothing incompatible with Epicurus' own position has emerged.

[20] Cf. the very early appeal to universal human practice reported by Elias from Aristotle's *Eudemus* (*In Cat.* 114.32–115.3 = *Eudemus* fr. 3 Ross). Aristotle likewise limits himself to an existential conclusion, here one favouring the soul's survival: all human beings by natural instinct (αὐτοφυῶς) pour libations to the dead and swear upon their names; and nobody ever does such things with regard to that which is altogether non-existent.

But what can it mean for our *prolêpsis* of the gods to be innate? Are we born already possessing some kind of awareness of the gods, albeit in a suppressed form, in the way that Platonists believe us to be born with latent knowledge of the Forms? That idea can be quickly eliminated as unacceptable to Epicureans: notoriously, the Platonist version of innatism relies on the hypothesis that the soul pre-existed its present incarnation and acquired the knowledge at that time, a doctrine which cannot fail to be anathema to any Epicurean. Rather, when Velleius says that nature has 'engraved it on our minds that we should consider the gods everlasting and blessed' (10), we must take him to mean that all human beings are born with an innate *predisposition* to form, as they mature, that conception of gods. Can this be Epicurean?[21]

There should, at least, be no resistance to the idea that in Epicurean eyes *some* true attitudes and evaluations are embodied in, and attested by, our innate predispositions. The obvious parallel is the innate leaning towards pleasure as the object to pursue, said by Torquatus, Cicero's Epicurean spokesman in *De finibus*, to manifest itself in our behaviour from the moment of birth (*Fin.* 1.30). In this 'cradle argument' our innate predisposition to treat pleasure as the goal is cited as sufficient evidence that pleasure is indeed the goal. And that is strongly reminiscent of the way our innate predisposition to think of the gods as existing with certain characteristics is cited as proving that the gods do exist and do have those characteristics. We have here, then, some encouragement to persist with the hypothesis that the doctrine of innate belief in god is authentically Epicurean.

So far the parallelism does not extend to the inclusion of an innate *prolêpsis*. However, as Torquatus immediately goes on to attest (1.31), some Epicureans did interpret Epicurus' argument for pleasure's being the goal as invoking a *prolêpsis*:

> However, some of our school want to refine this doctrine, and deny that sensation should be left to be the criterion of what is good or what is bad. Instead, they maintain, it can be understood by the mind's reasoning both that pleasure is to be sought for its own sake and that pain is to be avoided for its own sake. To this end, they say that there is as it were a natural idea implanted in our souls (*quasi naturalem atque insitam in animis nostris inesse notionem*), such as to make us sense the one to be worth seeking, the other worth avoiding.

There can be no doubt that the natural 'idea' (*notio*) in question is a *prolêpsis*. That is the term with which we saw Cicero introduce *prolêpsis* at

[21] D. Scott 1995: 190–201, offers a head-on critique of the attribution to Epicurus of dispositional innatism about the gods. Cf. his valuable account of varieties of innatism, pp. 91–5.

ND 1.44 as well,[22] before launching into his digression about how better to render it in Latin. The lack here of any more refined translation than *notio* simply reflects the fact that *De finibus* is the slightly earlier of the two treatises, predating Cicero's concerted effort in the *De natura deorum* passage to find a more sophisticated Latinization of *prolêpsis*.[23] The earlier date of the present passage also explains why, whereas in *ND* 1 Cicero would write *insitas . . . vel potius innatas*, here at the equivalent point he simply writes *naturalem atque insitam*. For if there is indeed a *prolêpsis* of pleasure as having a positive value, that it should be innate seems almost unavoidable, given that according to Epicurus himself we act in accordance with it from the moment of birth. It is therefore only to be expected that his source should have called this *prolêpsis* 'innate'. Cicero's dilemma was, it seems, how best to translate the Greek adjective ἔμφυτος,[24] almost certainly the term he found in his source text. Because the verb ἐμφύω means 'implant', the translation *insitus*, 'implanted', initially suggested itself to him. But his later self-correction to *innatus*, announced in *Fin.* 4.4 with *insitam . . . vel potius innatam*, and repeated in *ND* 1.44 with *insitas . . . vel potius innatas*, looks well judged, corresponding more accurately to regular Greek usage of the adjective. The repeated self-correction suggests awareness that he had previously mistranslated the word. Already here in *Fin.* 1, then, we should take Cicero's words to be evidence for an Epicurean innatist theory, this time one concerning the *prolêpsis* (or *prolêpseis*) of pleasure and pain.

True, the innatist doctrine is here assigned to followers of Epicurus, not to Epicurus himself. However, as I have argued elsewhere,[25] these Epicureans were not as sometimes supposed disagreeing with the Master, but were offering their own best interpretation of arguments which he himself, after articulating the cradle argument, had gone on to use (*Fin.* 1.32–3) – arguments with which he had sought to show that everybody, whether or not they realize it, in fact acts in such a way as to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. The conjecture that these arguments were offered as evidence for a universally innate *prolêpsis*, manifested in all human conduct, was a reasonable one on the part of one group of his followers,

[22] Both passages have in common their way of representing the content of the *prolêpsis* in question: we have a *prolêpsis* such that (*hanc . . . ut*) we should have a certain belief/feeling about its object.

[23] Interestingly enough, he later reverts to the simple *notio* at *Top.* 31: 'I call "idea" (*notio*) what the Greeks sometimes call *ennoia* and sometimes *prolêpsis*, namely, an implanted and previously grasped cognition of each thing, in need of unfolding.'

[24] For ἔμφυτος as an epithet of *prolêpsis*, see Chrysippus, as quoted at Plut. *Comm. not.* 1041E; cf. Epict. *Diss.* 2.11.3–6.

[25] Sedley 1996.

even though other Epicureans, also reported here by Velleius, adopted a different explanation. It seems likely that what at least in part inspired the former party in its attribution was the innatist theological doctrine from which we started. I do not want to insist that, so far as a *prolêpsis* of pleasure was concerned, they read Epicurus correctly.[26] Nevertheless, their interpretation is evidence that postulation of some kind of innate *prolêpsis* could credibly be attributed to Epicurus, and to this extent it lends additional credence to the innatist content of Velleius' argument.[27]

Why has there been widespread reluctance among modern interpreters to accept an Epicurean doctrine of innate *prolêpseis*? One motive, to which I shall return, may be its potential implications for our understanding of Epicurus' theology. A more direct one, however, is its apparent incompatibility with our best source on Epicurean *prolêpsis*, Diogenes Laertius 10.33:

> A *prolêpsis*, they say, is as it were a cognition (κατάληψις), or correct opinion, or conception (ἔννοια), or universal 'stored notion' – i.e., memory – of that which has frequently appeared from outside (τοῦ πολλάκις ἔξωθεν φανέντος): e.g. 'Such and such a kind of thing is a man.'

If, the objection will run, possessing a *prolêpsis* of *X* requires that instances of *X* have frequently appeared to one from outside,[28] then the doctrine is so wholeheartedly empiricist as to leave no possible room for innate *prolêpseis*, of god or anything else.

In general I agree that the empiricist label is correct. For example, according to Lucretius (4.473–7), even the *prolêpsis* of 'truth' – which would surely be an a priori concept if there were any – has in fact to be acquired by empirical encounters with truths. Nevertheless, an 'innate' *prolêpsis* of god can be made to conform to the requirements set out by Diogenes Laertius. Gods are, after all (more on this below), initially conceived through the repeated impingement of simulacra on the human mind *from outside*. It

[26] An innate *prolêpsis* of pleasure, if there were one, would apparently fail to meet the stipulation at DL 10.33 that its content should have 'appeared frequently from outside', whereas, as we will see, the innate *prolêpsis* of god can meet that stipulation. It is even possible that the qualification *quasi* used by Cicero in reporting these Epicureans is meant to allow that what is at issue is not *stricto sensu* a *prolêpsis* but something functionally equivalent or analogous to it.

[27] There is very little basis for the speculation, entertained by Manuwald 1972: 15–16, that these Epicureans, and therefore perhaps also the source of *ND* 1.44, were Stoic-influenced.

[28] As at LS vol. 11, p. 92, I place a comma after τουτέστι μνήμην, making it a parenthetical gloss on the preceding two words, and thus reattaching the genitive τοῦ πολλάκις ἔξωθεν φανέντος to *all* the preceding accusatives, κατάληψιν etc. It seems inconceivable that the bare terms 'grasp', 'correct opinion' etc., without the dependent genitive, were meant to be sufficient to define *prolêpsis*.

could then be that, on the one hand, the *prolêpsis* of god is innate in the sense that we are from birth programmed to acquire it, unlike, say, the *prolêpsis* of horse, which depends entirely on the contingency of our encountering horses during our lifetimes; but that, on the other hand, our full realization of that predisposition occurs, much as in the case of horse, only when images of divine beings have frequently entered our consciousness from outside.[29] (Dispositional innatism is inevitably liable to admit discrete stages like these. Even a rationalist like Descartes, who believes the concepts of God and truth to be dispositionally innate, would be hard put to it to say that a one-day-old child 'has' these concepts.)

That would narrow the gap between the *prolêpsis* of god and other *prolêpseis*, but would not – and should not be expected to – eliminate it. One reason is that, while all other *prolêpseis* are of 'sensibles' (αἰσθητά), that of gods alone is of 'intelligibles' (νοητά). This, at any rate, seems the lesson to draw from col. 16 of Philodemus' *On Piety* (*De pietate*), thanks to the much improved text now provided by Dirk Obbink.[30] Philodemus is evidently replying to critics who object that Epicurus, in saying at the beginning of his physical discourse that 'the totality (τὸ πᾶν) is bodies and place', was thereby expunging[31] the gods from his list of existents. This criticism, says Philodemus (435–58),

is the mark of utterly reckless people – unless someone with any sense was likely, when making a division of the most generic common classes, to mention species whose *prolêpseis* place them within these classes (ἐν ταύταις προ|ειλημμένων εἰδῷ̣[ν]).[32] By that argument they should not have said just that the *gods* are

[29] In this regard I am substantially in agreement with Kleve 1963.

[30] I here reproduce from Obbink 1996 the text of the entire column (= lines 432–60); my translation of lines 435–58 follows in the main body of my text: σώματα καὶ τόπον, | τοὺς θεοὺς δὲ μὴ συν|αριθμεῖσθαι, περιγρά|φειν αὐτούς, τελε[ί]|ως ἀναλγήτων ἐσ|τίν, εἰ μὴ τὰς ἀνω|τάτω{ι}διαιρούμε|νος κοινότητ[[ο]]ας ἔ|μελλεν ἔνφρων {η}| τις <τῶν> ἐν ταύταις προ|ειλημμένων εἰδῷ̣[ν] | μνημονεύ[σειν, οὐ] | δέον τοὺς θεοὺς | μόνον ἀναιρεῖσθαι | πρὸς αὐτοῦ φαν[αι] | τούτου χάριν, ἀλ|λ'}{σ} οὐχὶ καὶ τοὺ̣ς̣ [ἀν|θρώπους κ[αὶ τοὺς] | ἵππους [καὶ] `πάγ'θ' ἁπλῶς | τὰ κατὰ μέρος αἰσ|θητά τε καὶ νοητὰ | [φ]ύ̣σ̣[ε]ων εἴδη καὶ συν|[πε]φ̣[υ]κότων· ὡς | ἄλ̣λ̣[ω]ν, ὧν οὕτως εὖ|δ[ηλ]ος, οὐδὲ τού|[τω]γ̣ ἐμνημόνευ|σ[εν· ἀμέλ]ει δ' ἐν τοῖς σώ|μ[α]σιν ἅπαντα τάτ|τειν ὑφειλήφεσαν . . .

[31] 434–5. For the philosophical sense of περιγράφειν ('bracketing') see Castagnoli 2000.

[32] I do not translate Usener's conjectured <τῶν> before ἐν in 441. Although it would be a stylistic improvement, it is not strictly required by the sense, and I suspect that Philodemus omitted it on purpose, in order to separate this argument cleanly from the next. At 437–43 he replies that Epicurus should not be expected already to have mentioned species when still at the stage of distinguishing the ultimate genera; at 443–58 he adds that anyway, the critics' argument no more applies to gods than to any of the *other* derivative items in Epicurus' ontology. If in the first argument he had already spoken universally of 'the' species of the ultimate genera, he would have anticipated the second argument.

eliminated by him, without adding human beings, horses, and quite generally all individual sensible and intelligible (αἰσ|θητά τε καὶ νοητά) species (εἴδη) of natural kinds ([φ]ύσ[ε]ων) and properties [adopting Usener's conjecture συν|[βε]β[η]κότων].[33] Being such a clear thinker, just like those other items he did not mention the gods here[34] either.

For present purposes, two points are worth noticing. First, we have a clear reference to the *prolêpsis* of the gods: they are a species whose *prolêpsis* places them in one of the two highest classes of beings, namely (since they can hardly be a species of place) the class of bodies. Second, the full division of the highest classes subdivides them into sensible and intelligible species. As Obbink has pointed out, the inclusion of that subdivision here must be motivated by the need to make it clear how the overall schema allows for the inclusion of the gods alongside other species. For the gods are the prime candidate for an intelligible (*noêtos*) species, as we can confirm by recalling how Epicurus in *Letter to Menoeceus* 123, appealing to what appears to be the *prolêpsis* of the gods as imperishable and blessed, calls it the 'common *noêsis*' of god.[35]

Jointly, these two clues indicate that the *prolêpsis* of gods is classed as a *prolêpsis* of intelligibles. There are undoubtedly other intelligibles in Epicurus' ontology,[36] including atoms and everything else which, because found only at the microscopic level, is accessible to consciousness by analogical reasoning, not by direct experience. But, in view of the account of *prolêpsis* at DL 10.33, it may be doubted whether any of these further items is the object of a *prolêpsis*, precisely because they cannot be objects of any kind of repeated direct experience in which they appear to us from outside.

[33] 453–4, συν|[πε]φ[υ]κότων Anon. A, taken up by Obbink. The conjecture συν|[βε]β[η]κότων is not recorded in Obbink's *ap. crit.* but can be found in Usener 1977, s.v. both νοητός and συμβεβηκός. The division of beings into per se entities (καθ' ἑαυτὰς φύσεις) and dependent properties (συμβεβηκότα, used correctly to designate all properties, of which 'accidents', συμπτώματα, are one species and 'permanent συμβεβηκότα' the other) is a standard Epicurean one. Usener's conjecture is supported by the consideration that Philodemus' answer to the critics requires a mention of συμβεβηκότα for completeness: otherwise he would risk conceding that Epicurus was, at any rate, eliminating dependent properties from his ontology, which he emphatically was not. If thus restored, the text should not be taken to imply that these 'properties' are, like human beings and horses, themselves species of either body or place, but just that, like humans and horses, they too are players in Epicurus' ontology which, because derivative from the pair of items separated in the highest division, were naturally not going to be mentioned already at that initial stage.

[34] I am conjecturing at 458 a completion such as ἐκεῖ, followed by a new sentence starting εἰ δ' ἐν τοῖς, κτλ.

[35] Cf. also the gods' designation as 'observed by reason', λόγῳ θεωρητούς, in the scholion to *KD* 1.

[36] Cf. Obbink 1996: 341, for an extended list of what else might be thought to rank as intelligibles.

The gods may in this regard be unique, the only intelligible objects of a *prolêpsis*. This would in fact be confirmed if one were to accept something like the following reconstruction of Philodemus, *On Piety* col. 66A:[37]

πὰν γὰ[ρ ἐναργὲς] | οἴεται καθάπ[ερ ὁρί]|ζεται χρό[νος, ἢ κατὰ] | πρό-ληψίν [τινα, κα]|θάπερ κἀ[τῶι δευ]|τέρωι καὶ [τριακοσ]|τῶι, καὶ τῶν [θεῶν ἐ]|ναργείαι φησ[ίν τι προ]|λαμβάνεσθα[ι πᾶσι,] | καίπερ ἓν τῶν [ἐν ὑπο]|κειμένοις ὄν, [οὐδὲν] | φύσιν διανο[ητὴν | ἧ]ττον ἔχον [ἢ τῶν] | ἄλλων ὄντων [τὰ κα|θόλ]ου πρὸς τὴ[ν αἴσ|θησιν ὄντ' ἀφανῆ].

For he [Epicurus] thinks it all self-evident in the way that time is defined, or else in accordance with some *prolêpsis*, in the way in which he also, in book 32, says that even an attribute of the gods is the subject of a self-evident *prolêpsis* for everybody, despite the fact that it is the one thing present in underlying subjects (ἐν ὑπο|κειμένοις)[38] that has a no less intelligible nature than do those, among other entities, that are altogether[39] non-evident to sense-perception.

As I understand him, Philodemus is here engaged in elucidating Epicurus' talk of something 'self-evident' (ἐναργές), presumably in a theological context, and quite possibly in one bearing on our 'self-evident' knowledge of the gods, as at *Ep. Men.* 123. To throw light on it, he offers a pair of alternative parallels. The first concerns the case of time, as analysed in *Ep. Hdt.* 72, although Philodemus may well have cited the longer original of this, probably in *Nat.* 2 or 10.[40] Time is to be understood, not like the other things which we investigate in an underlying subject (ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ) by appeal to this or that *prolêpsis*, but by starting directly from the 'self-evident fact' (ἐνάργημα) in virtue of which we find ourselves using familiar temporal language. The second case, taken from another book, probably

[37] Here is Philippson's text as reproduced with minor adjustments in Obbink 1996: πὰν γὰ[ρ . . . . .] | οἴεται καθάπ[ερ ὁρί]|ζεται χρό[νος, εἶναι] | πρόληψιν· [καὶ κα]|θάπερ κἀ[τῶι δευ]|τέρωι καὶ [τριακοσ]|τῶι, καὶ τῶν [θεῶν ἐ]|ναργείαι φησ[ὶν κατα]|λαμβάνεσθα[ι τὸ ὄν,] | καίπερ ἓν τῶν [ἐν ὑπο]|κειμένοις ὄν, [τὴν δὲ] | φύσιν διανο[ητὴν] | ἧ]ττον ἔχον [τῶν] | ἄλλων ὄντων [καὶ κα|θόλ]ου πρὸς τὴ[ν . . .

Thus read, the text says that the 'being' of the gods has a 'less intelligible (διανοητήν) nature than other beings'. Unless there is a surprising degree of contrast intended between νοητός and διανοητός, this seems unlikely.

[38] This implies that the gods themselves count as ὑποκείμενα. Regardless of whether we translate it '(underlying) subjects' or 'substrates', it should not be thought to favour realism over idealism. An impression constituted by a stream of simulacra not emanating from any solid (στερέμνιον) body still has as its object a ὑποκείμενον, constituted by the simulacra themselves (S.E. *Adv. math.* 8.63, ὑπέκειτο γὰρ τὰ εἴδωλα). Likewise the gods, even if they are physically constituted by streams of simulacra and are not στερέμνια (Cic. *ND* 1.49), are still the underlying subjects of the divine predicates.

[39] For Epicurus' use of καθόλου in this sense, cf. *Ep. Hdt.* 69.

[40] The scholion on *Ep. Hdt.* 73 refers us to *Nat.* 2, but there is good reason to think that the more developed version was not there but in *Nat.* 10 (see Sedley 1998a: 112–13, 118–19).

32,[41] of *On Nature*, is one concerned with attributes of the gods. This time – no surprise here – the self-evidence *is* provided by a *prolêpsis*. What is special about the second case, it seems, is that the divine attributes revealed by the *prolêpsis* are, despite their self-evidence, said by Epicurus to have an altogether intelligible (διανοητός) nature.

If then, as it seems, the *prolêpseis* of gods are epistemologically unique on account of their purely intelligible content, the pressing question is: how are they formed? At the same time we must bear in mind the further question: what is it about people's noetic encounters with divinities that would, if Cicero is right, make it appropriate to call the resultant *prolêpsis* 'innate'?

To make headway towards answering these questions, we have to examine Lucretius' well-known account of early man's first religious experiences. The reason for special Epicurean interest in this early phase is no doubt that only thus can we ask what a religious experience must be like when altogether uncontaminated by existing religious traditions and other cultural influences.[42] The approach is a kind of cradle argument – focused, however, on the infancy of mankind, not of the individual. Since our cognitions of the gods are guaranteed *true*, present-day ones are likely to have the same basic content, but either they or our understanding of them could be camouflaged by culturally generated beliefs about the gods.

Here are the crucial lines (5.1169–82):

> For already in those days the races of mortal men used to see with waking mind, and even more so in their dreams, figures of gods, of marvellous appearance and prodigious size. They attributed sensation to them, because they seemed [or 'were seen', *videbantur*; 1173] to move their limbs, and to give utterance with voices of a dignity to match their splendid appearance and great strength. They endowed them with everlasting life, because their appearance was in perpetual supply and the form remained unchanged, and more generally because they supposed that beings with such strength could not easily be overcome by any force. And hence they supposed them to be supremely blessed, because none of them seemed oppressed by fear of death, and also because in their dreams they saw them perform many marvellous acts with no trouble to themselves.

[41] See Obbink 1996: 562.

[42] Sextus Empiricus at *Adv. math.* 9.33 employs on his own behalf a νόμῳ-φύσει argument of unmistakably Epicurean origin. Against the theory that the idea of god was originally imposed by lawmakers, and that this explains the diversity of religious belief, he argues that the universal *prolêpsis* of god was 'stirred up naturally' (φυσικῶς . . . ἐκκινεῖσθαι), asking why else we all focus on precisely the same characteristics of god, namely blessedness, imperishability, perfect happiness, and immunity to all harm.

Like most interpreters, I shall concentrate on the dream experiences, and not worry too much about what their relatively rare waking counterparts may have involved.[43] How were the divine figures seen to be and to act in those dreams? They appeared alive, beautiful, huge, unageing and unafraid of dying. They also moved their limbs, spoke in an august manner and manifested great strength, performing amazing acts with ease. Pretty well all of these are characteristics that can be seen to have contributed, however primitively, to the conception of the gods as immortal and blessed. Immortality is indicated by their being alive in the first place, along with their apparent failure to age, their superhuman strength and their unconcern about death. Blessedness is conveyed by the absence of any fear of death, and by a more general freedom from disturbance, represented here by the effortlessness with which they were able to achieve any goal they wished. By this visualization, it is clear, primitive human beings were already on the way to forming, by means of the imagery that made best sense to them, the *prolêpsis* of god as an immortal and blessed living being.

But why should a *prolêpsis* built up through a whole series of such post-natal – indeed, quite possibly adult – experiences be called 'innate'? The answer will become clear once we start asking how these dream experiences came about.[44]

Take the evidence that initially convinced these primitive dreamers that the figures they saw were alive. It was because they could be seen to move their limbs. And why, according to Epicurean theory, do dream figures appear to move their limbs? Lucr. 4.722–822 and 962–1036 contain the primary materials for a detailed answer.[45]

The air is perpetually full of ultra-fine simulacra, too tenuous to affect the eyesight but capable of directly entering and impressing themselves upon the mind (724–31, 744–8). Some of them retain the outer forms of solid objects, from which they have emanated; others are self-formed and therefore not representative of any actual objects, although they may well be monstrous hybrids formed by the simulacra from two or more objects combining (732–43). Even when awake the mind can draw on them at will for the materials of imagination, deliberately focusing in such a way as to select from among the countless available images the specific ones that it

[43] One might have thought that the waking experiences were more typically auditory, the hearing of daimonic voices, but Lucretius' opening reference to seeing does not favour the guess.

[44] In what follows I am conscious of a debt to Paul Blendis, whose Cambridge MPhil essay on this theme I supervised in 1996.

[45] For 4.722–822 I follow the text as set out in LS 15D, incorporating the persuasive transposition of 768–76 to follow 815 proposed by Asmis 1981.

needs (779–87, 794–815). In sleep, it is these same images that enter us and provide the imagery of our dreams (757–67), typically because our minds are already attuned by our daytime experiences to the things or activities the images represent (962–1036), but sometimes apparently because they are subjects which concern us for other reasons, as when we think we are being revisited by the dead (757–67). The reason why dream figures appear to be alive is that the mind, having first admitted one image, then follows up with another which on the one hand resembles the first, but which on the other may portray a slightly different posture; and the cinematographic effect of a whole series of these images constitutes the illusion of bodily movement (768–76, 816–22).[46] In so far as these sequences lead us to believe that we are witnessing the movements of solid living beings, it is repeatedly emphasized that they are deceptive (762–7, 816–22).[47]

Our sources leave it less than fully clear just what range of causes may determine the contents of our dreams. Certainly the most emphasized cause is our daytime experiences, which are said to predispose us to receive similar images in our dreams by opening up appropriate passages in us.[48] But our desires and wishes (*studium atque voluntas*; Lucr. 4.984) are listed as further causes, and we must assume these to predominate in, for example, the dreams in which we think that someone dead has returned. If, then, our dreams' contents are sometimes influenced by our desires, it must be that in such cases the images are selected by the process described by Lucretius at 4.794–815, whereby from the countless available images we admit only those on which we choose to focus.[49] In the case of early mankind's dream

[46] I am now persuaded by Purinton 2001 that in Cic. *ND* 1.49 the process of *transitio* said to be involved in the visualization of the gods represents what Philodemus calls ὑπέρβασις τῶν μεταξύ, and not, as maintained in LS, μετάβασις. If the former is, as he maintains, the process by which a single continuous entity emerges out of a series of similar simulacra, it should, I take it, apply to apparently living dream figures in general, not just those of gods.

[47] Cf. Diog. Oin. 9 IV 2–VI 3 Smith.

[48] Diog. Oin. 9 III 6–IV 6 Smith; Lucr. 4.973–7.

[49] Lucretius leaves it unspecified whether this selection process is relevant only to answering his first question, how we think of things at will (777–87), or also to his second (788–93), why dream images dance. But the above considerations suggest that it bears also on the latter, which is itself emblematic of the more general question why they seem to be alive. This would in fact be confirmed if we were, with Smith and some other editors, to retain 800–1, deleted by Lachmann because of their virtual recurrence at 771–2, where they seem more appropriate. If retained, these two lines unmistakably apply the selection method to the explanation of dream figures' apparent movements. In LS we opted for Lachmann's deletion, but in view of my more recent work on Lucretius (Sedley 1998a), I am now inclined to see the awkward virtual repetition as yet another mark of Book 4's unrevised state, and to assume that, so far as Lucretius' source material was concerned, the explanation of dream figures' movements really was brought up at a point corresponding to 800–2, in the context of the image-selection process. It is, after all, implausible that the figures should just happen to present themselves in the right cinematographic sequence for depicting continuous movement, and

visualizations of the gods, the influence of desires seems a much likelier explanation than the prolongation of their daytime experiences, since it is hard to see what the relevant daytime experiences could have been. If since the dawn of human history everybody, despite the virtually unlimited range of alternative images to choose from, has dreamt of a certain kind of superhuman beings, it is probably because, consciously or unconsciously, they want to.[50]

When the divine figures in our dreams appear to move their limbs, we cannot be witnessing anybody's actual bodily movements.[51] Our own imaginations are constructing those movements out of images which, even if it were to turn out that they originate from actual living beings, could not represent what those beings are actually doing or have done. And once this is appreciated in the case of bodily movement, it is not hard to work out that the divine figures' remaining activities are equally of our own making. If they appear to perform feats of superhuman strength, such as lifting mountains, we are ourselves the virtual authors of those scenes, drawing on the available images to choreograph sequences of limb-flexing along with the movements of huge objects. Likewise if they are seen to behave in a way that makes them look unafraid of death. And if they never appear to age, it need be nothing more than our own imaginations that, by the images they admit, picture them as unchanging from year to year and from decade to decade.[52] Early human beings were, as Lucretius describes,

much likelier that we see them in that order because we are already expecting them to move and select the images accordingly.

[50] D. Scott 1995: 197, defending an empiricist interpretation, suggests that what accounts for our choosing to focus on the divine images, among all those available, is their extraordinariness, in other words that they grab our attention even though we are not in any way predisposed to pick them out. This idea does not, it seems to me, correspond to anything in Lucretius' lengthy explanations of what determines our dream contents.

[51] Commenting on Lucr. 5.1169–70, 'the races of mortal men used to see . . . figures of gods (*divom . . . facies . . . videbant*)', D. Scott 1995: 192, writes: 'Lucretius is very clear that what first appeared to us were . . . gods . . . This commits us to an interpretation where the gods actually exist, emitting films of atoms.' If that were so, Lucretius would also, at 4.732 (*centauros itaque et scyllarum membra videmus*), be asserting that centaurs and scyllas actually exist, emitting films of atoms, precisely what he goes on to deny.

[52] Realists may respond that the explanation of the unchanging images is the unchanging nature of the gods from whom the images emanate, which makes images of them as aged simply unavailable to our imaginations. But Cicero's Velleius (*ND* 1.49) strongly suggests that the availability of these unchanging images is explained simply by the infinity of the stock of atoms from which they can form (*cum infinita simillumarum imaginum series ex innumerabilibus individuis existat*; cf. *ND* 1.109, and see further, Purinton 2001: 199–201; LS has been rightly corrected, e.g., by Mansfeld 1993: 192, for specifying that they come from human sources, although there is no reason why some should not). And even if it were conceded that there are not enough spontaneously generated images to supply the need, the difficulty for the realist would remain that, given our minds' ability to select images, the unchanging nature of the images could not constitute evidence for the unchanging nature of objectively real gods.

able (most probably when they woke up) to read off the characteristics of immortality and blessedness from their dream depictions of the gods, and thus to fill out their innate *prolêpsis* of god, not because they had witnessed them manifesting those properties, which would be impossible according to Epicurean dream theory, but because they had themselves *visualized* them that way in the first place.

There is certainly an explanatory role here for the innate religious disposition of which we have already seen evidence. It is unlikely that human beings would have uniformly envisaged these superhuman figures as performing effortless acts of prowess, and as scorning death, unless they had been predisposed to think of beings who possess precisely those capacities. Whether their predisposition lies in an antecedent wish to envisage such beings, in an innate physical structure that keeps open the appropriate 'passages' in them, or in a combination of the two, is not clear. But since the predisposition does at any rate seem to arise in everybody independently of all antecedent experience, it is anything but surprising that it should be called innate.

The fact that the divine figures are seen as acting with such extraordinary prowess is not in itself, we have learnt, any kind of evidence that somewhere outside our own minds there are actual living beings performing those same actions. Here it becomes crucially important that the *prolêpsis* of gods as immortal and blessed is, as we saw earlier, unique among *prolêpseis* in having a purely intelligible content, and in being formed in a correspondingly different way. Although the images that constitute the dream experiences come from outside, and are in themselves as real as any other simulacra, they are not direct evidence about external solid bodies, in the way that repeated waking experiences of horses are genuinely informative about the shape, movement etc. of horses as objectively living beings. The fact that all human beings, through such experiences as these, arrive at the same basic *prolêpsis* of god is not dictated by their being exposed during their lifetimes to common objects of experience, analogous to horses, but by their shared predisposition to form dream images encapsulating a certain kind of being. Hence in this one special case it is not the nature of the object that determines the *prolêpsis*, but the innate predisposition of the human subject. Cicero's insistence that the *prolêpsis* is in some appropriate sense innate is thus vindicated.

The question then arises how we come to have this innate predisposition, given that, in Epicurean eyes, it cannot have been hardwired into us by any divine creator. The answer should be as follows. According to Epicurus all animals have, by nature and without divine design, an innate desire to

maximize their own pleasure, and for human beings that maximization is identifiable with a life of blessed tranquillity, untainted by the fear of death. The gods, correctly understood in accordance with the basic *prolêpsis* as blessed and altogether free from the fear of death, are an ideal model of just such a life. Each of us has an innate propensity to imagine – and in particular to dream of – the being we would ideally like to become.[53] By doing so, we are *ipso facto* giving a concrete realization to the *prolêpsis* of god. Hence our innate predisposition to form this *prolêpsis* is likely to amount to our natural tendency to form a graphic picture of our own equally innate moral agenda. And the guaranteed truth of the *prolêpsis* may well be identifiable with the truth of our intuitive underlying conception of the best life.[54]

What seems to me altogether beyond doubt, however, is that the process by which we are said to form our *prolêpsis* of the gods cannot, according to the principles of Epicurean psychology, amount to our witnessing, via dream contact, actual gods leading their actual lives. Nor does it even require that, somewhere in the universe, there should exist such beings. Indeed, if the existence of gods is proven, as Epicurus and Velleius jointly aver, by our innate and self-evident cognition of them, that cognition can hardly amount to anything more than our intuitive grasp of a graphically visualized ideal, and could not possibly be, or depend on, telepathic access to a privileged extramundane life form. Hence the most basic epistemological prop for the realist interpretation cannot in fact serve any such purpose.

Maybe nevertheless Epicurus did believe that there are somewhere in the universe living beings who, in conformity with the *prolêpsis* of god, are literally immune to death – that is, who not only will definitely never perish, no matter what foreign bodies crash through or accumulate in the space they occupy,[55] but who also, by a principle of symmetry advocated by the school, must have already been alive from infinite time past.[56] I myself

[53] This incidentally makes both inevitable and explicable the much-derided Epicurean insistence that gods must be anthropomorphic. For discussion of the sense in which divine immortality can serve as an ideal for humans, see Warren 2000.

[54] What is the *prolêpsis* true *about*? Presumably about the gods, since it describes ideal beings, and that is what the gods are. Although the gods are neither solid bodies nor discrete individuals, they are not non-existent either, being (constitutively) the simulacra that combine to form the mental image of them (cf. Cic. *ND* 1.49). See further note 38 of this chapter, p. 43.

[55] As Holger Essler has pointed out to me, according to Epicurus himself (*Ep. Pyth.* 89), the *intermundia* (μετακόσμια) are spaces in which worlds can form, which hardly seems to make them perpetually safe havens for the gods.

[56] In his onslaught against Plato's *Timaeus*, whose cosmogony he interprets literally, Velleius asks: 'Do you suppose that this man had so much as sipped at the cup of natural philosophy . . . when he

continue to doubt that he seriously entertained this view.[57] But I do not deny that his forthright statement 'There are gods' lent itself to a realist interpretation,[58] perhaps not unintentionally at least so far as the school's public reputation was concerned (they did after all seek to participate in local religious worship).[59] It may well also have misled certain of his own followers into the same error.[60]

Some modern interpreters have argued that Epicurus' loyal followers, with full access to his works, could not have failed to know his true view

thinks that something with an origin can be everlasting' (*ND* 1.20). On this evidence, if the school was committed to the existence of biologically immortal gods, it must have held that, despite being atomic aggregates or processes of some kind, those same gods had been alive from infinite time past as well. Cf. the apparently Epicurean argument at Aët. 1.7.8, which makes it a premise that god is 'eternal' in his past as well as his future existence, confirmed by the report of Epicurean theology at S.E. *Adv. math*. 9.46, according to which the eternity of god was originally conceived by joining infinite past as well as future time together.

[57] Purinton 2001 argues for an interpretation whereby Epicurus in a way did not, but in another way did, admit that gods are living beings. However, even the latter way falls within the constraints of idealism, and I do not see it as constituting a substantive difference of interpretation.

[58] Cf. S.E. *Adv. math*. 9.58: 'According to some people, with a view to the public Epicurus allows the existence of god, but with a view to the nature of things he decidedly does not'; cf. Posidonius as cited at Cic. *ND* 1.123 (cf. 85), and Obbink 1989: 208–9. However, see also *ND* 1.64, '. . . and maybe the philosophers of the Garden too allow the existence of god, as Epicurus' express statements testify'. Doubt about Epicurean commitment to the existence of gods in 'the nature of things', i.e., to a realist theology, is conceded, but, in order to complete a unanimous catalogue of philosophers endorsing the existence of god, Epicurus' express assertion of it is here allowed to take precedence.

[59] For this motivation, cf. S.E. *Adv. math*. 9.49: the Sceptic is likely to be playing 'safer' than other philosophers, since despite his self-restraint regarding the philosophical question whether there are gods he follows local convention in *saying* that the gods exist and in taking a full part in their worship (cf. Phld. *Piet*. 1200–1 Obbink for a similar use of 'safer'). Cf. also Cic. *ND* 1.61 for a telling contrast, from the point of view of a Roman priest, between the need to acknowledge the gods' existence in one's public conduct and the freedom to deny it in private philosophical conversation. For the ease with which Epicureans, along with 'Christians' and 'atheists', could incur disfavour for allegedly denying locally recognized divinities, cf. Lucian, *Alex.* 25 and 38 (my thanks to Tad Brennan for the reference). There is evidence to suggest that Philodemus himself had at some stage in his life been exiled from Himera for denying the beneficence of a local divinity; see Sider 1997: 9–10.

[60] I aim to suspend judgement on Philodemus until we have satisfactory editions of all his surviving theological works, although I note that Obbink 1996 and Purinton 2001 have been able on the evidence so far available to interpret him in accordance with some form of idealism. I am confident that Lucretius, despite accurately transmitting in the main body of his poem the vital data favouring an idealist reading, himself assumed the realist interpretation, as witnessed in his very independent proems (see esp. 6.68–79). Also a realist is Cicero's Velleius and therefore, quite possibly, Cicero's Epicurean source for the doctrinal part of his exposition (who may or may not be Philodemus), despite the fact that, much like Lucretius, he transmits doctrinal material which in practice tends to favour idealism. For the existence of an anti-realist tradition of interpretation outside the Epicurean school, cf. n. 58 of this chapter. (It is a mistake to assume that interpretations external to the school can carry no evidential weight. I am, for example, far from alone in thinking that Aristotle, the Epicureans and other non-Platonist critics, in reading the *Timaeus* creation story in literal chronological terms, were truer to the text of Plato than Platonist apologists like Xenocrates and Crantor.)

and adopt it as their own.[61] That, I think, is a faulty inference. Religious discourse, very far from being transparent, has been the richest of all sources of interpretative schisms, as witnessed by the Platonists' radical division of opinion, throughout the millennium from Plato's own death to the end of antiquity, about their master's meaning when speaking of divine creation in the *Timaeus*.

In more recent ages there have been plenty of thinkers – Hobbes is one who comes to mind – whose theism remains a matter of deep contention despite our access to all their relevant writings. Epicurean loyalists were divided over other aspects of Epicurus' philosophy for which they likewise possessed all the relevant texts,[62] and there is even less reason to expect interpretative transparency when it comes to so delicate and contentious a matter as his theology.

Grant then, if only hypothetically, the idealist interpretation, according to which for Epicurus himself the gods exist only as objects, contents or constructs of thought. To end, I want to point out features of his language when speaking of these gods. We have only one substantive passage about the gods in Epicurus' own words: *Ep. Men.* 123–4. Condensing a considerable body of doctrine into a few lines, it is written with a complexity and consequent obscurity that depart markedly from the generally non-technical and inclusive style of this introductory epitome:

> (1) First of all, consider god an immortal and blessed living being, as the common notion of god is in outline, (2) and attach to him nothing alien to imperishability or inappropriate to blessedness, (3) but believe about him everything that is capable of protecting (φυλάττειν) that combination of blessedness and imperishability. (4) For although there are gods – the knowledge of them being self-evident – (5) they are not as the many regard them, (6) since by regarding them as of that kind the many *fail* to protect (φυλάττειν) them.

The passage includes a strong existential affirmation (4): there are gods. As in our opening Cicero text, the plural 'gods' captures the fact that many different gods are recognized, across and within cultures; hence in the remainder of the passage Epicurus continues to use the plural when generalizing over prevalent religious beliefs. On the other hand, the advice he offers his reader is about a grammatically singular god, namely one's own. And the advice focuses on how to *construct* the conception of that

[61] E.g. Santoro 2000: 63–5; Babut 2005: 88.

[62] I have examined the case of rhetoric in Sedley 1989. Recent literature on Epicureanism, when discussing these schisms, still sometimes persists in marking off a 'dissident' from an implicitly loyalist wing. This is misleading: all Epicureans were self-declared loyalists, and each party will have considered the others heretical.

god, a task in which the reader is given the active role. What one believes about god should have the aim of 'protecting' (3) his essential features; and popular beliefs about god fail (5–6) precisely because they fail thus to protect him (6). This is because the key essential feature of a god, as properly conceived, is invulnerability, setting an ideal benchmark for the kind of moral and psychological invulnerability which, among human beings, is available only to the Epicurean sage. Those who conceive their gods as cosmic administrators are, whether they realize it or not, depriving them of that vital invulnerability.

The emphatic idea that it is up to us to endow the gods with the required protection, while not in itself entailing that gods are nothing more than our own thought-constructs, sits more than comfortably with that interpretation. The one other passage on the nature of the gods to survive from Epicurus' immediate circle is a fragment of his eventual successor Hermarchus (= fr. 32 Longo Auricchio), preserved in Philodemus' *On the Gods* (*De dis*) 3. This too is cast in terms of advice about how to shape one's own conception of the gods: he urges us to think of them as breathing, having voices and enjoying a social life centred on conversation, either in Greek or in a language very like Greek. This all reads much more like a recipe for constructing one's own ideal than as an attempt to discover the nature and lifestyle of some extramundane beings.

The first-generation Epicureans' carefully coded style of religious discourse[63] was chosen, or so it seems to me, to serve an agenda of theological idealism, while being cast in the existential terms agreeable to a culture that never came to trust atheism. If Epicurus were to learn that his existential assertion would mislead many of his later readers, even within his own school, into assuming his stance to be realist rather than idealist, I doubt if he would be all that disconcerted.

[63] Already in antiquity it was noticed how other of Epicurus' theological pronouncements were formulated with some existential caution. See Cic. *ND* 1.85–6 on the wording of *KD* 1, 'That which is blessed and imperishable neither suffers troubles nor inflicts them upon others.' Some unnamed critics, we learn, took this wording to be a way of avoiding commitment as to whether there is anything that in fact satisfies the description 'blessed and imperishable'.

CHAPTER 4

Epicurus on the gods

David Konstan

In this chapter, I defend (once again) the view that the Epicurean gods are real, in the sense that they exist as atomic compounds and possess the properties that pertain to the concept, or *prolêpsis*, that people have of them. The contrary view – that the Epicurean gods have no objective existence, and that the notion of them is a consequence of 'psychological processes . . . within the human soul',[1] was proposed in the nineteenth century[2] and revived in the twentieth by Jean Bollack;[3] more recently, it has received support from Long and Sedley and Dirk Obbink,[4] and, most forcefully, in the chapter by David Sedley in this volume. The physical existence of the gods has been reasserted, in turn, by Jaap Mansfeld, Gabriele Giannantoni, Maria Carolina Santoro and Michael Wigodsky.[5]

Given that Epicurus, in the *Letter to Menoeceus* (123–4), flatly declares that 'there are gods' (θεοὶ μὲν γὰρ εἰσίν), and that this dictum is echoed by all subsequent Epicureans who have pronounced on the matter,[6] I

The original draft of this chapter was written independently of the contribution by David Sedley, as his was of mine; but I have benefited enormously from discussions with him, in which he generously shared his thoughts with me. In addition, David was kind enough to read and comment on a revised version of this paper. I wish to express my gratitude to all the members of the group, and especially to Michael Wigodsky and Holger Essler, for their acute observations; Holger too graciously commented on the revised version.

[1] Obbink 2002: 215.

[2] See, e.g., W. Scott 1883.

[3] Bollack 1975: 225–38.

[4] LS vol. 1, pp. 144–9; Obbink 1996, 2002.

[5] Mansfeld 1993, 1999; Giannantoni 1996; Santoro 2000; and Wigodsky 2004. In her excellent summary of the nature and role of the gods in Epicureanism, Kany-Turpin (2007) remains agnostic on the question of whether they are to be understood as physical entities or mere images.

[6] Cf. Phld. *Piet.* 205–19 Obbink (= Obbink 1996: 121), where he refers to Epicurus' *On Holiness* for the view that certain things may 'subsist not only indestructibly but also continually one and the same in their perfection' (τὸ μὴ μόνον ἀ|φθάρτως, ἀλλὰ κ[αὶ κα]τὰ συντέλε[ιαν] ἓν καὶ ταὐ[τὸν συν]εχῶ[ς ὑπάρχον]); and *PHerc.* 1055 col. 15 (= Santoro 2000: 96), possibly a fragment of a treatise by Demetrius Laco on the shape of the gods, in which it is affirmed that god, 'along with the rational faculty, also has a real existence' (σὺν λογισμῷ τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἔχῃ; Santoro translates: *insieme alla facoltà razionale ha anche l'esistenza reale*). Santoro (p. 151) argues that the term ὑπόστασις 'is highly significant, inasmuch as, by indicating the concrete and substantial existence of the divine being, it shows that the theory of εἴδωλα-gods is unfounded' (*è molto significativa, in quanto, indicando*

venture to say that no one would ever have proposed that they were mere 'psychological processes' or 'thought-constructs',[7] had it not been for two difficulties that appear to beset the Epicurean theory. Both are evident in the same passage from Epicurus' *Letter to Menoeceus*. Epicurus states that the common notion (κοινὴ νόησις) of god is that of an incorruptible and blessed animal (ζῷον ἄφθαρτον καὶ μακάριον); accordingly, one must not ascribe to a god anything that is inconsistent with blessedness and incorruptibility. People go astray in departing from the evidence of the primary notion, for 'what the majority affirm about the gods are not *prolêpseis* but rather false *hupolêpseis*' (οὐ γὰρ προλήψεις εἰσὶν ἀλλ' ὑπολήψεις ψευδεῖς αἱ τῶν πολλῶν ὑπὲρ θεῶν ἀποφάσεις). It is precisely on the basis of our 'clear knowledge' of the gods (ἐναργὴς γὰρ αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἡ γνῶσις), moreover, that Epicurus affirms their existence.[8]

Now, the notion that some atomically constituted entities – and the gods unquestionably are such, if they exist at all – might be incorruptible would seem to contradict Epicurus' basic teachings on the nature of the physical world; as Long and Sedley put it: 'It is extremely difficult to see how, in an Epicurean universe, any compound could be guaranteed to last forever.'[9] So too, Obbink states that the existence of immortal gods 'would be inconsistent with the condition for indestructibility in the Epicurean universe';[10] hence, Obbink concludes that 'gods do not have an existence independent of the coalescence of the images by which we perceive them: their existence consists fundamentally in that coalescence'.[11]

This, then, is the first difficulty. The second difficulty concerns the process by which we acquire a *prolêpsis* of blessed and immortal beings. Like any other concept, that of the gods must arise from idols or *simulacra* that impinge either on the senses or directly on the mind. However, even if we assume that these simulacra flow from really existing gods, it is not obvious how we would know on this basis that the gods are incorruptible or eternal. It would appear that no finite quantity of images reaching human beings, over however long a period of time, could prove that the gods live forever. Maria Carolina Santoro argues, accordingly, that the idea of the gods' immortality is based on inference.[12] But in that case we must inquire into what role, if any, inference plays in the formation of *prolêpseis*.

I must, then, show that eternally existing gods are compatible with Epicurean physics, and indicate how a *prolêpsis* of their incorruptibility

*esistenza concreta e sostanziale dell'essere divino, dimostra che è infondata la teoria degli dèi-*εἴδωλα); Lucr. 1.44–9.

[7] So LS vol. 1, p. 145. [8] Cf. Mackey 2006: 12–13. [9] LS vol. 1, p. 148.
[10] Obbink 2002: 216. [11] Ibid.: 322; cf. 325–7, 330–1. [12] Santoro 2000: 37.

might be acquired. As to the first question, Michael Wigodsky provides what seems to me to be a convincing solution, as far as it goes. He points out that, according to Lucretius (2.1122–43), living creatures typically grow by incorporating more matter of a suitable sort from their surroundings than they expel, until they reach their maximum size, at which point the process is reversed and they begin to decline: 'In some animals, however, including human beings, this attrition does not become apparent for some time after the attainment of maximum growth; and if these animals can maintain a state of equilibrium for years, one can imagine Epicurus asking, why should there not be others possessing this capacity in a higher degree?'[13] There is further evidence for this view elsewhere in Lucretius. At 3.800–5, Lucretius offers as an argument for the mortality of the soul the fact that what is mortal cannot mix with what is immortal:

> quippe etenim mortale aeterno iungere et una
> consentire putare et fungi mutua posse
> desiperest; quid enim diversius esse putandumst
> aut magis inter se disiunctum discrepitansque,
> quam mortale quod est inmortali atque perenni
> iunctum in concilio saevas tolerare procellas?

Moreover, to yoke together the mortal and the everlasting, and to imagine that they can share one another's feelings and experiences, is fatuous. What notion can be more preposterous, incongruous, and inharmonious than that of a mortal thing being united with something immortal and imperishable, and of the two together weathering pitiless storms?[14]

Lucretius goes on to say (806–13) that what is eternal must be either perfectly solid, and hence immune to dissolution, or else pure void, which cannot be affected by any kind of blow:

> praeterea quaecumque manent aeterna necessest
> aut quia sunt solido cum corpore respuere ictus
> nec penetrare pati sibi quicquam quod queat artas
> dissociare intus partis, ut materiai
> corpora sunt, quorum naturam ostendimus ante,
> aut ideo durare aetatem posse per omnem,
> plagarum quia sunt expertia sicut inanest,
> quod manet intactum neque ab ictu fungitur hilum.

Furthermore, all things that subsist eternally must either be composed of solid substance, so that they repel blows and are impenetrable to anything that might

[13] Wigodsky 2004: 217.
[14] Unless otherwise noted, I use the translation of M. Smith 2001 for all quotations from Lucretius.

destroy the close cohesion of their parts from within – like the elements of matter, whose nature I have already demonstrated; or their ability to survive throughout all time must be due to their immunity to blows – as is the case with void, which is always intangible and never experiences any impact.

As for something compounded of atomic matter and void, it will be able to endure forever if there is no place outside for it to lose substance, nor again any possibility that blows deriving from incursions of new material can disrupt its integrity (814–18); such a thing is the universe as a whole:

> aut etiam quia nulla loci sit copia circum,
> quo quasi res possint discedere dissoluique,
> sicut summarum summast aeterna, neque extra
> quis locus est quo diffugiant neque corpora sunt quae
> possint incidere et valida dissolvere plaga.

or else the cause of their indestructibility must be the absence of any surrounding space into which their substance might disperse and dissolve – as is the case with the totality of the universe.

So far, there is no instance that corresponds to the incorruptibility of the gods. But there follows a fourth possibility (819–23):

> Quod si forte ideo magis inmortalis habendast,
> quod vitalibus ab rebus munita tenetur,
> aut quia non veniunt omnino aliena salutis,
> aut quia quae veniunt aliqua ratione recedunt
> pulsa prius quam quid noceant sentire queamus, . . .

If by chance the preferred supposition is that the soul is to be considered immortal because it is fortified and protected by the forces of life, or because things fatal to its existence never approach it, or because those that do approach it are repulsed by some means before they can inflict any injury upon us . . .

At this point there occurs a lacuna, and it is impossible to fill in the apodosis with perfect confidence. Conceivably, what followed was a denial of the protasis: there are no circumstances under which the *anima* – clearly the subject of *habenda* ('to be considered') – or anything else can be fully walled off, because matter inimical to its stability inevitably reaches it and cannot be harmlessly repelled. Alternatively, as Giussani maintained, this means of achieving immortality is indeed unavailable to the human soul, but describes precisely the condition of the gods.[15] At all events, it is clear

[15] Giussani 1896–8: vol. 1, pp. 224–5; cf. M. Smith 2001: 89 n. 54; Wigodsky 2004: 216.

that Lucretius recognizes the theoretical possibility of such a permanent atomic equilibrium.

Following the lacuna, Lucretius observes that the (human) soul is affected both by corporeal disease and by anxiety for the future, as well as by regrets for the past – the point being that such a thing is hardly immortal; but it is in just this respect that our soul differs from the nature of the gods. The fact that the gods are immune to pain, whether physical or mental, is a sign of their incorruptibility: their blessedness and immortality are two sides of the same coin.[16] Potentially harmful matter is repulsed, as Lucretius says, 'before we can perceive the harm it might do' (*prius quam quid noceant sentire queamus*). Seen from a different angle, the gods' virtue may be said to guarantee their physical stability. Thus, Wigodsky argues that the gods maintain their corporeal integrity by means of their superior psychic control, and may be conceived of as 'a species which is as far in advance of us in bodily self-control as we are of the animals in emotional self-control'.[17] The gods are thus endowed with a psychophysical composition capable of appropriating external matter in such a way as permanently to replace that which is lost, if for no other reason than at least by the emission of simulacra.

But there remains a difficulty: it is not enough for the gods simply to replenish lost matter; they must also be safe against potentially fatal blows from without, in the way void, for example, is.[18] Suppose that the gods do indeed dwell in the *intermundia*, whatever region that term is intended to designate.[19] What prevents the incursion of sufficient streams of atoms, or even an entire local cosmos, from disrupting the gods' stable constitutions?[20] The answer, I think, is that the gods are composed of such fine material that streams of ordinary atoms simply pass through them, without inflicting any damage. Cicero (*ND* 1.48) has Velleius speak of the 'quasi-flesh' and 'quasi-blood' of the gods,[21] as a way of indicating the extreme subtlety of their bodies. Lucretius (5.146–54) goes further in ascribing to them, and to their abode, a texture so fine that it can neither touch nor be touched by anything that is palpable to us:

[16] In *KD* 1, Epicurus affirms that what experiences anger or gratitude cannot be immortal, for such things pertain to what is fragile.

[17] Wigodsky 2004: 219.

[18] Cf. Lucr. 3.812: 'or else the reason why they can endure through all time must be that they are free from assaults, as the void is'; and 3.817–18: 'nor [are there] bodies to fall upon it and dissolve it asunder with a strong blow'.

[19] For further discussion of these 'interworld' spaces, see below (pp. 58–60).

[20] Alternatively, the atomic constituents of the gods might be swept up in the process of the formation of a cosmos.

[21] See Sanders 2004 for the sense of *quasi corpus*.

> Illud item non est ut possis credere, sedes
> esse deum sanctas in mundi partibus ullis.
> tenuis enim natura deum longeque remota
> sensibus ab nostris animi vix mente videtur;
> quae quoniam manuum tactum suffugit et ictum,
> tactile nil nobis quod sit contingere debet;
> tangere enim non quit quod tangi non licet ipsum.
> quare etiam sedes quoque nostris sedibus esse
> dissimiles debent, tenues de corpore eorum.

Another notion that you cannot possibly accept is that the holy habitations of the gods are located in any part of the world. In fact, the nature of the gods is so tenuous, and so far removed from our senses, that it is scarcely perceptible even to the mind; and since it eludes the touch and impact of our hands, it cannot touch anything that is tangible to us; for what is itself intangible cannot touch. Therefore the gods' habitations also must be dissimilar to our habitations and as tenuous as their bodies.

The texture of the gods is itself as thin as that of their simulacra, which are finer than the simulacra of any other compound – and even the cruder simulacra can achieve an attenuated state in which they penetrate ordinary matter; for this is how we imagine, in dreams or thought, things that are remote and people long dead.[22] The gods, then, are not affected by grosser matter they may encounter, whereas any structures that have as tenuous a consistency as their own will simply serve to replenish any diminishment of their substance. And this is sufficient, I believe, to account for their incorruptibility.[23]

However, a problem arises: if it is true that the gods are invulnerable to harm by the gross atoms that enter into the formation and constitution of worlds, what reason is there to locate them at a distance from our own cosmos, or in those spaces that Epicurus (*Ep. Pyth.* 89) identifies as μετακόσμια, or 'the space between cosmoi', and which Cicero (*Fin.* 2.75, *ND* 1.18) labels *intermundia*?[24] Has Lucretius offered here the beginnings of an explanation of the gods' imperishability, which would eliminate the necessity to render them remote, but somehow failed to harmonize this idea with an earlier view that ascribes their invulnerability to harm precisely to

[22] See Lucr. 4.724–31, 757–67, 807–13; cf. Stob. 1.1.29b82.

[23] I may note that I have not invoked the doctrine of *isonomia*; from its unique mention in this context in Cicero *ND* 1.50, it would appear intended to prove that there is a multitude of deities, corresponding to the number of mortal things – a point perhaps to be related to Philodemus' claim, in *Piet.* cols. 362–3, that Epicureans 'assert the existence not only of as many gods as all Hellenic peoples affirm, but also of many more' (tr. Obbink 2002).

[24] On the issue of μετακόσμια/*intermundia*, see also Obbink 1996: 7 n. 5.

their location in outer space? Such is the suggestion of Sedley,[25] who notes that Lucretius promises at just this point a further discussion of the gods that he does not in fact produce – perhaps, according to Sedley, because he could not find the necessary material in the writings of Epicurus. But Lucretius, in these very lines, reaffirms the differences between the place where the gods reside and that of human creatures (5.153–5):

> quare etiam sedes quoque nostris sedibus esse
> dissimiles debent, tenues de corpore eorum;
> quae tibi posterius largo sermone probabo.

Therefore the gods' habitations also must be dissimilar to our habitations and as tenuous as their bodies. This I will subsequently prove to you with ample argument.

Perhaps, however, these lines refer not to a different location in space – Lucretius, after all, does not speak of *intermundia* – but simply to a different kind of habitation, one that could be conceived of as intersecting with our own, in the same way that the ultra-fine simulacra of the gods pass through our world like neutrinos, unaffected by contact (though they must make an impression at least on the finest particles that constitute the human mind, or else they would not be knowable by us at all).[26] Indeed, the invocation of *intermundia* to explain the gods' invulnerability presents more difficulties than it solves: for if it is hard enough to imagine how creatures composed of atoms might endure forever, it is still more implausible that there should be entire regions of the universe wholly impermeable by atoms that might constitute a threat to the physical integrity of the gods that dwell within them.

The idea that the gods are remote from human habitation is intimated by Lucretius (cf. 1.44–6)[27] and alluded to by Cicero (*ND* 1.18), but it finds much fuller and more explicit development in the third book of Philodemus' treatise *On the Gods* (*De dis*). Philodemus inquires in detail about the places where the gods are (col. 8,13), which, he says, Epicurus treated at least in some respect in the fifth book of *On Nature*. The text is often fiendishly difficult to construe, and this is not the place to enter into a detailed account of it, especially since a new edition is currently in

[25] LS vol. 1, p. 149.

[26] The finest elements of which the mind is composed should also be relatively unaffected by the passage of coarser matter, I presume; unlike the gods, however, it does not have a structure that can maintain itself once the container of the body is removed.

[27] For a discussion of these lines, see below.

preparation by Holger Essler.[28] Suffice it to say that something – perhaps the mind – is said to receive the συμπλοκαί, or 'tangles', of the gods (col. 8,36 Diels), whence it received also the first thoughts of them (i.e., of the gods) 'from the first moment of birth'.[29] The simulacra of the gods reach us in a pure condition, and continually produce undamaged or uncontaminated impressions: this explains, I take it, why we can form clear *prolêpseis* of the gods and not be misled by random combinations of simulacra. Although the text is very vexed at this point, it seems that the gods are conceived (or perceived by the mind) as being at the same distances as certain stars. In fact, however, they do not dwell and circulate together with the stars: rather, it is the interminglings (συμπλοκαί; 9,21) that occur in the middle space, however far away the gods' constituent atoms (γεννητικά; 9,24) may be.

Why locate the gods beyond the stars, as Philodemus appears to do? Philodemus mentions the doctrine that the gods must be far from mundane things that might disrupt their incorruptibility (9,36–42). I believe that in this passage he is reporting, and dissenting from, the view of Apollodorus, the teacher, according to Diogenes Laertius, of Philodemus' master, Zeno of Sidon. Philodemus' own view, as I understand the text (9,42–10,2), is that the gods would not be in peril even if they did mingle with things subject to generation and destruction. If they do dwell in more remote locations, it may be simply because they choose to do so. More than this it is impossible to conclude, I think, given the state of the papyrus.

In fairness to Long and Sedley, it must be said that they are conscious of the ambiguity of Epicurus' pronouncements on the nature of the gods, and they raise the possibility that he was deliberately vague on the question. As they put it: 'he may have constructed his system in such a way that this peripheral question could be left open'.[30] (Epicurus famously allowed for multiple explanations of remote or celestial phenomena, provided that they were consistent with the atomic theory.)[31] What is more, they acknowledge that 'there is no doubt that Epicureans and others in the first century BC were interpreting the "gods" of Epicurus' system' as 'a specially privileged extraterrestrial life-form'.[32] These literalists included not just Cicero but also Lucretius and Philodemus. If indeed Lucretius or other Epicureans made a case, in atomistic terms, for how such a life form might exist on the basis of the fineness of the gods' texture and the continual replenishment of lost substance, then presumably Long and Sedley would ascribe such

[28] I reserve fuller discussion for a future occasion, but see Essler's ch. 7 of this volume.
[29] For συγγενικός, cf. Epicur. *Ep. Men.* 129, where it is stated that we recognize that pleasure is the 'first good from the time of birth'.
[30] LS vol. 1, p. 148. [31] See, e.g., *Ep. Pyth.* 88. [32] LS vol. 1, pp. 148–9.

arguments to Epicurus' successors rather than to the founder himself. This seems to me to attribute too much inventiveness to the epigoni in so central a matter, above all in the case of one whom Sedley himself characterizes as an Epicurean 'fundamentalist'.[33]

Having briefly rehearsed the arguments in support of the material existence of the Epicurean gods, I turn now to the question of how a concept of blessed and incorruptible gods may have arisen in the human mind. *Prolêpsis* was one of Epicurus' basic forms of knowledge of the world.[34] As Diogenes Laertius (10.31) explains: 'Epicurus appears in the *Canon* as saying that sensations (αἰσθήσεις), preconceptions (προλήψεις) and feelings (πάθη) are the criteria of truth, and Epicureans add imaginative projections of thought (τὰς φανταστικὰς ἐπιβολὰς τῆς διανοίας).' In the same paragraph, Diogenes cites Epicurus to the effect that 'every sensation is non-rational (ἄλογος), and is receptive of no memory whatever'. A *scholion* to Epicurus' *Letter to Herodotus* (= fr. 311 Us.) reports further that, according to Epicurus, 'one part of it [i.e., the soul] is non-rational (ἄλογον), and dispersed throughout the rest of the body, whereas the rational part (τὸ δὲ λογικόν) is in the chest, as is evident from fears (φόβων) and from joy (χαρᾶς)'. It is reasonable to infer from this that sensations are located in the non-rational part of the soul. As for *pathê*, Diogenes states (10.34) that, according to the Epicureans, 'there are two *pathê*, pleasure (ἡδονή) and pain (ἀλγηδών), which exist in every animal, the one pertaining to what is one's own (οἰκεῖον), the other pertaining to what is foreign (ἀλλότριον), by which choices and avoidances are distinguished'. Since the *pathê* exist in all animals, not just in human beings, it is likely that they too pertain to the non-rational part of the soul. It follows, I believe, that the *pathê* are infallible, in the same way, and for the same reason, that 'all sensations are true' for Epicurus.[35] One can no more be in error about whether one feels pain or pleasure than one can be mistaken about hearing a sound or seeing a colour. The information provided by the senses is on a par with that provided by receptors of pleasure and pain, however they may be presumed to function.[36]

What, then, of *prolêpseis*? Diogenes, as we have seen, locates them between sensations and *pathê* among the criteria. Are they too infallible? Diogenes (10.33) reports that a *prolêpsis* is 'a memory of what has appeared often from outside'. This might suggest that *prolêpseis* have some share in

[33] Sedley 1998a: 62.
[34] Some of what follows is based largely on Konstan 2006, 2007: 21–48; and 2008a.
[35] Cf. Lucr. 4.499.
[36] For a review of the controversy concerning the contrast and lack of symmetry between pleasure and pain, see Aydede 2000, 2006.

the rational part of the soul. Epicurus is in this same passage said to assert that 'preconceptions are always clear (ἐναργείς)': as far as I can judge, the Epicureans reserved the terms 'true' and 'false' for what they called δόξα and ὑπόληψις, which we may render as 'belief' and 'supposition', two psychic processes that surely involve the rational part of the soul. According to Diogenes (ibid.), Epicurus further specifies that what is believable (τὸ δοξαστόν) 'depends upon a previous thing that is clear, to which we refer it when we say, "How do we know whether this is a human being?"' The thing that is clear must, I think, be a *prolêpsis*. The upshot is that beliefs, which may be true or false, depend on *prolêpseis*, which are clear; and *prolêpseis*, in turn, result from the memory of repeated sensations, which are infallible. We can add a further detail: while a *prolêpsis* depends on sense impressions, it is usually triggered by a word or name: when we hear a word, then, in accord with a *prolêpsis*, we conceive of an imprint (τύπος) of a thing, and in this process 'the senses lead'.

I take the entire process to be something like this: some object – say a horse or cow – is perceived from afar. Assume I say, 'this is a horse': I take it that this is a *hupolêpsis*, or supposition, concerning the identity of the creature, which may be true or false. In Epicurean terms, which seem to avoid the language of propositions, I think or pronounce the word 'horse', as a result of which I conceive an imprint of a horse, which I refer to my *prolêpsis* of this animal – a *prolêpsis* that I have acquired by means of repeated sense impressions of horses. Suppose that, on closer inspection, the animal in question turns out to be not a horse but a cow. In that case, my belief was false; I will now utter or think the word 'cow', which will in turn trigger the appropriate impression and *prolêpsis*.

The reason why my *prolêpseis* of a cow and a horse are clear and distinct is that the repeated sensations that have produced them reflect the way cows and horses actually are. Since a cow differs from a horse, its images (Greek, *eidôla*; Latin, *simulacra*) do as well, and hence too the *prolêpsis* that results from repeated sensations. Mistakes occur only at the level of *hupolêpseis* or *doxai*, and these are of two kinds. First, I may utter a name in response to a vague or distorted stimulus (in the form of *eidôla*), and trigger the wrong impression and *prolêpsis*: this is the case of the cow mistaken for a horse. Alternatively, I may entertain false beliefs about what a thing is, and so, when I utter the name that elicits the impression, I end up referring not to a *prolêpsis* but rather to a *hupolêpsis* or *doxa*, as people commonly do, according to Epicurus, in the case of the gods. I take it that such people do not wholly lack the *prolêpsis* of god, but rather fail to distinguish it from other beliefs they hold that happen to be false.

Let us return to the horse and cow: what kind of false opinion might a person entertain about such animals? One possibility is the belief that they are rational. This error is similar to that which people make when they ascribe to the gods the capacity to grow angry or feel pain, a *hupolêpsis* that is incompatible with their nature. According to Philodemus, the *prolêpsis* of a human being includes the quality of being a rational animal.[37] But how do we form a *prolêpsis* of man as a rational animal on the basis of repeated sense impressions conveyed by simulacra? Rationality cannot be inferred from the mere image or outline of a human being: sense impressions must, then, carry more information than just the shape of a thing, or its smell or feel. It is true that, according to Diogenes (10.33), Epicurus speaks of recognizing 'the shape (μορφήν) of a horse or a cow by way of *prolêpsis*'. In terms of distinguishing a cow from a horse, that may well be sufficient, although it would hardly be enough to specify what a horse is. In any case, the repeated sense impressions that result in a *prolêpsis* of a human being must include evidence of rational behaviour, not just of the human form. Since no such sequence of sensations occurs in the case of horses, the belief that a horse is rational represents an erroneous addition to whatever *prolêpsis* we have of that creature; we must, accordingly, return to the *prolêpsis* and eliminate the false belief, just as we should do if we falsely ascribe immortality to human beings or corruptibility and the absence of blessedness to the gods.

We might perhaps accept that repeated sense impressions of a complex kind can produce the concept of human rationality; but how can simulacra generate the *prolêpsis* of gods as incorruptible? Obviously, not by being perceived over an infinite stretch of time. Rather, knowledge of the gods' incorruptibility must follow from, or be coordinate with, the perception of their perfect bliss: they are immune to pain and hence to any disruption of their physical constitutions. Michael Wigodsky cites Lucr. 3.459–62 – 'just as the body undergoes great sickness and harsh pain, so the mind undergoes biting cares and grief and fear; and *therefore* it must also share in death' – to indicate the connection between the ability to experience pain and susceptibility to death.[38] Lucr. 1.44–9 makes, I think, the corresponding link between the absence of pain and immortality:

> omnis enim per se divum natura necessest
> immortali aevo summa cum pace fruatur
> semota ab nostris rebus seiunctaque longe;

[37] See Phld. *Sign*. De Lacy col. 52.
[38] Wigodsky 2004: 218. The translation here (and the emphasis therein) is Wigodsky's own.

> *nam* privata dolore omni, privata periclis,
> ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,
> nec bene promeritis capitur nec tangitur ira.

For it is inherent in the very nature of the gods that they should enjoy immortal life in perfect peace, far removed and separated from our world; *for* free from all pain, free from peril, fully self-sufficient, independent of us, they are not influenced by worthy conduct nor touched by anger.[39]

I take *nam* ('for') as introducing the reason for the gods' immortality as well as for their serenity: they live forever because they are free from pain and danger.

I have noted that, according to Epicurus, a *prolêpsis* forms as a result of the memory of repeated sensations, a process that does not seem to involve logical inference. In the above-cited passages, the particles *quare* (3.462) and *nam* (1.47) have their place as parts of an argument, and do not necessarily indicate how elementary concepts are formed. There is one place, however, where Lucretius does appear to explain the idea of the gods' immortality and other attributes as a consequence of reasoning; in his treatment of how early human beings came to believe in the gods, Lucretius affirms (5.1169–82):

> quippe etenim iam tum divom mortalia saecla
> egregias animo facies vigilante videbant
> et magis in somnis mirando corporis auctu.
> his *igitur* sensum tribuebant *propterea quod*
> membra movere videbantur vocesque superbas
> mittere pro facie praeclara et viribus amplis.
> aeternamque dabant vitam, *quia* semper eorum
> subpeditabatur facies et forma manebat,
> et tamen omnino quod tantis viribus auctos
> non temere ulla vi convinci posse *putabant*.
> fortunisque ideo longe praestare *putabant*,
> *quod* mortis timor haut quemquam vexaret eorum,
> et simul in somnis quia multa et mira videbant
> efficere et nullum capere ipsos inde laborem.

The truth is that even in remote antiquity the minds of mortals were visited in waking life, and still more in sleep, by visions of divine figures of matchless beauty and stupendous stature. To these beings, *therefore*, they attributed sensation, *because* they saw them move their limbs and speak in a majestic manner appropriate to their splendid appearance and ample strength. They gave them immortal life,

[39] I have here slightly modified the translation found in M. Smith 2001.

because their images presented themselves in constant succession and their forms remained unchanged, but above all because they *thought* that beings endowed with such mighty strength could not easily be overcome by any force. And they *thought* that they were consummately happy, *because* fear of death did not trouble any of them and also because in sleep they saw them perform many marvelous feats without experiencing any fatigue.[40]

This passage leads directly into Lucretius' account of the rise of superstitious fear, which is inspired in part by the attribution of heavenly and meteorological phenomena to the will of the gods and is clearly a consequence of false reasoning.[41] I suggest that primitive mankind's conclusions about the gods' power and longevity are likewise faulty, even though these attributes correspond better to the properties inhering in our *prolêpsis* of deities. Epicurean gods do not emit 'arrogant' utterances, nor are they endowed with 'enormous power' in the ordinary sense. Of course, dreams are not an entirely reliable source of information about the outside world. Our reasoning faculties are dormant, and we may draw wrong conclusions from the simulacra that penetrate to our minds. This is certainly the case with dreams we sometimes have of people who have died: they may seem to be alive, moving or tossing their limbs, but this is merely a cinematic effect, due to a sequence of independent images succeeding one upon another.[42] We naturally expect or are predisposed to see such acts, and doubtless this is part of the reason why we select or admit, among the myriad simulacra available, just those that produce the idea of such movements. But images which are exceedingly fine by nature, such as those of the gods, and have not been banging around in the atmosphere for years on end but have travelled directly and in appropriate order from the objects that emit them, will produce accurate impressions, in the same way that the coarser simulacra transmitted to the mind via the senses do. Nothing in Lucretius' analysis of dreams precludes this, and indeed he affirms that people also have waking visions of the gods, when their reason is alert. This is why Philodemus can state, in the passage discussed above, that images of the gods can reach us in a pure or uncontaminated state, even though they may seem to mix with simulacra deriving from stars or other heavenly bodies that appear equally far away.

[40] Here again the translation given represents a slight modification (with emphasis added) of that in M. Smith 2001.

[41] See esp. lines 1183–93; cf. *ergo* 1186, *quia* 1189; hence too the repeated verb *putabant*, 'they thought', 'they supposed'.

[42] See Lucr. 4.757–76.

If this is so, then there is no need to posit an innate disposition to perceive gods as immortal and happy as the basis for the *prolêpsis* that we form from simulacra that impinge on the mind.[43] The evidence adduced to support the notion of innate *prolêpseis* comes from Cicero's *ND* 1.44–5, where Velleius, the Epicurean spokesman, explains Epicurus' view of the gods. I reproduce what I take to be the most salient sentences:

intellegi necesse est esse deos, quoniam insitas eorum vel potius innatas cognitiones habemus; de quo autem omnium natura consentit, id verum esse necesse est; esse igitur deos confitendum est. . . . quae enim nobis natura informationem ipsorum deorum dedit, eadem insculpsit in mentibus ut eos aeternos et beatos haberemus.

It must be understood that the gods exist, for we have ideas of them implanted, or rather inborn, within us; and what the nature of all people agree upon must be true. Therefore their existence must be acknowledged. . . . We possess, I say, a preconception that makes us think of them as blessed and immortal. For nature that gave us the idea of gods as such, has also engraved in our minds the conviction that they are blessed and eternal.[44]

Velleius states that one must understand that the gods exist, because we have '*insitae*, or rather *innatae*', notions of them – I shall discuss in a moment the meanings of these two terms. He then adds that where all people by nature (literally, 'the natures of all people') are in agreement on a matter, it must be true, and hence one must believe that the gods exist. A little further on, Velleius adds that the same nature that has provided us with our awareness of the gods has also 'sculpted in our minds' the conviction that they are eternal and blessed.

The first part of the argument seems oddly redundant: Velleius affirms we must believe in gods because we have a preconception of them, and then infers the truth of this belief from the *consensus omnium*. I presume that, among other things, the fact that all people – and peoples – share a common notion of the gods guarantees that there is a preconception of them, as Velleius goes on to state more explicitly. This *prolêpsis* is not reducible to what any given individual or group may believe the gods to be like: the Egyptians, for example, as Velleius notes (1.43), hold an incorrect (or, as he puts it, 'insane') view of them, doubtless in reference to their therocephalic representation. As we have seen, dreams, which may in fact be produced by images flowing directly from the gods, are nevertheless

[43] For a spirited defence of the innateness thesis, see Sedley, ch. 3 of this volume.

[44] Cf. 2.12: 'And so upon the main point all men of all nations are agreed, for the existence of the gods is an idea natural to all, and engraven, as it were, upon the mind.' The translations of both passages are based upon those in Brooks 1896, with modifications.

liable to misinterpretation, and may lead to false inferences concerning the gods' nature. *Prolêpseis* are formed over time, as a result of repeated sensory (or mental) impressions: they do not come ready formed at infancy, but are acquired through experience – the more so, I imagine, in the case of gods, whose nature is not susceptible to closer inspection in the way that ordinary objects are. And this, I think, is what the terms *insitae* and *innatae*, as well as *insculpsit*, are intended to convey.

The basic meaning of *innatus*, an adjective derived from the past participle of *innascor*, is not so much 'innate' or 'inborn' as 'grown upon' or 'developed'. Thus, a character in Terence's *Hecyra* (l. 543) describes the vice of associating with hetaerae as one developed (*innatum*) in adolescence: not 'innate', but naturally occurring at a certain age. So too, Pyrgopolyneices, the braggart soldier in Plautus' *Miles gloriosus*, declares (l. 1063): 'avarice has never developed in me (*non mihi avaritia umquam innatast*), for I have riches enough'. He does not mean that he was born without the trait, but rather that, thanks to the wealth he acquired as a mercenary, it has had no occasion to emerge.[45] Turning to Cicero himself, in *Top*. 69 he explains that one type of comparison of worth involves the case in which things desirable in themselves are preferred to those desired for the sake of something else, in the same way that things that are 'grafted and grown upon' another are preferred to those that are added on and accidental (*ut innata atque insita assumptis atque adventiciis*), pure things to those that are mixed, necessary to unnecesary, and the like. Note here that the order of *innata* and *insita* is the reverse of that in the passage in *ND*, which suggests that there is no significant difference in emphasis between the two terms;[46] the contrast is between traits or parts that pertain to a thing essentially and merely accidental accretions.

[45] In the *Persa*, Toxilus asks (ll. 312–14): 'What is that swelling up on your neck?', to which Sagaristio answers: 'it's a tumor, don't press it'. Toxilus then inquires, 'When did it develop (*Quando istaec innatast tibi*)?', and Sagaristio replies: 'Today.' 'Innate' would make no sense in this context. There is a similar case in Celsus (*Med*. 2.8.28): 'those whose joints hurt in such a way that a swelling forms on them from a callus (*ut super eos ex callo quaedam tubercula innata sint*) are never freed from pain'. At Plaut. *Poen*. 300, Adelphasium says: 'envy and malice have never developed in me (*numquam innatast*)'; the adverb *numquam* indicates that the sense cannot be 'congenital' (cf. Apul. *Met*. 4.24 for the collation of *innata* and *innutrita*). Finally, Livy (25.17.1–2) speaks of willows that have 'grown upon the banks' of a river (*salicta innata ripis*).

There are at least two passages in which *innatus* perhaps approaches the sense of 'innate'. At Terence's *Andria* 625–8, where a character wonders whether *Schadenfreude* could possibly be a natural sentiment in anyone, the sense of *innatus* is perhaps ambiguous between congenital to and arising in an individual. So too Julius Caesar (*Civ*. 3.29.4) affirms that a certain spiritedness is inherent in all people: *est quaedam animi incitatio atque alacritas naturaliter innata omnibus*.

[46] Cf. Cic. *Tim.* 44.11.

At *Ver*. 2.4.106 the cult of Ceres and Libera (Proserpina) is said to be *insitum atque innatum* in the hearts of the Sicilians, since the goddesses are believed to have been born (*natas*) there. There may be a pun on *innatum* and *natas*, but the former means simply 'formed in' or the like.[47] At *Sest*. 88, Cicero speaks of Sestius' *innata libertas*, i.e., his 'native sense of freedom', which, like his virtue, is presumably a trait that emerged in him over time, though possibly here the sense approaches that of 'inborn'. Again, at *Tusc*. 3.2, Cicero asserts that 'the seeds of virtue are native to our character' (*sunt enim ingeniis nostris semina innata virtutum*), and that if they are allowed to develop, then nature herself will lead us to a blessed life. Once again, the nuance or connotation of *innata* would seem to be 'implanted' rather than 'innate'.[48]

In all, then, I judge that the participial adjective *innatus* retained the force of the verb *innascor*, and meant not so much 'innate' as 'growing' or 'implanted' on a thing. The contrast that Cicero draws in *ND* between *insitus* (from *insero*, 'graft on') and *innatus* is that between, for example, a twig that is spliced onto a plant and one that grows naturally on a tree: neither is 'innate' in the sense of being there from the beginning. Both terms are compatible with the idea that knowledge of the gods is something people acquire over time, as they mature; there is no suggestion, I think, of innateness in the sense of a concept or even a disposition that is present in the mind from the very moment of birth.[49]

[47] Cf. *Ver*. 2.5.139, where a contrast is drawn between *recepta* and *innata*, and again between *delata* on the one side, and *adfixa* and *insita* on the other; once again, *innata* precedes *insita*, suggesting that it is not necessarily the stronger term.

[48] At *Inv*. 2.65, Cicero distinguishes rules that have their basis in nature from those that derive from utility and those that come from custom, and affirms that 'a certain native force' (*quaedam innata vis*) imparts those that are natural, such as reverence for the gods, gratitude, truth etc. Here again the idea seems to be 'congenital', though perhaps it could indicate a force that develops as we mature. So too, at *Fin*. 2.99, Cicero argues that Epicurus' own kindliness proves that upright behaviour is native (*innatam*) to mankind, and not a result of the pursuit of pleasure. Later (4.4), he affirms that, according to the Platonists, human beings are born so as to be suited to the principal virtues, and that we have an ingrown desire (*insitam quandam vel potius innatam cupiditatem*) for knowledge and are born (*natos*) for sociability. Here is the same combination of terms, and in the same order, as in our passage in *ND*; the sense is that the potential for knowledge and social life are implanted in us from birth, and yet these capabilities are still described as set or rooted in our natures, rather than as pre-existing dispositions of the soul.

[49] The *OLD*, s.v. *innatus*, unhelpfully offers 'inborn, natural, innate'. Asmis (1984: 69) remarks that *insitus* in Lucretius describes 'the acquisition of empirical concepts', and concludes that 'in Velleius' explanation Cicero uses *innatas* not to mean "innate", but to reinforce *insitas* so as to make it clear that the concept has developed naturally within a person, and has not been imposed by some external authority . . . This is entirely compatible with the claim that the concept is a response to the environment; what matters is that the concept is a response of human nature, developed from within an individual.'

To sum up: the images of the gods that early people perceived, whether awake or asleep, were clear enough, but were already overlaid by interpretation and hence were vulnerable to error. The *prolêpsis* of the gods' indestructibility is formed, rather, in tandem with that of their perfect tranquillity or blessedness, directly on the evidence of (mental) perception.

I have argued that the material existence of indestructible gods is consistent with Epicurean atomism, and that it is possible to explain how a *prolêpsis* of their immortality can arise, based on repeated images impinging on our senses, or rather, in this case, directly on the mind. If these conclusions are accepted, then two obstacles to the existence of Epicurean gods are eliminated. So far, however, I have not shown that the images or simulacra that are responsible for this *prolêpsis* necessarily derive from actually existing deities, as opposed to arising in some other way. There are at least four such alternative explanations. The first is Sextus Empiricus' statement (*Adv. math.* 9.45) that our idea of the gods' eternity and blessedness is nothing but an extrapolation from images of long-lived and happy human beings (κατὰ τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων μετάβασιν), like the notion we have of Cyclopes – an explanation that Sextus himself challenges (9.47) on the grounds of circularity, since in order to recognize perfect happiness in human beings we need first to have formed a concept of it on the basis of our knowledge of the gods. The latter thesis is, as Sextus acknowledges, good Epicurean doctrine; but it obviates the need for extrapolation from human images. So too, Long and Sedley assert that 'Gods, like giants, are thought-constructs'.[50] But giants, unlike gods, do not exist, and it may be doubted that there is a *prolêpsis* of them.[51] The second alternative is that our belief in the gods arises from a conflation or 'coalescence', in Obbink's expression,[52] of images from different sources, like the idea we have of centaurs and other hybrid creatures.[53] This view fails for reasons similar to the preceding: if our idea of the gods is no different from that of monsters, it is hard to imagine that Epicurus would have described it as a *prolêpsis*, which he regarded as a criterion of truth on a par with the senses and the *pathê*.[54]

[50] LS vol. 1, p. 145.

[51] At *Adv. math.* 9.45, Sextus speaks rather of the 'thought' (νόησις) of a Cyclops.

[52] Obbink 1996: 322. [53] Cf. Lucr. 4.732–43, 5.878–906.

[54] Asmis (1984: 66) allows that there are *prolêpseis* even of non-existent things such as Cyclopes, which we acquire 'by mentally increasing the ordinary human being', and centaurs, which we acquire 'by a combination of perceptible objects'. We certainly have thoughts or ideas of these objects (cf. note 51 of this chapter), but I doubt that such ideas are meant to serve as a criterion, as *prolêpseis* are.

Conceivably, the gods exist simply as simulacra, effluences that drift through the universe and produce a *prolêpsis* when they impinge on human minds. We may imagine certain loci in the universe where free-floating atoms are configured in the appropriate way, without there being an abiding entity that generates them. Think of the images produced by a warped lens, for example; some such cosmic prism might theoretically be a source of simulacra that could yield a conception of beings wholly imperturbable and immune to pain, and so appearing to be immortal. Although Lucretius states (4.726) that simulacra may form spontaneously, there is no evidence for such a mechanism in connection with the gods, unless the vexed account by Velleius in Cicero's *ND* (1.49) can be dragooned into supporting such a hypothesis. Velleius affirms that the gods are not like ordinary solid bodies but are 'images that are perceived by way of likeness and transition (*similitudine et transitione*; cf. Sextus' μετάβασις), when an infinite semblance (*species*) of very similar images composed of innumerable atoms arises and flows to the gods (*ad deos adfluat*)'. The sticking point, however, is the phrase *ad deos*. Long and Sedley comment: 'The images are said to arise from the inexhaustible stock of atoms and to flow *to* the gods, not from them. That is, by converging on our minds they *become* our gods.'[55] But how flowing to the gods can mean becoming gods in our minds is obscure: if they flow 'to the gods', then gods there must be.[56]

Finally, there is the view that the gods are second-order abstractions: real enough, in their way, but what Epicurus would describe as a σύμπτωμα, or an accident of atomic combinations, rather than a concretely existing thing. Thus, Dirk Obbink states: 'Knowledge of the gods, like that of virtues, mathematics, qualities, etc. constitutes a reality that supervenes on corporeal physical existence.'[57] It is true, of course, that Epicurus posited a *prolêpsis* of justice, for example, to which there corresponds no physical object. But surely the analogous case would be a concept of divinity or the divine, not of gods; yet, the *prolêpsis* we have, according to Epicurus, is of the gods as blessed and indestructible animals or creatures. This can only derive from the repeated impact of simulacra from gods.

We are left, then, with these simulacra as the source of the *prolêpsis* we have of the gods. A continuous stream of them impinges on our minds,

[55] LS vol. 1, p. 145 (emphasis in original).

[56] On the emendations that have been proposed for *ad deos* (principally *ab deis* or *ad nos*), and other textual cruces, see Dyck 2003 *ad loc.*; also Freymuth 1953: 25–39.

[57] Obbink 2002: 215.

sufficiently rich in content to convey the gods' blessedness and incorruptibility. When we say the word 'god' in response to a given (presumably mental) stimulus,[58] it activates the relevant impression or τύπος, and if we refer this impression to the right *prolêpsis*, we can correctly judge by this criterion the nature of the object that produced it.

[58] Although perhaps a suitably sculpted statue or other image can have a comparable effect; cf. Frischer 1982.

CHAPTER 5

Not all politicians are Sisyphus: what Roman Epicureans were taught about politics

Jeffrey Fish

When it comes to political involvement, some of our most important sources on early Epicureanism frame the question in terms regularly employed by their Stoic rivals: 'Will the sage engage in politics?' Epicurus and Chrysippus apparently both discussed this question in works sharing the title *On Modes of Life* (Περὶ βίων).[1] Of Epicurus' treatment we have a two-word summary: οὐδὲ πολιτεύσεται ('and the sage will not participate in politics').[2] But if the question were really as simple as its traditional wording makes it seem, this answer would appear to create complications for some, especially for converts in oligarchic aristocracies. What was someone like Cassius, the tyrannicide, to do once he came to be a late-life convert to Epicureanism? On the face of it, if Epicureanism has really taken hold, he would lay down his political influence, withdraw from the larger society and live the rest of his life unnoticed with his Epicurean friends. Otherwise, if he clings to his political career and influence, and even risks his life for them, as Cassius did, we would suspect that he is just dabbling in Epicureanism. As for Epicurean philosophers, we might expect the more rigorous ones to help princes and courtiers find ways to descend from their positions of authority and influence, as Epicurus did with his friend Idomeneus, a politician from Lampsacus.[3] And we might imagine Epicurean philosophers who would not give such advice as parasitic professionals, mere flatterers unwilling to forego the benefits of having rich and powerful patrons. Where would they be if their patron were to forfeit his own power of patronage?

This line of thinking has coloured nearly all interpretation of Epicureanism and politics. A rare exception is the recent ground-breaking work of Geert Roskam, who demonstrates that there was always a flexibility in

I am grateful to David Armstrong, Kirk Sanders and Michael Wigodsky for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

[1] See Joly 1956. [2] DL 10.119. [3] For Idomeneus' biography and fragments, see Angeli 1981.

Epicureanism regarding issues like political involvement.[4] Prohibitions were not dogmatic, but rather suggestions that should be considered according to circumstances. According to the relevant calculus, a political career might prove the best choice in certain cases. In general, however, the views of Cicero and Plutarch continue to predominate, and nowhere more so than in the interpretation of Epicurean statesmen in the Late Roman Republic.[5] This tendency has a long history in modern scholarship. For example, one of the reasons Usener thought that the *Key Doctrines* (*KD*) was a compilation made by a not very intelligent follower rather than by Epicurus himself was its lack of a clear affirmation of μή πολιτεύεσθαι ('forego politics') and λάθε βιώσας ('live unnoticed'). Epicurus, thought Usener, would surely have unambiguously stated the principle of non-involvement in politics.[6]

In the light of all this, it is no surprise that Philodemus' *On the Good King according to Homer* (*De bono rege*) has occasioned scepticism towards both its author and its addressee, Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus. The work assumes that a good man can deal well and to his own profit with princely responsibilities, and that Homer's princes provide useful models of good and bad behaviour. As for the addressee himself, many modern assessments hold that Piso's commitment to Epicureanism did not run deep. So, for instance, Elizabeth Rawson:

> One might suggest that Piso read this [i.e., *On the Good King*] . . . , glanced at some of the other so-called diatribes, sometimes looked in on the dinner parties on the twentieth of the month to which we saw him being invited, and for the rest felt

[4] Roskam 2007 has anticipated me on several important points, although I differ from him, as I point out, at certain significant junctures. Koch 2005 strikes some of the same notes as Roskam but is less informed and sometimes overspeculative (see the review by Warren (= Warren 2007)). The celebrated treatment of Momigliano 1941 serves as a fine starting point. Benferhat 2005 gives a useful review of many of the important figures but lacks Roskam's analysis. Fowler 1989, despite many insights, ignores much of the evidence. Miriam Griffin's informed study in Griffin and Barnes 1989 – which contains a thorough bibliography that is updated in Griffin and Barnes 1997 – shows how difficult it can be to establish connections between the philosophical commitment of a ruler and a particular political course of action (cf. Jocelyn 1977), but this fact does not prove a lack of genuine philosophical commitment on the part of Roman statesmen. Such a commitment may rather be seen more clearly in the emphasis of certain character qualities and attitudes, as Griffin herself shows with regard to Piso in Griffin 2001.

[5] Castner 1988, for example, assumes throughout her prosopography of Epicurean statesmen in the Late Republic that political activity equates with an insincere or unintelligent commitment to Epicureanism. So she says by way of comment on Trebatius' commitment to Epicureanism: 'such adherence among Romans was superficial in that it presented little hindrance to a full range of the political activities traditional for the upper classes' (72).

[6] Usener 1887: xliv.

that a tame Greek philosopher about the villa was a status-symbol, and should be allowed to get on with his work.[7]

Recent work on Piso by Miriam Griffin has taken a much more positive approach. According to Griffin, Cicero's *In Pisonem* 'provides us with clear evidence that Piso himself openly expressed his Epicurean convictions and explained his actions in terms of them'.[8] Moreover, she demonstrates that there is a remarkable correspondence between Philodemus' good king and what we know of Piso's own character and career.[9] When one also considers the inscriptional and other evidence attesting that Piso's daughter, Calpurnia, and even their freedmen and freedwomen were committed Epicureans,[10] the possibility that Piso himself was earnestly committed to his philosophy must itself be taken seriously.

More devastating charges have been directed against Philodemus as the author of such a work. The issue is not advising a ruler per se, since several Epicureans are known to have done this,[11] but the nature of the treatise itself. In the influential article 'Lucretius and politics', Don Fowler argued forcefully that a positive case for Epicurean kingship and political leadership cannot be made. The issue of *On the Good King* surfaces only briefly, and Fowler states simply that he hopes to deal with the treatise at some later date but that perhaps, as Oswyn Murray once claimed, the treatise does not have important connections with Epicurean philosophy after all.[12] The implication is clear: if *On the Good King* were genuinely

[7] Rawson 1985: 59; cf. Rawson 1989: 233, 'Philodemus' *On the Good King according to Homer* is written by the author rather as poet and critic than as Epicurean philosopher.' Cf. also Jocelyn 1977: 352, 'It is interesting that Philodemus went against all Epicurean tradition and dedicated a treatise on ὁ ἀγαθὸς βασιλεύς to his Roman patron Piso.' Roskam 2007: 123–5, is right to claim that there is no contradiction between Philodemus' philosophy and the substance of *On the Good King according to Homer*.

[8] Griffin 2001: 90. Grimal 1966 also takes Piso's Epicureanism seriously.

[9] Griffin 2001: 89–90. Nisbet 1961: xvi, plays down the possible influence of his philosophy: '[H]is political moderation depended on native common sense rather than on philosophical theory'. Even to open the possibility that philosophers might make a difference in their patrons is to go against the grain of some scholarship, e.g. Jocelyn 1977: 352; cf. Dorandi 2005.

[10] See Armstrong 1993: 200–1 n. 29; Boyancé 1955.

[11] For a useful survey, see Benferhat 2005: 43–56.

[12] Fowler 1989: 133, '[P]erhaps we have no alternative but to return to Murray's view of that treatise [*sc.* in Murray 1965: 165] as not in essence an Epicurean work'. Fowler was more emphatic in his review of Dorandi's edition of *On the Good King* (= Fowler 1986): 'There is no doubt that the work is unorthodox [*sc.* with regard to Epicurean attitudes towards poetry and politics], but I suspect Dorandi is right to point to works like Epicurus' *On Kingship* as possible forerunners.' Cf. also Murray 1984a: 236, which states that *On the Good King* 'belongs not with Philodemus' philosophy but with his poetry'. I agree with Murray and Fowler that the treatise is not an *intra-school* work, but would argue that it is very much in keeping with Philodemus' philosophy. It had been previously supposed, for example, that *On the Good King* was inconsistent with Philodemus' own teaching in

Epicurean – written by an Epicurean to an Epicurean – it would argue that power never truly creates safety, which can only be found by withdrawing from public life to the company of Epicurean friends.

I maintain instead that *On the Good King* itself constitutes a positive case for a form of Epicurean statesmanship.[13] Although Philodemus' analysis of Homeric kings makes use of several stock elements from kingship literature, he concentrates on one theme especially compatible with Epicureanism, and one, I think, especially articulated within the school. *KD* 7 identifies glory as a risky pleasure, but adds that there would be no reason not to enjoy it were it risk-free. A ruler's virtuous exercise of power leads to, or at least tends to promote, his safety.[14] I suggest that, with the help of Philodemus and others like him, Roman statesmen were able to connect two strands of Epicurean thought in order to justify their political life: one, that a person's virtues are productive of the good will and love of others, actual pleasures in themselves;[15] the other, that power can in fact lead to safety. Combining the two could result in the claim that the virtuous exercise of political power can sometimes provide safety as well as pleasure to a ruler. Epicurean statesmen in previous generations likely held a similar point of view.

The suggestion that Epicurus and his followers believed power capable of producing personal safety has itself been controversial. Safety, we are told, can only be found by withdrawing altogether from public life to the company of like-minded friends. Epicureans of the Late Republic clearly thought otherwise, and I maintain that there is a good case to be made in their defence on Epicurean terms. Rather than something inexplicable,[16] or a reflection of an inability or unwillingness to reconcile their philosophical commitments with their public life,[17] the decision of such men to engage

On Poems, in which he denies that moral teaching belongs to poetry's essence, and suggests that poetry is a poor medium for conveying philosophical thoughts; however, Asmis 1991 has shown how it is entirely consistent with Philodemus' views to discover moral teaching in Homer nonetheless.

[13] Others have already made the suggestion, albeit without the kind of detailed support I provide here, that *On the Good King* was written in the tradition of earlier Epicurean thought (now lost) on kingship; see, e.g., Warren 2002: 156–7.

[14] Constrast Schofield 2000: 455, 'The treatise contains nothing distinctively Epicurean in doctrine, but probably this is due principally to the conventions of the genre, which seems to have dealt in variations of stock themes inherited from Isocrates' *To Nicocles* and similar writings rather than in argument from first principles.' My own forthcoming edition of the treatise reveals the need to modify this assessment.

[15] On this see Cassius' reply to a letter of Cicero's (*Fam.* 15.19) and Armstrong's discussion of it in ch. 6 of this volume (pp. 112–13).

[16] Cf. Momigliano 1941: 157.

[17] Cf. Maslowski 1978: 222, 'Epicureanism with them was more of a personal matter than a doctrine guiding their public activities.'

in politics was perfectly reasonable within an Epicurean framework, given their life situations. Without denying that the best life was one of complete withdrawal from politics,[18] these men affirmed that someone who for justifiable reasons was unable completely to avoid politics, could still enjoy many of the benefits of Epicureanism. Epicurus and his followers did not discourage the possession of power per se, only the ambitious pursuit of it. Their position was much more nuanced than Cicero and Plutarch or their modern counterparts would have us believe.

I shall begin not with Epicurus' own opinions on politics and power, but with the Sisyphus allegory as found in Lucretius (3.995–1002), which nowadays is thought to show the vanity and futility of all politics. I shall then move on to discuss other passages in *De rerum natura* (*DRN*) (in particular 5.1120–34) that are thought to present a view of power and safety according to which political life is *always* the worst choice. In conjunction with these verses, I will examine Epicurus' Key Doctrine 7 as well as a passage from Philodemus' *On Vices*, which contrasts with Lucretius by discussing how a virtuous, as opposed to a vicious, person may pursue safety through a good reputation. Finally, I shall consider how power, safety and politics are treated by Torquatus in Cicero's *De finibus* and by Philodemus in his own *On the Good King*.

In Lucretius we find a striking ambiguity about politics. The poem begins with a prayer to Venus that she and Mars embrace, since in time of trouble (*patriai tempore iniquo*) Lucretius cannot engage in his philosophical writing, and Memmius must dedicate himself to politics for the common good (1.41–3). Memmius' political activities are portrayed as legitimate duties. Lucretius does not want him to abandon them during this time of the Republic's need. This opening has proven difficult to reconcile with the prevailing interpretation of other passages, including that of the allegory of Sisyphus in 3.995–1002:

> Sisyphus in vita quoque nobis ante oculos est, 995
> qui petere a popolo fasces saevasque secures
> imbibit et semper victus tristisque recedit.
> *nam petere imperium quod inanest nec datur umquam*, 998

[18] This is expressed clearly at the end of *KD* 14, according to which 'the purest security is that which comes from a quiet life and withdrawal from the many' (tr. Inwood/Gerson). The nature of Epicurean withdrawal from society is generally misunderstood, as Asmis 2004: 135 has noted: 'While opposing traditional values, Epicureanism does not remove the individual from the rest of society. It keeps a person integrated in the daily routine of ordinary life while shifting his or her aims away from those of the rest of society.' Further (140): 'The life that they shared with other Epicureans was especially important; it was, in a sense, the only real life. Yet there was also a life, however attenuated, outside the Garden, and Epicurus gave instructions on how to cope with it.'

atque in eo semper durum sufferre laborem,
hoc est adverso nixantem trudere monte
saxum quod tamen e summo iam vertice rursum
volvitur et plani raptim petit aequora campi.

Sisyphus, too, is here in life before our eyes, he who thirsts to seek the rods and awesome axes from the people and always goes away defeated and dejected. *For to seek an imperium that is in vain and is not ever granted*, and always to undergo harsh labors in the process, this is to struggle to push up the face of a mountain a stone which rolls still yet again from the highest summit and rapidly seeks the level areas of the even plain. (Tr. Englert, with minor changes)

The last 100 years has witnessed the emergence of a nearly universal scholarly consensus regarding the meaning of line 998. The view, first hinted at by Lemaire in 1838, was fully articulated by Giussani:

Power is in essence illusory; one never has true power, because it is always connected with much servitude, with too many obligations and concerns for others . . . Lucretius compares to Sisyphus not only the candidates who repeatedly remain at the bottom of the ladder, but also the fortunate. For that reason, *quod inanest nec datur umquam* is essential: even Pompey and Caesar are among the Sisyphuses.[19]

This declaration of existential despair, we are to understand, makes even the winners of elections resemble Sisyphus, because *imperium* itself is essentially empty and never conferred, no matter the actual election outcome.[20] David West starts from this position and then takes it a step further.[21] According to West, the rock making for the level plain (*plani petit aequora campi*) is itself a reference to successful candidates who, after their year's term in office, return to the Campus Martius 'to stand for election again'.[22]

[19] Giussani 1896–8: vol. III, p. 125. I present Lemaire's comment below.

[20] Subsequent commentators have followed suit; cf., e.g., Kenney 1971 *ad loc.*, 'For the false idea that power confers security cf. 59–86n. *nec datur umquam* means that the *imperium* that men promise themselves is illusory and unobtainable.' So also P. Brown 1997 *ad loc*. Heinze's commentary on Book 3 (= Heinze 1897) was published in the same year as Giussani's. Unfortunately, Heinze does not comment upon *nec datur umquam*, and so we cannot tell the full extent of his agreement with Giussani, but he does agree that *imperium* is something empty per se.

[21] D. West 1969: 101, '"To be a candidate for power, which is an illusion, and is never given" can mean only that all political power is hollow, that even those who win elections have achieved nothing.'

[22] Ibid.: 101–2. West reiterates the point on p. 102: '[E]ven if you get to the top, you must down again to the Campus, that is to say even if you are elected you must presently demit office and prepare to fight your next election'. West's view has, to my knowledge, gone unchallenged, with the single exception of a brief criticism in a review of the book by M. L. Clarke (= Clarke 1971): 'Lucretius says definitely that the Sisyphus of this world is the politician who is always defeated in elections; West, in some confusing paragraphs, tries to show that he also had in mind electoral success, because Sisyphus' stone reached the top before it rolled down again.' Fowler 1989: 140

Whatever its attractions on a literary-critical level, such an interpretation entails major anachronisms and ignores basic facts of the Roman constitution for the period under consideration. Only two senatorial offices conferred imperium, the praetorship and the consulship. West's suggestion of successful candidates returning immediately after their year as consul or praetor for another term to explain the allegory of Sisyphus and his rock is not easily reconciled with Roman history. Lucretius presumably describes a phenomenon current in his own day (*nobis ante oculos*), which neither successive consulships nor a consulship following directly upon a praetorship were. Not since Marius had consulships been consecutively repeated, and no one was praetor twice.[23] Pompey held the consulship three times (70, 55 and 52) but never consecutively. As far as we know, no statesmen in Lucretius' day tried for the consulship in the year immediately following a term as praetor or for consecutive consulships. We can say with certainty that none succeeded in doing so. Moreover, as with the preceding allegories (3.981–94) on ἔρως and ingratitude respectively, we would expect the Sisyphus allegory to describe a general phenomenon, not something that could have applied at most to a handful of statesmen of the day, even were we to assign the poem a date later than the *ante* 54 BC usually supposed.[24] The reasons are not hard to find as to why a second consulship was attempted only in the rarest of circumstances, even after an interval of some years. Holding the consulship once marked a man for life and meant both the entrance into a privileged inner circle of the Senate and the attainment (if desired) of near kingly power as a proconsul whose tenure usually lasted for several years.[25] Accordingly, there was rarely any reason, at least when Lucretius was writing his poem, why anyone would even want to hold the consulship more than once. West's interpretation seems to conflict with these important facts of Roman political life.

Against the prevailing existentialist interpretation of the passage, I propose reviving the view held by some (perhaps all) commentators prior to Lemaire. Simply put, the passage refers to a perennial candidate for praetor

endorses West's view, as does Gale 2001: 94, although Gale never loses sight of the fact that the passage is primarily about ambition. Others following West include Gigandet 1998: 70, 377–8 and Edwards 2007: 82. Nussbaum 1994: 218–19, embraces an existential view of the passage, if not West's explicit formulation. Benferhat 2005: 83, views Lucretius as not departing from Epicurus here, but claims that political activity 'seems to be thoroughly condemned' in the passage.

[23] Marius held the consulship seven times: 107, 104–100, and 86. Q. Caecilius Metellus Numidicus, consul in 109, tried unsuccessfully for a second consulship in 100 (see Broughton 1991: 9).

[24] For the possibility of a later date, see Hutchinson 2001 and Canfora 1993.

[25] Proconsuls were often considered as counterparts to Hellenistic kings, on which see Rawson 1975. In the 50s, when *DRN* was probably written, the period of tenure abroad was longer than usual (see Badian and Lintott 1996).

or consul, one who cannot win election but continues to try, and nothing more. Certainly, this is the how the earliest surviving commentary on the passage, contained within remarks by Servius on *Aeneid* 6.596, interprets it. Servius' comment presents a fairly extended interpretation of the three allegories in Lucr. 3.978–1010. On Sisyphus he writes: *per eos autem qui* '*saxum volvunt*' *ambitum vult et repulsam significari, quia semel repulsi petitores ambire non desinunt* ('By those however who "roll their stone" Lucretius will have it that political ambition and the "repulsa" [i.e. electoral loss], is signified, because once they become "repulsi" [i.e. electorally defeated] the candidates do not quit campaigning'). This comment almost certainly extends back to earlier interpretations, perhaps even to Probus, who published a critical edition of Lucretius. Beginning here and extending through to Lemaire in 1838, I have been unable to find any evidence that the Sisphyus passage was ever taken to refer to anything other than a perennial candidate.[26] Lemaire's own commentary on the passage functions as something of an interpretative bridge, in that he presents both the older view and (only tentatively) the newer one. Commenting on the word *inane* in 998 he writes: *an quia nunquam datur*; *vel potius per se vanum est*, *neque ad hominis veram felicitatem quidquam confert*? ('Perhaps because "it is never granted"; or rather because it is empty in itself and contributes nothing to the true happiness of a man?') Of course, the fact that the newer reading seems not to have held any currency in pre-modern interpretation of the poem does not mean that the current consensus is incorrect, but it does suggest that the old view, all but forgotten, is worth re-examining. To begin with the most obvious aspect of earlier interpretation, *nec datur umquam* does not mean that power is never in any context conferred, or that power is unreal,[27] but that it is never *in this particular case* conferred, because the politician never gets elected to an office with *imperium*.[28] The

[26] Creech's edition of 1818 (revised by Bentley) gives this paraphrase *ad loc.*: *nam petere imperium quod frustra petitur, nec umquam datur & in eo petendo improbum laborem semper sustinere, id profecto est conari saxum volvere adverso monte* ('For to seek imperium, which is sought in vain "and never granted" and always to undergo tiresome labor in seeking it, this is truly to try to roll a stone with a mountain [slope] opposing it'). Creech clearly intends *quod frustra petitur* to paraphrase *quod inanest* as *(petere imperium) quod inane est petere, nec umquam datur*; *nec datur umquam* is explained as identical with *inane est petere.* This is reflected in his translation (Creech 1682) as well in other translations of the period, e.g. Dryden's: 'For still to aim at pow'r and still to fail, / Ever to strive and never to prevail'. For the period after Lemaire but before Giussani, Bockemüller 1874 clearly holds to the traditional view, remarking on *quod inane est*: 'welches für den eifrigen Bittsteller in so veit gar nicht vorhanden ist, als er es niemals erhält'.

[27] On this passage, cf. Minyard 1985: 48, '*Imperium* is a name without reference in the world of things. It is, in Epicurean terms, part of the void.'

[28] It is important to keep in mind that *imperium* here is not 'power' in general, but rather (see *OLD* s.v. 3) 'an office, magistracy, or command involving supreme power'.

imperium is thus never granted. But how do we understand *inane* on this reading? For Creech *inane* describes an *imperium* that is sought in vain (*quod frustra petitur*).[29] Seeking consular *imperium* in vain, i.e. not getting elected, is to be Sisyphus.

A similar line of interpretation yields a better account of *inane*. A Roman reader would have understood that the kind of person envisioned in the passage has already advanced to the lower levels of the Senate, a prerequisite for someone seeking *imperium*. And yet there is no indication that there was anything Sisyphean about his earlier efforts to become quaestor or aedile. Nor is there any reason to suppose that Lucretius means to convey a general principle to the effect that political involvement at the lower levels of government is permissible for the virtuous person, but forbidden to him at its higher levels. The passage is better understood as a satire of the politician who does not know his limits.[30] He has managed to attain the lower levels of the *cursus*, but to try to go further, and fail continually in the attempt, is to be like Sisyphus. This object of satire may be someone attempting to become a *novus homo* without the necessary backing, but whose ambition drives him to run repeatedly for office. Or he may be someone from the nobility who, despite his social connections, proves incapable of making it to the top but continues trying nonetheless.[31] His resulting embarrassment is called *repulsa*, as part of the common vocabulary of Roman politics, and was feared as a disgrace.[32] The *imperium* here is *inane* because repeated failed efforts have shown that it is beyond reach, a vain and unachievable goal. Alternatively, we may understand *imperium* as something empty per se, though without the implications assumed by modern interpreters. Like wealth or luxurious food, political power should never be treated as a final goal. Anyone who treats it as such, and fails repeatedly in the process, is like Sisyphus.[33] Even this view does not imply that power is somehow

[29] Creech 1695 *ad loc*.

[30] Godwin 2004: 74 also reads the Sisyphus passage as satire, but for him a major part of the satire depends on the idea that even apparent winners in politics are really losers. An unqualified claim of this sort about political involvement would seem to me to spoil the satire.

[31] The most famous American perennial candidate, Harold Stassen, provides a good example. After winning a term as governor of Minnesota, Stassen ran for the Republican nomination for president nine times without success.

[32] Cf. Cic. *Fin.* 1.71; on *repulsi* see Broughton 1991: 4, who suggests that losing the first time might have helped candidates get elected on the second try. According to Hopkins 1983: 33, 'losing elections was tolerable to upper-class Romans, because it involved only political, not social demise'. Whether this is true or not, perpetual political defeat must have been held in contempt.

[33] Desires that are both non-natural and non-necessary are referred to in Cic. *Fin.* 1.59 as *inanes* (= κεναί): *animi autem morbi sunt cupidates immensae et inanes divitiarum, gloriae, dominationis,*

unreal. The paraphrase '*imperium* is not given because it does not really exist' is unjustifiable. The words *nec datur umquam* refer to the fact that *imperium* is not granted to the candidate, because he continually loses. Thus, on any acceptable construal of *imperium*, the passage cannot be read as a prohibition of politics *tout court*. Rather, it satirizes the destructive desire for prestige and power.

The existentialist interpretation of the passage is also untrue to Epicurus and the history of Epicureanism. Like most other philosophical schools, Epicureanism denies that political and military authority is all it may seem. Such authority is often precarious and limited. In 5.1226–33, Lucretius describes how even the prayers and vows of a consul may not prevent a fierce storm from obliterating the fleet. He follows this by remarking (in an echo of 3.996) how a hidden power similarly crushes humanity 'and seems to trample upon the noble rods and the cruel axes (*pulchros fascis saevasque secures proculcare*), and hold them in derision' (5.1234–5). But while authority may be tenuous and subject to other powers, it is not therefore unreal or incapable of ever actually being conferred. This distinction has too seldom been appreciated. Bailey's commentary on Lucr. 3.998 includes the claim that 'power is *always* futile, i.e., as Epicurus says, it does not give *asphaleia*'.[34] A. A. Long, citing *KD* 7 and 14, approaches the same opinion: 'He [*sc.* Epicurus] diagnoses political ambition as a "desire for protection from men", and argues that this [i.e. security from men] in fact can *only* be secured by a quiet life in retirement from public affairs.'[35]

The words 'always' and 'only' in these respective commentaries are potentially deceptive. Let us examine what Epicurus says in *KD* 7:

libidinosarum etiam voluptatum ('Illnesses of the mind are boundless and empty desires for riches, glory, dominion and even sexual pleasures'). Phld. *De elect.* col. 5,11–17 Indelli/Tsouna-McKirahan illustrates the limits to which one may go in trying to realize such empty desires: ἕνεκα γὰρ τῶ[ν] ξε|νοτάτων ὡς ἀναγκαιοτά|των τὰ χαλεπώτατ' ἀναδέ|χ[ο]νται κακά, δυναστείας | λέγω καὶ λαμπρᾶς δόξης | καὶ π[ε]ριουσίας ὑπεραγού|σης καὶ τ[ρυ]φῶν τοιούτων | καὶ τῶν ὁμοίω[ν] ('For on account of the most alien and unnecessary desires (I mean desires for power and a glorious reputation and extravagant surplus and such luxuries and the like) they assume the harshest evils').

[34] Italics mine.

[35] Long 1986a: 71 (italics mine); Long 1986b, however, seems to equivocate on this: 'But he [i.e. Epicurus] does not categorically deny that the head of General Motors or the President of the USA could achieve an Epicurean happiness' (293). He then goes on to quote *KD* 7 in support. However, in a reply to Gigon recorded in a transcription of conference discussion, Long seems to lean against this possibility (324). After stating that deleting ἀρχῆς καὶ βασιλείας from *KD* 6, as do Usener and Bailey, is a mistake, he adds: 'But I am inclined to read *KD* 7, the clearer and fuller statement, counterfactually: political power could not be impugned it if actually generated ἀσφάλεια, but *in practice* it fails to achieve this' (emphasis Long's). Fowler 1989: 131 n. 51, invokes the authority of this latter statement for his own position.

Ἔνδοξοι καὶ περίβλεπτοί τινες ἐβουλήθησαν γενέσθαι, τὴν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀσφάλειαν οὕτω νομίζοντες περιποιήσεσθαι ὥστε, εἰ μὲν ἀσφαλὴς ὁ τῶν τοιούτων βίος, ἀπέλαβον τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἀγαθόν· εἰ δὲ μὴ ἀσφαλής, οὐκ ἔχουσιν οὗ ἕνεκα ἐξ ἀρχῆς κατὰ τὸ τῆς φύσεως οἰκεῖον ὡρέχθησαν.

Some people conceived a wish to become famous and held in high honour, thinking that they would thus acquire security from men. Consequently, if the life of such men is safe, they received a natural good; but if it is not safe they do not possess that for the sake of which from the start they conceived a desire which was in accord with what is suitable to nature.

The subject is clearly public prominence, and most likely political prominence in particular. The limited context provided by the ordering of the *Key Doctrines* already suggests as much: the immediately preceding maxim deals with power and kingship.[36] Certainly Lucretius understood *KD* 7 (or perhaps the larger context of Epicurus from which it derives, probably also a cultural-historical account) in this way.

In fact, Lucr. 5.1120–34 can shed some light on how this Key Doctrine should be read. Long and Sedley's commentary on *KD* 7 implies, correctly I think, that Epicurus' own maxim allows for the possibility of the people it describes attaining safety. Like Bailey, however, they maintain that the passage from Lucretius does not.[37]

at claros homines voluerunt se atque potentes,
ut fundamento stabili fortuna maneret
et placidam possent opulenti degere vitam –
nequiquam, quoniam ad summum succedere honorem
certantes iter infestum fecere viai,
et tamen e summo, quasi fulmen, deicit ictos
invidia interdum contemptim in Tartara taetra,
invidia quoniam, ceu fulmine, summa vaporant
plerumque et quae sunt aliis magis edita cumque;
ut satius multo iam sit parere quietum
quam regere imperio res velle et regna tenere.
proinde sine incassum defessi sanguine sudent,

[36] *KD* 6: Ἕνεκα τοῦ θαρρεῖν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἦν κατὰ φύσιν ἀρχῆς καὶ βασιλείας ἀγαθόν, ἐξ ὧν ἄν ποτε τοῦτο οἷός τ' ᾖ παρασκευάζεσθαι ('The natural good of public office and kingship is for the sake of getting confidence from (other) men, (at least) from those from whom one *is* able to sometimes provide this'; tr. Inwood/Gerson, slightly altered). Usener deleted ἀρχῆς καὶ βασιλείας on the grounds that they must have been a gloss on ἐξ ὧν.

[37] LS vol. ii, p. 131: 'Lucretius develops the point [*sc.* of *KD* 7] at length, Lucr. 1120ff., but without entertaining the theoretical possibility that such a life could achieve ἀσφάλεια.' Cf. Roskam 2007: 94, comparing Lucretius and Epicurus more generally: 'It is clear that Lucretius is here much more radical and apodictic than Epicurus, as he fundamentally excludes any possibility of achieving a more permanent political success.' For an extreme statement of this view, see Nichols 1976: 142.

angustum per iter luctantes ambitionis,
quandoquidem sapiunt alieno ex ore petuntque
res ex auditis potius quam sensibus ipsis.

Still, human beings wanted to be famous and powerful so that their good fortune would stand fast on a firm foundation and they with their wealth would be able to lead a smooth life – all in vain, since struggling to advance to the height of honour they saw to it that the path of their life was filled with danger. And yet envy, like a thunderbolt, sometimes strikes and hurls them down with great scorn into bitter Tartarus, since envy, like a thunderbolt, usually sets ablaze the heights and whatever raises up higher than the rest. Thus it is much better to obey quietly than to desire supreme command over things and to rule kingdoms. Therefore let them get exhausted and sweat blood in vain, struggling with difficulty along the narrow path of ambition, since their wisdom comes from another's mouth and they are seeking things more from hearsay than from their own feelings. (Tr. Englert, with slight changes)

Lucretius appears to interpret the conditional 'if the life of such men is safe they achieved a natural good' from *KD* 7 as a counterfactual expressing an ironic impossibility. The attempt of these men to create safety has been in vain (*nequiquam*). Their struggle to reach the top creates its own unintended perils (1123–4). But Lucretius' subsequent description of *how* their path is made dangerous contains some surprises. He says that 'resentment *from time to time* (*interdum*) strikes and hurls them down with great scorn into bitter Tartarus, since resentment, like a thunderbolt, *usually* (*plerumque*) sets ablaze the heights and whatever raises up higher than the rest' (1126–8). Odds that lie somewhere between 'sometimes' and 'usually' admittedly do not inspire much confidence. Nevertheless, the characterization of these men's search for security as *nequiquam* seems excessively strong, almost misleading. Long and Sedley's translation of lines 1125–6 suggests one way of removing this difficulty: 'Even from the summit, resentment *in a while*, like a thunderbolt, strikes and hurls them down with ignominy into a foul abyss.'[38] This way of rendering *interdum* creates continuity by maintaining the absolute tone of *nequiquam*. These safety-seekers may not meet their destruction immediately, but it is certain to happen eventually. Any contingency that *plerumque* might have suggested in the next line is thus obscured. Despite its attractions here, however, this

[38] The French translation of Long and Seldey by Brunschwig and Pellegrin (= Long and Sedley 2001) does not translate the word *interdum* at all, unless as 'soudain': 'Même parvenus au sommet, l'envie, comme la foudre, les frappe soudain et les précipite ignominieusement dans l'horrible Tartare' (1125–6).

meaning for *interdum* is otherwise unattested.[39] The correct translation is therefore almost certainly 'from time to time'. We are left with the apparent incongruity between the certainty of *nequiquam* and the more qualified vocabulary that follows it.[40] Rather than attempt to eliminate the incongruity, I suggest that we see this passage as one example of a pattern found throughout the *DRN*, according to which Lucretius first stakes out an extreme position before intentionally providing the reader something of an out in choice places. Without abandoning his extreme rhetoric, Lucretius nevertheless acknowledges the possibility (however remote) that safety may indeed come from prominence and political power. His acknowledgement of this more moderate position lends authority to reading *KD* 7 in the same way. An allowance is made, though cautiously and perhaps even somewhat begrudgingly, for finding safety through political power. Lucretius' ultimate position is virtually identical to that of Philodemus, for whom the political faculty brings its possessors '*sometimes* greater (good) things than what is to be found in private life, and *often* greater evils'.[41]

The pursuit of safety by means of one's reputation is also discussed, albeit in a very different light, in Philodemus' *On Flattery* (*De adulatione*) col. 4:

. . . καιων λόγος ἥιρει κακὰ τη|λικαῦθ' ὑπομένειν ἐκτίν[ειν] | εἵνεκα τῶν περισαλων αι|[.]ησει̣[.· ἡ] δόξα τοίνυν χάριν ἀσφαλείας ἐδιώχθη κατὰ φύ|σιν, ἣν ἔξεστιν ἔχειν καὶ ἰδι|ώτηι καὶ φιλοσόφωι, κακία[ς | δ' ο]ὐ πάσης, ἐν αἷς ἡ κολακεία | [πρ]ωτα[γ]ωνι[στ]εῖ καὶ μεί[ζο]|νά [γ'] ἀδοξ[ί]αν ⁑[κ]ῆ π[ε]ριτίθ̣[η|σιν ὅταν ε]ὐδοξίαν ἀποτελ̣[εῖ|ν προσδοκᾶται . . . [42]

. . . the argument demonstrates that they endure to pay such a great price in evils on account of . . . ; so therefore, good repute was pursued according to nature for the sake of security (from men), good repute which is open to non-philosophical men and philosophers alike; not for the sake of any vice, among which [*sc.* vices] flattery plays the first role, and recklessly[43] puts upon one greater disrepute whenever it is supposed to accomplish good repute . . .

[39] The only other meaning given in the *OLD* is 'in the meantime', 'meanwhile'; 'for the time being', but this is a very late usage (Silius Italicus and Apuleius).

[40] *Interdum* is like the ποτε in *KD* 6, quoted above in note 36 of this chapter, p. 82, and in DL 10.121b: καὶ ὑπὲρ φίλου ποτὲ τεθνήξεσθαι ('on occasion the sage will die on behalf of a friend'). This obviously does not happen always nor (in a given person's life!) frequently, but it can happen and must be taken into account. Cf. also the ποτε in DL 10.119, quoted below in note 82 of this chapter, p. 93.

[41] Phld. *Rhet.* 2 col. 14a,26–8 Hammerstaedt: ἔστιν ὅτε | πλείω τῶν ἐν ἰδ[ι]ωτείᾳ, πολλάκις δὲ κ[ακ]ὰ πλεί|ω.

[42] The text is from Gargiulo 1981: 107.

[43] ⁑[κ]ῆ in place of Gargiulo's αἰ[κ]ῆ, which is a poetic form, was suggested to me by David Armstrong. On εἰκῆ, cf. Chadwick 1996: 97. This portion of *On Flattery* survives only in a disegno.

The situation the papyrus describes is not entirely clear. Someone, perhaps Epicurus himself, is being defended against the charge of flattery.[44] The text would seem to have a political dimension, or at least be open to such an application. It initially appears that Philodemus departs from the position expressed by Epicurus in *KD* 7 and elsewhere.[45] Michael Erler has suggested that this statement constitutes a concession on the part of Philodemus to his Roman audience.[46] The focus is certainly different from that of *KD* 7. In the first place, this fragment deals with seeking merely a good reputation, not celebrity status and fame. This observation in turn suggests a more important point about the sort of people under discussion in the fragment. Unlike Lucretius in the passages cited and Epicurus in *KD* 7, Philodemus has in mind a *good person* who pursues a good reputation for the sake of security. Such a person, unlike a flatterer, can seek good repute κατὰ φύσιν, in accordance with nature, and 'not for the sake of any vice'.[47] This characterization implies that his reasons are based in fact and an accurate assessment of his own advantage, not perverted by any false opinion.[48]

Why does Lucretius by contrast never explicitly consider the possibility that safety can be acquired through political power? Hedonic calculations, though crucial to Epicureanism, did not present him with rhetorically and therapeutically compelling prospects. The therapeutic effectiveness of his

[44] Gargiulo 1981: 105, points out that Epicurus was accused of flattering Mithres, minister to Antigonus (DL 10.4), and suggests alternatively that Philodemus may also have his own defence in mind, in view of the kind of accusations that arose from his service to Piso.

[45] DL 10.120a: εὐδοξίας ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον προνοήσεσθαι, ἐφ' ὅσον μὴ καταφρονήσεσθαι ('The sage will pay just so much regard to his reputation as not to be looked down upon').

[46] Erler 1992a: 196. Gargiulo 1981: 105, takes a similar view. Roskam 2007: 111–12, disagrees with Erler and associates this passage with *KD* 6 and *KD* 7; however, he fails to note the crucial fact that *KD* 7 primarily deals with vicious persons, whereas this fragment from *On Vices* refers to the *virtuous* pursuit of reputation. It is true, as Roskam affirms (113) that fame is not Philodemus' preferred road to security, but the vices against which Philodemus elsewhere warns (φιλοτιμία and δοξοκοπία) are not shared by the person here referred to. As a result, Roskam's discussion on the perils of ambition, while accurate and insightful in itself, does not seem to me to follow naturally from a discussion of this fragment.

[47] Gargiulo's rendering of κακία[ς | δ' ο]ὐ πάσης as 'e non esclusivamente per vizio' cannot be correct. Roskam (2007: 113) was aware of the grammatical difficulty, and accordingly left the text unsupplemented. But while Gargiulo's construal of the passage cannot be defended, his text itself can. The phrase οὐ πᾶς can be used as an equivalent of οὐδείς (see LSJ s.v. πᾶς B.VI). Such a usage is in fact frequent in the Greek of the New Testament, on which see Arndt et al. 2000 s.v. πᾶς 1.a.α *sub finem*. Regarding the use of οὐ πᾶς for οὐδείς in Philodemus, Richard Janko has kindly drawn my attention to the following parallel, or rather parallels, from *On Poems* 4 col. 107,2–6 in Janko 2010: τ[ὸ δ' ἴδ]ιον [οὐ πᾶ]|σα μίμ[η]σ[ις ἀκο]ύσετ[αι, οὐ] | δ' ὑπ[ομνήσει] πᾶς τοῦ κεῖ[σθαι] | τὴ[ν πρᾶξιν] περὶ ποιηματ[ι]|ῆς ('But its particularity will not be understood as just any mimesis, nor will anyone [οὐ . . . πᾶς] make mention of [his claim] that "action is essential to the definition of the art of versification"').

[48] Cf. Demetrius Laco *Opus incertum* col. 67 Puglia.

exempla is directly connected to their extreme and absolute nature, which results in occasional oversimplifications and the reduction of the more careful and detailed casuistry found in other writers to mere qualifying adverbs.[49] We see an example in the case of Lucretius' initial severity, which he later softens, regarding people's emotional reactions to the prospect of death.[50] At times Lucretius also adopts the same harshness towards religion that he does towards politics, conveying the impression that there could be nothing but evil associated with it. Elsewhere, however, he shows a more moderate attitude that conforms with Epicurean orthodoxy.[51] In the case of *DRN* 5's discussion of politics, despite having opened the door slightly to a third possibility, the two options Lucretius explicitly entertains are either abstention from politics ('obeying quietly' *parere quietum*) or embrace of the foolish desire 'to rule with *imperium* and to hold kingdoms' (5.1129–30). Those who opt for the latter course depend for their 'wisdom' on other people's opinions rather than their own feelings, and Lucretius suggests that one would do best simply to leave them 'struggling on the narrow path of ambition' (1131–4). Their disillusionment results from blindly treating a non-natural and non-necessary desire as though it were instead both natural and necessary. As described in *DRN* 3, the bad man animated by the fear of death is full of *ambitio* and *invidia* and driven by greed and 'blind lust for honours' (*honorum caeca cupido*) (3.59). He is friendless and treacherous. It comes as no surprise that his position is unlikely to be secure, given that he makes one wrong choice after the other both as a human being and as a ruler. Such a man is quite the opposite of the one Philodemus considers in the fragment from *On Flattery*, whose pursuit of a good reputation is prompted by nature and not by any vicious motive.

One unfortunate result of Lucretius' choice to focus exclusively (with the exception of Memmius) on vicious people in politics has been the

[49] In the 'diatribe' portion of Philodemus' *On Anger* there are descriptions of angry people so extreme as to seem absurd to us, but this was part and parcel of the therapeutic technique: 'as for emotions in our soul that are consequent upon our own entertainment of false opinion – some (bad for us) in kind, some by their intensity – *the chief cause of their dismissal lies in our perceiving their intensity and the mass of evils they contain and bring along with them*' (col. 6,13–22). Extreme examples were apparently regarded as the most efficacious. On the technique in Philodemus, see Tsouna 2001a as well as her ch. 9 of this volume.

[50] Cf. Fish 1998 on Lucr. 3.933–4 and 3.952–3.

[51] Without a theology that removes the fear of the gods, one cannot 'approach their shrines with a peaceful heart' (*delubra deum placido cum pectore adibis*) (6.75). Bailey comments on this line: 'We may perhaps guess that Lucretius himself did not show the same devotion as his master.' But newer studies have focused more on Lucretius' developing expectations of the reader over the course of the poem (see esp. both Volk 2002 and Solomon 2004). By this late point in the poem one can be confident that Lucretius expects his reader to know the truth about religion, thus allowing him to join in conventional worship with a peaceful heart.

shared assumption over the last century of scholarship that he regards anyone in a position of political power as necessarily filled with greed and ambition. Whereas in fact it is only '*desiring* to rule with *imperium* and to hold kingdoms' that Lucretius denounces (5.1130), commentators have mistakenly taken ruling generally or the possession of any political power whatsoever as also coming in for condemnation. It is difficult to find fault with those who advocate such a reading, insofar as they seem to have been led to it by a kind of Lucretian sleight of hand. It may even be that Lucretius wants his readers to embrace this more negative view of politics. Nevertheless, there remains within *DRN* both space for the orthodox view and even some acknowledgement of it. Thus, for example, Lucretius acknowledges both the nobility by birth of the poem's addressee (*Memmi clara propago*), and the need for him to attend to politics more than philosophy in the trying times Rome currently faces (*patriai tempore iniquo*) (1.41–3). *Ex hypothesi*, the purpose of the poem cannot have been to withdraw Memmius from politics.[52] In the end, Lucretius' position is both faithful to Epicurus and compatible with that of his own contemporary, Philodemus, even if Lucretius' own treatment of the subject lacks the nuances found in their works.

Any discussion of Epicurean sources treating the idea that a ruler might obtain safety through a reputation for virtue must also include the first book of Cicero's *De finibus*, a work roughly contemporaneous with Lucretius' poem, in which T. Manlius Torquatus plays the role of the Epicurean spokesman. In the course of discussing the bravery of his ancestor, Manlius Torquatus Imperiosus, who as general put his own son to death for insubordination, the younger Torquatus credits the elder's bravery with securing 'honour and affection (*laudem et caritatem*), which are the strongest guarantees of leading a life without fear (*vitae sine metu degendae praesidia firmissima*)'.[53] His infamous severity is said to have been aimed at securing the safety of his fellow citizens 'on which he knew his own depended'.[54] Cicero of course rejected the idea that the principal value of political virtue is to create safety for the statesman himself. He represents the risks he himself underwent in quite the opposite terms, claiming to have sacrificed

[52] As Benferhat 2009: 395 rightly notes. Cf. Maslowski 1974: 77, 'The political career of Memmius was of course the main initial obstacle to his conversion to Epicureanism.'

[53] *Fin.* 1.35; cf. 1.52, where *caritas* is described as 'most suited for living a life of peace' (*aptissimum est ad quiete vivendum*) and 1.53: *nam diligi et carum esse iucundum est propterea quia tutiorem vitam et voluptatem pleniorem efficit* ('for to be esteemed and held dear is pleasant moreover because it makes life safer and pleasure fuller').

[54] Ibid.

his own safety for that of others,[55] something no true Epicurean could ever consistently do. Cicero's intention in selecting Torquatus as his Epicurean spokesman was presumably to enforce a paradox, although the creation of a backdrop that served to subvert Torquatus' argument may also have been a factor. The fact that Torquatus had died as a hero in battle less than two years before the composition of *De finibus* will have been constantly present to the minds of its audience. Cicero is hardly alone in doubting that a willingness to take political risks, even while attempting to minimize these through virtuous behaviour, could lay claim to an authentic Epicurean provenance. In commenting on the account of virtue attributed to Torquatus in *Fin.* 1, Phillip Mitsis points to a perceived Stoic taint as well as to the fact that Torquatus' arguments 'are generously sprinkled with such common terms of Roman public approval as *liberalitas* (liberality), *caritas* (esteem), and *benevolentia* (kindness)' in support of the conclusion that the entire account is infused with 'strong overtones of social class and social obligation that are absent from Epicurus' own account [of ethics]'.[56] In response to Mitsis, David Sedley has argued convincingly for an alternative explanation as to why the four Stoic cardinal virtues figure so prominently in Torquatus' ethical discussion: the widespread acceptance of these virtues as somehow foundational makes them 'the most prominent explananda' for Epicurean hedonists and so a necessary subject of discussion within their ethical theory.[57] I would like to supplement Sedley's response with the suggestion that Torquatus' account is also indebted to Epicurean *kingship* literature, which would have explored the virtues of liberality, esteem and kindness in addition to the cardinal virtues.[58]

[55] See, e.g., *Rep.* 30: *non dubitaverim me gravissimis tempestatibus ac paene fulminibus ipsis obvium ferre conservandorum civium causa meisque propriis periculis parere commune reliquis otium* ('yet I could not hesitate to expose myself to the severest storms, and, I might almost say, even to thunderbolts, for the sake of the safety of my fellow citizens, and to secure, at the cost of my own personal danger, a quiet life for all the rest'). For further discussion of this point, see Asmis 2001.

[56] Mitsis 1988a: 70. Annas 2001: xvi, offers an even more negative assessment of Torquatus' exposition, or rather of Cicero's presentation of him.

[57] Sedley 1998b: 149.

[58] Obviously discussion of these particular virtues was not exclusive to Epicurean kingship literature, but the emphases within Torquatus' discussion of his ancestor's life suggest a specifically Epicurean source. Philodemus (though not specifically his treatise *On the Good King*) has previously been suggested as a possible source for the Torquatus material in *Fin.* 1. This proposal gains a certain credence from the fact that Torquatus himself apparently regarded Philodemus and Siro as Epicurean authorities (see Cic. *Fin.* 2.119 and *Fam.* 6.11.2). On the general question of Cicero's use of Philodemus for Torquatus' exposition of Epicurean ethics, see Tsouna 2001b and the response to it in Erler 2001b. For more or less positive valuations of Cicero's presentation of Epicurean ethics, see LS vol. 1, p. 122; Mitsis 1988a: 49; and Stokes 1995: 145–70. For a decidedly negative assessment, see Gosling and Taylor 1982: 375–94.

Philodemus devotes several columns in his *On the Good King* to showing that a king wins safety by his virtue. When he praises kingly virtues, it is not because of any intrinsic value they possess, but because they lead to a sound monarchy:

ἀπὸ δὴ τῶν τοι|ούτω[ν ἀ]ναχωρήσαντες, | πάλι τ[ὸ] σπουδαῖο̣ν̣ βα̣σ̣ιλεῖ | παραι[νῶ]μεν· αὐσ̣τ̣[ηρὸ]γ̣ | μὲν κα̣[ὶ] τ̣ραχύ [τι ἦθος καὶ] | πικρὸν ἐχθ[ρ]αίρει̣[ν καὶ] π{α}ᾳ̣α̣ό̣|τητα δ̣ιασκεῖν κ[αὶ] ἐπιε̣ί̣|κειαν καὶ τὸ βα[σιλέ]ως ἥ|μερον καὶ συ̣[γ]γ̣γ̣[ω]μονι|κόν, ἐφ' ὅσον π̣λ̣εῖστον, ὡς | φοροῦ̣[ν]τα̣ π[ρ]ὸς εὐσταθῆ μο|ναρχ[ία]ν [καὶ] μὴ δεσ[ποτικῶι] | φόβωι δυνα[σ]τ̣εί[αν.

Departing therefore from such topics, let us again recommend that which is good for a king, to be averse to a harsh, austere and bitter character, and to practise gentleness, goodness and a king's mildness and leniency as much as possible, *since these lead to a sound* (εὐσταθῆ) *monarchy and not arbitrary rule based on fear of a despot.* (Col. 24,6–18 Dorandi, with minor changes)

Philodemus finds the idea of a king's deriving safety from his virtue in Homer's *Iliad*, particularly in the contrasting attitudes of the Trojans towards Hector and Paris. They have tender love (φιλοστοργία, cf. *caritas* above in Cicero) for Hector, and when Achilles drags his body around the city walls, it is as though all of Troy were burning.[59] Newly recovered quotations from the *Iliad* in the earliest surviving portion of the treatise show that this theme occupied Philodemus for several columns. Paris, by contrast, is despised by the Trojans. When he is faced with danger, they 'would not hide him out of friendship if someone were to see him' (*Il.* 3.453).[60] Helen wishes he had perished on the battlefield (*Il.* 3.248). And when Paris and Menelaus are about to fight in a duel, a prayer is offered requesting that the guilty party perish and go down to Hades (*Il.* 3.321–2).[61]

Philodemus elsewhere emphasizes that a king's gentleness should be apparent in order that he may be loved.[62] The concern that there be a bond of love between a ruler and his subjects is a common theme in kingship literature.[63] But there is also a great deal in Philodemus' treatment of this

[59] Col. 5,17–22 Dorandi quotes *Il.* 22.411–12: 'It was most like what would have happened, if all lowering Ilion had been burning top to bottom in fire.' Of course Hector perishes, but by his own folly, according to Philodemus (col. 36 Dorandi).

[60] Col. 5 Fish (in preparation). [61] Col. 2 Fish (in preparation). [62] Col. 25,13–14 Dorandi.

[63] Cf. Cairns 1989: 21 s.v. K 6 iii. On the importance of the love of a ruler's people, cf. Pseudo-Aristeas 265: τίς ἐστι βασιλεῖ κτῆσις ἀναγκαιοτάτη; τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων φιλανθρωπία καὶ ἀγάπησις: διὰ γὰρ τούτων ἄλυτος εὐνοίας δεσμὸς γίνεται ('What is the most necessary possession for a king? The benevolence and love of his subjects, for through these, an indissoluble bond of good will arises'). The closest parallel that clearly refers to the bond of love between ruler and ruled deriving from the king's own virtue is found in Plut. *Praec. ger. reip.* 821F: οὕτως ἁπάντων ἐρώτων ἰσχυρότατος ἅμα καὶ θειότατός ἐστιν ὁ πόλεσι καὶ δήμοις πρὸς ἕνα δι' ἀρετὴν ἐγγιγνόμενος

theme that is suited to a specifically Epicurean viewpoint, and foreign to other philosophical points of view. The value of virtues is described in unabashedly instrumental terms, as means to the end of a secure and prosperous reign. So Philodemus claims that a king should avoid shameful behaviour in symposia, 'lest he not be loved with reverence, *since there is a use for this* (χρείας [ὑπα]ρχού[σ]ης)'.[64] The Epicureans' practical approach to the virtues makes χρεία, usefulness, paramount.

Although there is an understanding that the just ruler will reign over a prospering and peaceful kingdom, Philodemus' focus is the well-being and happiness of the ruler.[65] In a quotation already known to earlier editors, through the just and pious king a land is said to flourish for him, and its people are said to prosper (*Od.* 19.111–14). Of crucial importance to Philodemus, Homer affirms that there is *enjoyment* in living and ruling justly. Such a view of virtue is entirely foreign to Stoicism, a point overlooked in previous attempts to view the treatise through that lens.[66] It would also have proven unappealing to Peripatetics or Platonists.[67] Although Cicero stresses the importance and utility of a good reputation in his letter to his brother Quintus on how to best govern a province,[68] he is committed to viewing the happiness of a ruler and the happiness of his people as essentially two separate things. The goal of happiness for those governed will often mean the unhappiness of the virtuous ruler, a false dichotomy for Philodemus.[69] By exploring how a ruler, through his virtue, creates as safe and stable a rule as possible, Philodemus' treatise also presents the inverse of what we find in the discussion of politics by his contemporary and fellow Epicurean,

('Thus of all loves the strongest and most godlike is the one which is engendered in cities and peoples towards an individual on account of his virtue').

[64] Col. 20,18–20 Dorandi.

[65] Even the hardest virtues, in Epicurus' system, are subservient to pleasure, and he admitted that glory, honour and power confer real pleasure. There are at least suggestions in *On the Good King* that the ability to do good to friends and to one's people is a pleasure, in the remarkable passage (col. 37 Dorandi) on how it is entirely justified that Homer's kings are called 'godlike' (*theoeideis*), and certainly also his use of *Od.* 19.109–14, the only Homeric verse which Philodemus quotes twice in the treatise (cols. 4 and 30 Dorandi). Roskam 2007: 147, notes that in the perspective of Philodemus, 'the Epicurean needs no longer to remain blind to the great merits of some famous statesmen and he can even praise their actions and accomplishments if they are based on a rational *calculus* and serve their personal security and their pleasure'.

[66] See, e.g., Paolucci 1955: 489–90.

[67] Cf. Pl. *Rep.* 363a.

[68] See the astute observations on Cicero's letter (*Q. fr.* 1.1) in D. Braund 1996: 24–36. In observing that much of Philodemus' advice in *On the Good King* could benefit a provincial governor, he suggests (p. 33) that *On the Good King* was composed 'in the early 50s BC, when Piso was a sort of monarch, first as consul in 58, and then as governor of Macedonia from 57–55'.

[69] Cf. Long 2006: 189, 'That these virtues actually "generate" the pleasurable life (τὸν ἡδὺν γεννᾷ βίον) is a striking claim. Among other things, it denies any perch to the Greek notion, ubiquitous in Greek popular morality, that justice and pleasure are natural antagonists.'

Lucretius. In this regard I suspect that *On the Good King* picks up a theme that may have been at the heart of Epicurus' own lost work *On Kingship*.[70]

Another contrast provided by *On the Good King* lies in the area of friendship between statesmen. Whereas in Philodemus' *On Rhetoric* (*De rhetorica*) the thing most inimical to friendship is *politeia*, because of the jealousy (*phthonos*) it produces,[71] in *On the Good King* we are told unambiguously that relationships without these emotions, apparently friendships, are possible between statesmen. Statesmen such as Nestor and Odysseus, the 'most prudent' (*phronimôtatoi*) of Homer's heroes according to Philodemus, are depicted as 'so far removed from these passions (*sc.* jealousy and the like) that "neither in war nor in counsel did they walk apart, but worked out how things would go best for the Argives"' (*Od.* 3.127–9).[72] When this statement is paired with that in *On Rhetoric*, it seems plausible to conclude that, while politics may engender envy, it is not impossible for friendships to develop between politicians for sake of the greater good.[73] Finding like-minded friends normally entails withdrawing from public life.[74] Philodemus may have had in mind here friendships between Epicurean statesmen such as Piso, Cassius, Torquatus, Gaius Pansa and perhaps even Julius Caesar himself, men all seriously committed (albeit some more than others) to Epicureanism, and for whom leaving public life was simply not an option. Or he may have envisioned friendships crossing philosophical and ideological boundaries between statesmen working together for the common good.

But the crucial question remains: why would any Epicurean want to be in politics? The answer is straightforward. All things being equal, a genuine Epicurean would never aspire to public life. On this point the school never compromised. From the beginning the school's position remained that one should not *desire* a political career, as a fragment of Metrodorus makes clear: λέγειν δεῖ, πῶς ἄριστα τὸ τῆς φύσεως τέλος συντηρήσει καὶ

[70] Warren 2002: 156–7 suggests that *On the Good King* recalled earlier Epicurean treatments of kingship.

[71] Book 2 col. 158. See Roskam 2007: 115.

[72] Col. 29 Dorandi. Philodemus singles out τὸ ζηλότυπον (begrudging someone else what he has), rather than φθόνος, in the passage preceding his reference to Odysseus and Nestor, but 'these passions' probably refers to jealousy and strife of all kinds.

[73] This point also gives further support to something Murray 1965 already noted about the treatise, namely that Philodemus intended to speak not to liberal 'monarchs' but to the Roman dynamic of an oligarchy; for more on this point see also Rawson 1989: 254. Braund 1996: 32–4 emphasizes those parts of *On the Good King* which could apply in particular to a Roman provincial governor as a quasi-monarch.

[74] Cf. Long 1986b: 314, 'He withdraws from much of civic life, not simply to avoid pain to himself, but to secure the kinds of pleasures that only the like-minded, the similarly committed, can provide for each other.'

πῶς τις ἑκὼν εἶναι μὴ πρόσεισιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐπὶ τὰς τῶν πληθῶν ἀρχάς ('It is necessary to tell how a person will best uphold the purpose of his nature and how, *as far as it depends on his own will*, he is not to present himself for public office in the first place').[75] All Epicurean injunctions about withdrawal from or avoidance of public life must have similarly had attached to them the implicit or explicit caveat: *if you are able to do so without bringing greater troubles and disturbances to yourself and your loved ones.*[76] Cicero conveniently omits this fact when he attributes to the Epicureans the claim that *rem publicam capessere hominem bene sanum non oportere* ('a truly sane man ought not to undertake affairs of state').[77] His original source presumably contained the far more innocuous assertion that anyone without a need to enter politics, and for whom doing so was likely to make life more troublesome, would be insane to embark on a public career.

Nevertheless, it seems clear from the writings of both Epicureans and their opponents that the best possible life, the one belonging to the sage, will be free from major political entanglements. Just as the Epicurean gods do not involve themselves in directing the affairs of the universe, so the sage will refrain whenever possible from involvement in directing human affairs. Diogenes Laertius includes no such qualifier when he summarizes an entire book of Epicurus' *On Modes of Life* with the words 'the sage will not engage in politics'.[78] Seneca and Cicero, however, tell us that Epicurus had in fact said that 'the sage will not enter public life *except in an emergency*'.[79] Other passages in Diogenes suggest an occasional tendency on his part to overgeneralize when summarizing Epicurus' views. On the subject of whether the wise man will ever compose poetry, for example, Diogenes credits Epicurus with an unequivocal denial.[80] In the course of a recent re-evaluation of this claim, however, Michael Wigodsky has contrasted it with Diogenes' neighbouring description of Epicurus' views on marriage.[81]

[75] Fr. 41 Körte = Plut. *Adv. Col.* 1125c; on which, see Roskam 2007: 50. Piso's reluctance to take the censorship (Dio 40.63.2) may have been in response to such considerations; or it may, as Griffin 2001: 89 suggests, indicate a reluctance to undertake 'this disagreeable role of moral censure and punishment'.

[76] Epicurus' encouragement to Idomeneus (Sen. *Ep.* 22.5–6) to withdraw *antequam aliqua vis maior interveniat et auferat libertatem recedendi* ('before some great force intervenes and takes away the liberty of withdrawing') indicates that this could indeed happen.

[77] *Q. Rosc.* 23. [78] DL 10. 119.

[79] Sen. *De Otio* 3.2 = fr. 9 Us. (emphasis mine); cf. Cic. *Rep*. 1.10: *Illa autem exceptio cui probari tandem potest, quod negant sapientem suscepturum ullam rei publicae partem, extra quam si eum tempus et necessitas coegerit?* ('Who in the world is able to approve of that exception, their saying that the sage will not undertake any part in public affairs unless some crisis compels him?').

[80] DL 10.121b. [81] Wigodsky 1995: 61–2.

The two passages begin similarly, but that on marriage tempers its initial, apparent absolutism with an additional sentence: 'Moreover, the wise man will both marry and father children . . . But he will on occasion marry in accordance with the circumstances of his life'.[82] It seems possible that Epicurus' *On Modes of Life* also discussed the issue of 'circumstance of life' (περίστασις τοῦ βίου), including factors such as inherited responsibilities and individual dispositions, with regard to the sage's political involvement.[83] Even if it did so, however, any concession made must have been relatively minor. Even Philodemus, who is often regarded as more accommodating on such matters, is adamant on this point. In contrast to even his most talented students, who may practise politics, the professed and professional philosopher will observe from the sidelines.[84]

[82] DL 10.119; I print here the text of Arrighetti: Καὶ μὴν καὶ γαμήσειν καὶ τεκνοποιήσειν τὸν σοφόν, ὡς Ἐπίκουρος ἐν ταῖς Διαπορίαις καὶ ἐν ταῖς Περὶ φύσεως, κατὰ περίστασιν δέ ποτε βίου γαμήσειν. There is some uncertainty about the text (see, e.g., Brennan 1996), which may require a negation in the first clause. In any case, the main point is sufficiently clear: Epicurus in general recommended not marrying and having children but allowed that in certain cases it would be the best thing to do. In noting that the Epicureans 'rejected the family just as they did political life', Asmis 2004: 166 comments upon this same passage: 'The Epicurean position does not, of course, mean that a person who becomes an Epicurean will abandon spouse or children, nor will he or she necessarily remain unmarried. Rather, if a person has a choice, he or she will not marry or have children. Epicurus himself was unmarried and childless. His close friend Metrodorus was not married, but lived with a woman, Leontion, and had children.' With regard to exceptional circumstances that would permit a sage to marry or raise children, see Brennan 1996: 350 (though Brennan does not, I think, sufficiently take into account the hostility of certain later sources and their readiness to misreport or oversimplify Epicurean positions).

[83] A somewhat surprising passage from Plutarch (*De tranq. an.* 465F–466A) indicates that Epicurus considered a individual's constitution in this regard: οὐδ' Ἐπίκουρος οἴεται δεῖν ἡσυχάζειν, ἀλλὰ τῇ φύσει χρῆσθαι πολιτευομένους καὶ πράσσοντας τὰ κοινὰ τοὺς φιλοτίμους καὶ φιλοδόξους, ὡς μᾶλλον ὑπ' ἀπραγμοσύνης ταράττεσθαι καὶ κακοῦσθαι πεφυκότας, ἂν ὧν ὀρέγονται μὴ τυγχάνωσιν. ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνος μὲν ἄτοπος οὐ τοὺς δυναμένους τὰ κοινὰ πράσσειν προτρεπόμενος ἀλλὰ τοὺς ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν μὴ δυναμένους ('Not even Epicurus thought men who were in love with fame and honour should lead a quiet life, but they should indulge their nature by taking part in politics and public life, on the grounds that they are constitutionally more likely to be disturbed and corrupted by inactivity, if they do not obtain what they want. But he is a fool to encourage to participate in public affairs, not those who are most able, but those who cannot live a quiet life).' On this passage see Wigodsky 1995: 61 n. 18 and Fowler 1989: 126.

[84] In *PHerc.* 1015 col. 36, which belongs to an unidentified book of Philodemus' *On Rhetoric*, Philodemus sharply criticizes those who do not understand the sage's relation to politics: ὁ δὲ [θ]αυμάζ̣ων̣, εἰ νομο̣θεσίας ἢ στρατ[η]γίας ἢ πο̣λιτικῆς οἰκον[ο]μίας ὁ σοφὸς ἀλλότριος, οὐδὲν εἶδέ πω τῶν σοφίας ἀγαθῶν, οὐδ' ἀνελογίσατο, τίνωι αἴτιον κακῶν ὁ πλησ[ί]ον καὶ τίνων αὐτὸς ἕκασ̣τ̣ος αὑτῶι, προσέτι δ' ο[ὐ]δὲ πῶς ἀλλότριος τῶν τοιούτων ὁ σοφὸς ἢ πῶς οὐκ ἀλλότριος διέλαβεν, οὐδὲ διε̣ῖλε, μέχρι τί[νος ὠ]φελεῖσθαι τὰ πλήθη ἐ̣ξ̣[έσ]ται κα[ὶ] κουφίξ̣[εσθαι . . . . ('But if anyone is surprised that legislation or generalship or political economy does not come naturally to the sage, he has never seen any of the good things proper to wisdom, nor has he reasoned out which bad things one's neighbour is the cause of and which each man is the cause of to himself, and in addition, neither has he grasped in what way these things do not come naturally to the sage and in what way they do come naturally to him, nor has he defined to what extent people can be helped and relieved

Witnesses hostile to Epicureanism seized upon the directive that the sage not be a statesman and twisted it into something it was not, namely, the claim that a political career is never the best choice for anyone, and that the fruits of Epicureanism are forbidden to all who are engaged in statesmanship. The reductive presentations of Epicureanism in Cicero and Plutarch are prime examples of this phenomenon. For both men the Epicurean viewpoint was tantamount to a denial of their own careers and ideals. In a letter to Trebatius, who had just converted to Epicureanism, Cicero asks 'what will the people of Ulubrae do, *if you have decided that one ought not engage in politics*' (*quid fiet porro populo Ulubrano, si statueris* πολιτεύεσθαι *non oportere*?).[85] The implication is that Trebatius' new allegiance to Epicureanism should preclude him from participating in politics even to the extent of being the patron of an insignificant, small town. The first chapters of Cicero's *De republica* offer a similar misdirection. Although it takes wisdom to be a good politician, according to Cicero the Epicureans not only believe that a wise man should not be involved in governing the state but in fact forbid his participation. Given that politics is off limits to an Epicurean, what practical benefit could any politician hope to get from Epicureanism? Subsequent scholarship has almost without demur believed Cicero. Thus we hear of 'Epicurean arguments against participation in politics' instead of 'Epicurean arguments against *the sage's* participation in politics' or simply *recommendations* that one avoid politics.[86] But Cicero's characterization conveniently omits any reference to the explicit claims by Epicureans that a statesman could benefit greatly from philosophy.[87]

Were it not for Vesuvius, Cicero and Plutarch would have likely had the last word on this subject. Thanks to the rediscovery of the Herculaneum papyri, however, we are now in possession of the philosophical works of Cicero's Epicurean contemporary, Philodemus of Gadara, and his presentation of Epicurean attitudes towards politics provides a stark contrast to Cicero's own. The end of the third book of Philodemus' *On Rhetoric*

en masse (as opposed to individually)') I thank David Blank for the use of his forthcoming text for this passage. For additional references to passages in which Philodemus states that a philosopher should not engage in politics, see Roskam 2007: 108, with n. 76.

[85] *Fam.* 7.12. [86] E.g. Maslowski 1974: 64.

[87] Reinhardt 2005 offers a fascinating study of the reductive and tendentious nature of the very vocabulary Cicero uses to describe the Epicurean theory of atomism. Reinhardt notes in particular how 'the doctrine of pleasure and Cicero's attitude to it exercise an influence even in contexts where there is no connection whatsoever with pleasure. The reason for these "irrational" influences is that the Epicurean tenet that pleasure is the highest good caused such an outrage among traditional Romans and intellectuals of Stoic persuasion that they brought it to bear on each and every Epicurean position' (174).

offers an especially bold statement about politics and philosophy.[88] Speaking of someone who lacks philosophical training but is naturally virtuous, Philodemus asserts that the political faculty is

πολλάκις αἴτιον καὶ συμφορῶν ἀνηκέστων . . . μετὰ μέντοι καλοκαγαθίας λαμβανομένην ταῖς μὲν πόλεσιν ἀγαθὰ πολλὰ συμβάλλεσθαι καὶ μεγάλα, τοῖς δὲ κεκτημένοις ἐστιν ὅτε πλείω τῶν ἐν ἰδιωτείᾳ, πολλάκις δὲ κακὰ πλείω.

often the cause of incurable evils . . . but when taken up with perfect virtue it contributes many and great good things to cities, on the one hand, but to its possessors sometimes greater [*sc.* good] things than what is to be found in private life, and often greater evils.[89]

He goes on to say that although philosophy is certainly not a necessary condition of success as a politician,

καλὸν μὲν οὖν γένοιτ᾽ ἄν, εἰ καὶ φιλοσοφίαι χορεύσειεν ὁ πολειτικός, ἵνα καὶ νεανικώτερως ἀγαθὸς ᾖ, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο λέγομεν, ὅτι φιλοσοφία καὶ κοινῶς προστεθεῖσα πολειτικῇ διαθέσει καὶ κατὰ μέρος ὑποθήκας προσεχεῖς τῇ πολειτικῇ διοικήσει παραδοῦσα διαφορὰν οὐρανομήκη ποήσει πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον.

it would be a fine thing, to be sure, if the politician were also practised in philosophy, that he might be still more vividly and energetically a good man; and for this reason we [*sc.* Epicureans] say that philosophy, both generally, when it accompanies a personal disposition for politics and when it gives suggestions appropriate for political arrangements, will make an astronomical difference for the better.[90]

The virtuous statesman can 'sometimes' have greater goods (and Philodemus must mean real rather than illusory ones) than those found in private life. More often, however, political activity leads to greater evils. This expression of a political life's unfavourable odds matches what we saw in Lucretius, although Philodemus explicitly mentions at least the possibility of success. But the most striking contrast to the Ciceronian presentation of Epicureanism and politics appears in the final sentence of the latter passage, which affirms that philosophy enables the naturally good statesman to be even better and to do even greater good than he could have otherwise done. Such an affirmation speaks primarily to the hope of good achievements and the consequent pleasure these afford a statesman, but other benefits, including greater personal security, may not be altogether out of the picture. The more a statesman makes his country prosper, the more likely he

[88] On this passage see Roskam 2007: 122–3, but cf. also the observations by Armstrong in ch. 6 of this volume (pp. 119–23).

[89] *Rhet.* 3 cols.14a,26–15a,6 Hammerstaedt.

[90] *Rhet.* 3 col. 15a,16–31 Hammerstaedt.

is himself to prosper along with it. It is significant that Philodemus claims here to be speaking as a member of the Epicurean school ('we') rather than giving his own individual opinion.[91]

What did Philodemus, Siro, and other Epicurean sages really think of Piso, Cassius, Pansa and Epicurean statesmen like them? Were they generally regarded as individuals who could benefit from Epicurean wisdom despite having taken the low road of political activity, or were they seen as people whose best choice, given the possibilities before them, was to lead a statesman's life that accorded as much as possible with Epicurean teaching? Whether or not these men had a political disposition would obviously come into consideration.[92] I suggest, however, that the commitments and responsibilities of those who had inherited position would also play a central role in any judgements made about such individuals as well as in the advice given to them.[93] One can easily imagine that withdrawing from, or even refusing to embark upon, a public career would create more disturbances than it would remove for some with hereditary responsibilities towards subjects, family members, connections and clients. Rather than leading to the truest kind of safety, withdrawal under these circumstances might even entail increased risk. The injunction λάθε βιώσας would be rendered absurd in such cases. Heeding it was arguably never, from the day he was born, a possibility for someone like Calpurnius Piso, whose family had before him held the consulship eight times.

Epicureanism's flexibility concerning life choices is also evident in Philodemus' *On Household Management* (*Oeconomicus*), which is itself based on Metrodorus' lost work by the same name. This treatise discusses the various ways someone committed to Epicureanism can earn a living.[94]

[91] In ch. 6 of this volume, David Armstrong makes a compelling case that Philodemus' authority in this portion of the rhetoric is Metrodorus himself.

[92] While I doubt that possessing the relevant *diathesis* alone would have justified a career in politics, see Plut. *De tranq. an.* 465F–466A above in note 83 of this chapter, p. 93. A person's disposition was clearly a serious consideration for Epicurus in this regard, but one detects in the passage an element of likely exaggeration by Plutarch in order to convey the impression that the only people Epicureans encouraged to participate in politics were those hopelessly addicted to glory.

[93] The issue of inherited status has received hardly any attention. Benferhat 2005: 69, refers to it in passing in her discussion of the Epicurean T. Albucius, where in justifying his ascension through the *cursus honorum* she notes: 'Pour le fils d'une famille sénatoriale, parcourir le *cursus honorum* n'était pas spécialement une marque d'ambition, mais le minimum de ce que l'on pouvait attendre de lui: il n'était pas question de se soustraire à ces obligations.' See also Benferhat 2005: 97 and Schofield 2007. Jocelyn 1977: 362, speaks of the pressure exerted upon the sons of senators to enter the Senate, though he provides no supporting textual evidence. Hopkins 1983 suggests that the pressures were not as great as have been supposed.

[94] Cf. Asmis 2004: 164, 'In *On Household Economics*, Philodemus is concerned not only with the occupation of being a wise person, but with the entire range of occupations suitable for persons who

The ideal occupation, naturally, is to teach philosophy among friends, as Epicurus had done. But the best alternative, according to Philodemus, is to be a landowning farmer who dedicates his resources and leisure to enabling a group of friends to do philosophy together. Philodemus here departs from pseudo-Theophrastus and Xenophon, who serve as frequent foils throughout the treatise. Their landowning farmer uses his leisure for politics. Philodemus does not, however, offer blanket disparagements of a political career. Instead, following Metrodorus' lead, he disparages only a certain kind of politician, namely, one who accumulates wealth through military aggrandizement.[95] Such criticism seems courageous when directed at Roman nobility, who were known for occasionally plundering the provinces where they served as governors. More significant for our purposes is the fact that Philodemus concentrates his criticism of the political life on military aggrandizement.[96] As Asmis has suggested, Philodemus' presentation involves some accommodation for his Roman aristocratic audience,[97] but there is no reason to think that he in any way contravenes either Metrodorus or Epicurus.[98] From Philodemus' treatise we are able not only to confirm Epicureanism's flexibility with regard to one's choices in life generally but also to see how someone like Piso in particular was able to combine an occupation that Philodemus heartily endorsed, that of a wealthy landowner who opens his estate to philosophical discussion, with one that he could at least accommodate, a political career. While Piso was certainly no Epicurean sage, his involvement in political life did not prevent Philodemus, on the basis of good Epicurean precedent, from making concessions and offering approval and support to him, and others like him, in accordance with the wisdom of Epicurus.

live philosophically. All of these people are "philosophers" in a broad sense. In the strict sense, as Philodemus points out, a philosopher does not engage in business dealings at all. In a broad sense, a philosopher is anyone who does philosophy, even if he has just a little time for philosophical study.'

[95] Col. 22,17–20; 24–26: ἡμε[ῖς] δὲ [λ]έγωμεν ἀκολοθοῦντες [τὸ] μὲν ο[ἴεσ]θαι πορισμὸν ἄ[ριστο]ν εἶναι τὸν δορίκτητον κα[ὶ χ]ρῆσιν . . . δοξοκόπων ἀνθρώπων εἶναι κατὰ σοφίαν οὐδετέραν . . . (tr. Asmis) ('But let us say, following (Metrodorus) that to think that the best procurement and use is by the spear belongs to people who court fame in accordance with neither wisdom . . . ').

[96] Cf. Asmis 2004: 173, 'All political participation is likely to disturb, but using political office to enrich oneself through war is especially bad. . . . Philodemus appears to be extending a message to Roman aristocrats and others who have broken into their circle: don't pursue the military life, and avoid political intrigue as much as possible by transforming your estates into philosophical havens for friends.' It is worth noting, however, that Philodemus does not criticize warfare in general, but only warfare undertaken for the sake of material gain.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Nor does Asmis herself suggest a contradiction; see, e.g., p. 159: 'Everything Philodemus says [in *On Household Economics*] is compatible with Epicurus' own teachings. But there is a change of emphasis.'

It is no accident that the most direct and proverbial proscriptions against politics attributed to Epicurus are short fragments preserved in secondary sources, and not part of either the *Key Doctrines* or any entirely extant letters.[99] Rather than being intended for general consumption, 'maxims' like λάθε βιώσας and μή πολιτεύεσθαι may well have been excerpted from letters addressed to individuals covetous of social connections or status that they lacked.[100] The likely result of such people's eagerness to win renown would be an unhappier life than before.[101] A fragment from Metrodorus preserved by Plutarch contains similar advice to someone concerned about being uneducated: 'Do not be disturbed, because, as you say, you do not know on which side Hector fought, or the first lines of Homer's poem.'[102] Instructions on the subject of political prominence, like those regarding education, must have been situational rather than dogmatic.[103] That is to say, they were not *maxims* at all. Their basic message was that individuals born into obscurity should be grateful for that fact and should not strive for fame or attract unnecessary attention to themselves. The kind of person at whom this message was directed would have been quite opposite to someone who, to borrow a phrase from Cicero, had been 'consul-designate from birth'.[104] The Epicureans had advice for both kinds of people, and a method for evaluating options that promised to maximize happiness whatever the relevant circumstances. There is no suggestion in any surviving source that a person born to the kind of station referred to by Cicero would be expected to go through the tumultuous process of trying to dismantle all of his inherited privileges and responsibilities. Wealth offers a useful analogy to political privilege in this regard. According to *Vatican Sayings* (*VS*) 67, it is the pursuit of wealth, rather than wealth itself, that is likely to imperil one's happiness; wealth obtained by chance may even be used to gain the goodwill of others.

[99] I have been anticipated somewhat in this by this Roskam 2007: 33, who notes the importance of the fact that the saying λάθε βιώσας is not found in the *Key Doctrines*.

[100] It was Usener (1977: lxviii–lxiv) who suggested, for reasons obviously different than my own, that these precepts may have come from letters of Epicurus. Closer to my line of thought here is Roskam 2007: 43.

[101] The ancient evidence regarding the statements 'live unnoticed' and 'do not engage in politics' is surprisingly slender and for the most part late. On λάθε βιώσας see fr. 551 Us.; on μή πολιτεύεσθαι, see frr. 8, 9 Us. For a full discussion, see Roskam 2007.

[102] Plut. *Non posse* 1094E.

[103] Cf. Roskam 2007: 36, 'Devoid of any context, it should have been understood as absolute and unqualified advice that has to be followed under all circumstances. This, of course, runs counter to the *calculus*, which implies that the maxim has its exceptions.' See also pp. 40–1, 146.

[104] *Fam.* 4.6.1–2.

For the same reasons that the Epicureans made certain allowances with respect to political participation for people of inherited status, I suggest that they would have in almost every case criticized any attempt to use politics as a means of securing positions higher than one's social standing and family connections would normally allow. This kind of ambitious upward social movement would be likely to attract the *invidia* of others and so entail more trouble than it was worth. Men of such ambition may be the intended targets of Lucretius' Sisyphus allegory and of his criticisms in *DRN*'s other passages on politics. This detail alone tells us nothing about his own social status, which has been the subject of much speculation. His distaste for ambitious social climbers may equally have been that of someone looking down from patrician heights or, as with Horace's satires, of an *eques* looking up from below.[105] We do, however, learn something arguably more important: Lucretius' own political perspective, and probably that of other Epicureans in the Late Republic, was deeply conservative. Piso's circle, like no doubt many others of prominent Romans, was united in the belief that outsiders wishing to accede to the ranks of the nobility were precisely the sort of people who should be kept out. In this respect, their Epicureanism was easily allied with aristocratic political ideals, since it gave the nobility a theoretical basis for justifying their own political careers while opposing others' attempts to rise into their own ranks.[106]

Piso's own ascent of the *cursus honorum* would seem in keeping with Epicurean principles, since he was able to win on the first try at every step of the way. He could make the case that his engagement in politics required neither great effort nor ambition on his part. That he may have explicitly tried to do so is suggested by one of Cicero's questions in *In Pisonem* 2.1–2: 'Does he even pride himself before *me* on having obtained all the magistracies at the first attempt?' (*Is mihi etiam gloriabatur se omnis magistratus sine repulsa adsecutum*?).[107] Cicero of course already knew, as did everyone else, that Piso had won every position of the *cursus* without defeat. The context of Piso's statement, what Cicero calls his boast, may have been that he was able to attain them with little sweat, to go back to the Lucretian way of putting it.[108] The relative ease of the journey itself would have constituted a justification for going through the *cursus* while

[105] On Lucretius' origins see Holford-Strevens 2002, which makes a case that Lucretius was not from a noble or patrician family, though he may have been at least Horace's equal in social rank.

[106] Cf. the comment in Asmis 2004 that the orientation of Philodemus' *On Household Economy* is 'blatantly aristocratic in its orientation'. Cf. Momigliano 1941: 151.

[107] The passage that immediately follows, in which Cicero complains of the advantages the nobility enjoyed in political life, is also relevant.

[108] Wiseman 1971: 106, emphasizes the ease with which the *nobilis* could attain offices.

still professing a commitment to Epicureanism, which must otherwise have struck some as disingenuous.[109] Cicero was happy to capitalize on Piso's theme by adding his own twist. For Cicero, the difficulty and self-sacrifice he had experienced served to ratify and ennoble his own career, in contrast to that of the *nobilis.* These same facts must have made Cicero's life paradigmatically undesirable for some Epicureans.[110] His own political theory, borrowed in part from the Stoics, maintained the existence in everyone of an inborn impulse to help the larger community.[111] Epicureans could not have disagreed more. To them, Cicero's political rise implied an underlying ambition for political pre-eminence, and the amount of toil and risk required was neither necessary nor ultimately merited.[112] According to the Epicurean view, if Cicero had to be in politics, he should have stayed back at Arpinum. He may not have been a Sisyphus – that is, a perennial loser who refuses to give up – but he was certainly not to be admired.

There is good reason to believe that Cicero recognized that his own status as a *novus homo* was almost the opposite of the life recommended by the Epicureans, despite their willingness to excuse the political career of a successful *nobilis*. His evocation of the elder Cato's similar career as a *novus homo* can be read in this light:

M. vero Catoni, homini ignoto et novo, quo omnes, qui isdem rebus studemus, quasi exemplari ad industriam virtutemque ducimur, certe licuit Tusculi se in otio delectare salubri et propinquo loco. sed homo demens, ut isti putant, cum cogeret eum necessitas nulla, in his undis et tempestatibus ad summam senectutem maluit iactari quam in illa tranquillitate atque otio iucundissime vivere.

[109] As Griffin 2001: 91 shows, Piso's claim that he never wanted a triumph (*Pis.* 56–7, 63, 92) was framed in Epicurean terms and probably part of a defence of his Epicureanism. New readings in the papyrus of *On the Good King*, col. 36 Dorandi, have revealed that Philodemus there treats the importance of not taking pleasure in the defeat of one's foes, no matter how arrogant and base they are; see Fish 2004. It is also clear from *Pis.* 65 that Piso had attempted to frame a defence of himself in philosophical terms.

[110] Cicero himself may imply as much at *Rep.* 1.4–6, where he states that quietists (apparently including Epicureans) included him in their roster of statesmen who had suffered misfortune, to dissuade people from a career in politics.

[111] E.g. *Rep.* 1.1: *unum hoc definio, tantam esse necessitatem virtutis generi hominum a natura tantumque amorem ad communem salutem defendendam datum, ut ea vis omnia blandimenta voluptatis otique vicerit* ('I make this one assertion: nature has given men such a need for virtue and such a desire to defend the common safety that this force has overcome all the enticements of pleasure and ease'; tr. Zetzel). On this concept, see Asmis 2001.

[112] At a low point in his career, Cicero speaks candidly to his brother Quintus of his lifelong passion to be at the top: *illud vero quod a puero adamaram,* 'πολλὸν [sic: αἰὲν MSS) ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχος ἔμμεναι ἄλλων' (*Il.* 6.208) *totum occidisse* ('and the deep love I have had since I was a boy, "to be the best by far and to excel all others" is ruined'; *Q. fr.* 3.5.4). An Epicurean would no doubt have viewed this abiding ambition as the real motivation behind Cicero's career, and his theory of an innate desire to help the community as mere pretence.

Marcus Cato, an unknown man of no pedigree – a man who serves as a model of industry and virtue to all of us who share his goals – could have remained at Tusculum, a healthy spot and not far off, enjoying peace and quiet, but that madman (as some people think), under no compulsion, chose to be tossed in the waves and storms of public life to an advanced old age rather than live a happy life in peace and calm.[113]

As Zetzel points out, Cato's obscure origins (*ignoto et novo*) are 'emphasized because Cato's lack of inherited reputation and family tradition would have made a life of *otium* an acceptable alternative to public service'.[114] Here we have further indication that Cicero was getting the message, whether implicitly or explicitly, from at least some Epicureans that people like Cato and himself were wrongly motivated and had brought unnecessary cares upon themselves. Cicero responded by trivializing and simplifying the Epicureans' arguments. It is a pity that we do not have more replies to these barbed remarks of his. Cassius' brief epistolary response to Cicero's bluster (= *Fam.* 7.19), analysed in full in this volume by David Armstrong, shows that there were standard replies ready.[115] But it is no wonder that Roman Epicureans seem to have been uninterested in detailed, serious correspondence with Cicero about their philosophy.

The fact that Epicureanism did not produce much political theory rankled the sensibilities of Cicero and Plutarch. Both men portrayed this relative silence as evidence that the Epicureans were indifferent to the health of the state,[116] since if their sages cared about good government, they would have produced their own equivalents to Cicero's *De Republica*. But such criticism is spurious. Epicureanism obviously had a strong libertarian bent, and non-involvement in politics was indeed the ideal, but the primary reason Epicurean sages were not given to much political theorizing is simply that they believed that people could flourish under a variety of governments. If there was a preference for monarchy, as many have argued, it is hard to detect in the sources.[117] In all likelihood, what Epicurean philosophers generally supported, when consulted, was the *status quo*. Their chief concern was with the character of political leaders. Virtuous statesmen, they believed, were the key to good government and the greatest contributors to a country's stability, which in turn enabled its people (and themselves) to get on with the business of being happy. This

[113] *Rep.* 1.1 (tr. Zetzel). [114] Zetzel 1995: 96; cf. Cic. *Rep.* 1.10.
[115] For a similar reduction of Epicurean thought in general, including politics, see *Q. Rosc.* 23.
[116] Cic. *Rep.* 1.11; Plut. *Adv. Col.* 1127A.
[117] This is the upshot of Benferhat 2004, on which see Schofield 2007. Westmann 1955 and Salem 1989 both argue for a preference for monarchy.

much, if nothing else, we learn from Philodemus' *On Rhetoric* 3 and *On the Good King*.

In intra-school literature, and sometimes even in writings intended for a more general public, Epicurean philosophers could admittedly look with condescension upon people with political engagements,[118] but the effect of much of this abuse is mitigated when seen in the correct light. Plutarch, for example, reports that Metrodorus reviled certain men as 'Lycurguses and Solons'.[119] An earlier passage, however, describes the specific objects of this ridicule as 'certain sages' carried away with 'the same desires as Lycurgus and Solon'.[120] This earlier reference makes clear that the men in question were philosophers, a group for whom participation in politics was generally forbidden by the Epicureans.[121] Plutarch also complains that Epicureans mentioned statesmen in their writings 'only for the purpose of having a laugh at them and destroying their reputation'.[122] There may be some substance behind this charge, since even the surviving portion of *On the Good King* brings up post-Homeric statesmen, with one or two possible exceptions, only to condemn them.[123] The examples offered of good kings all come from Homer. Nevertheless, the specific rulers that come in for criticism by Epicureans arguably deserve it. While Plutarch expresses his indignation at Epicurean criticism of Epaminondas, for example, the man in fact seems to have possessed few virtues as a leader.[124] It is clear in any case that Roman Epicureans did not condemn all contemporary politicians. The hope Philodemus extends at the end of *On Rhetoric* 3 of a statesman making a great contribution is genuine.

With regard to the attitudes and positions of early Epicureans towards politics, we are faced again and again with a fundamental choice: whether to trust the testimony of hostile witnesses such as Plutarch and Cicero or that of the Epicurean Philodemus, whose deliberate use of the first person plural at the end of *On Rhetoric* 3 seems to imply a claim to speak on

[118] This is richly documented by Fowler 1989: 134, though he does not make this distinction with regard to the intended audiences of Epicurean works.

[119] Plut. *Adv. Col.* 1127c: 'It is therefore fitting to burst into the laughter of one truly free at all men and more particularly at these Lycurguses and Solons.'

[120] Ibid., 1127b.

[121] Cf. Westman 1955: 125. Fowler 1989: 213–14, assumes on the basis of the Plutarch passage that the early Epicureans simply despised all politicians.

[122] *Adv. Col.* 1127a.

[123] Those criticized include Cambyses, Nicomedes III and Demetrius Poliorcetes.

[124] See Cawkwell 1972; Buckler 1980; Roy 1994. Epicurus is also said (*Non posse* 1097c) to have disparaged the accomplishments of Themistocles and Miltiades, but one can easily see how these two would have been thought worthy of his harsh judgement. Idomeneus apparently criticized several Athenian statesman in *On Demagogues*; see Fowler 1989: 124.

behalf of the school. Epicureans, he suggests, have always believed that a virtuous man with a good disposition can rule well, and that if he is trained in philosophy, he can rule all the better and make an even greater contribution. Our knowledge of the actual interactions of Epicureans and rulers leads me to conclude that Philodemus is the one deserving our trust. If Epicurus looked upon politicians with a certain contempt in his writings intended for internal consumption, I am quite confident that he was more positive, and no less sincere, in his lost work *On Kingship*, as well as in his personal contacts with politicians who had hereditary commitments. In this respect, I disagree with Oswyn Murray, for whom 'Epicurus's *On Kingship* was clearly a satirical attack on the idea that kings should be seen with philosophers: it was a waste of everyone's time.'[125] The lives and works of subsequent Epicureans would seem to belie this interpretation. The Epicurean Philonides reportedly converted Demetrius I Soter (160–152 BC) to Epicureanism.[126] King Demetrius is said to have made good progress in Epicurean philosophy, and there is no indication that his teacher tried to persuade him to renounce his kingship. On the contrary, it seems that Philonides believed Demetrius could enjoy many of the benefits of Epicureanism in spite of his kingly duties. While our knowledge of Philonides

[125] Murray 2007: 19, which also suggests that 'Epicurus had clearly set out to explode the whole idea of the intellectual at court.' In support of this view, Murray first cites Plutarch: 'The Epicureans write on kingship to persuade us to avoid living with kings' (*Adv. Col.* 1127A). Plutarch's claim may have been inspired by efforts on Epicurus' part not to privilege the relationship between philosopher and ruler, as other schools had, and above all, for the philosopher not to lose his freedom of speech. Murray maintains that the only surviving fragment of *On Kingship* discourages the relationship between king and philosopher; cf. also Fowler 1989: 132. The fragment in question portrays Epicurus as 'not giving a place even at drinking parties to the literary and learned discussions of scholars, but advising even cultured kings to submit to military anecdotes and coarse horse-play at symposia rather than talk about literary and poetic problems' (Plut. *Non posse* 1095C, tr. Murray). Even if Epicurus discouraged literary conversation, it does not follow that he likewise discouraged discussion about politics, philosophy or the character of a good ruler. What I expect he in fact discouraged was discussion (literary or otherwise) that had no practical bearing on the ruler's life. I doubt Philodemus would expect Piso or others like him to follow the arguments in a work like *On Poems*. By contrast, *On the Good King* and portions of Philodemus' *On Rhetoric*, part of which was dedicated to Vibius Pansa, deal with issues directly relevant to ruling.

[126] Murray is of course familiar with this subsequent history, but his trust in Plutarch seems to have led him to see discontinuity within the Epicurean school on these matters. On Philonides, see Erler 1994: 251–5; Benferhat 2005: 48–50. The key passage is from the life of Philonides, fr. 30, 2–4 Gallo: πρὸς τὴ[ν] αἵρεσιν, | Φιλωνίδης αὐτὸ[ν] αἱρετισ|τὴν τῶν λόγων ἐπόησεν ('As for the sect, Philonides made Demetrius into a partisan for their doctrines'). The word choice is important. Demetrius was not turned into a philosopher, but 'a partisan'. There are other precedents for Epicureans advising rulers (for a brief survey, see Warren 2002: 156–7; for an in-depth one, see Benferhat 2004), but the case of Philonides offers the clearest indication of the involvement of specifically Epicurean training. There is large inscriptional evidence that Philonides and his brothers inherited wealth and political position from their father. For the latest survey of his life, see Koch 2005: 62–71. Gera 1999 contains several important improvements to Gallo's text.

is somewhat sketchy and uncertain, the message of Philodemus' *On the Good King* is quite clear: the virtuous exercise of power could, at least on the average, provide a ruler with a secure life. This same message is articulated by Torquatus in Cicero's own *De finibus*, and by Cassius in his canny reply to Cicero's disparaging letters.[127] This broad agreement gives good reason for supposing that the theme has its origins in even earlier Epicurean writings, and most likely in Epicurus' *On Kingship* itself. Of course safety is only the starting point for an Epicurean.[128] A political life affords many distractions that could interfere with one's philosophical progress. A newly restored passage of *On the Good King* makes reference to both avoidable and unavoidable disturbances.[129] Philodemus' *On Anger* (*De ira*) and *On Death* (*De morte*) provide confirmation that certain disturbances are unavoidable aspects of the human condition. As with Epicurean ethical theory generally, the goals of Epicurean pronouncements on politics are to distinguish clearly the relevant disturbances that genuinely cannot be avoided from those that can, and to help in mitigating the former and avoiding the latter. More than this is not possible. Not even the best human life is entirely free from disturbance.[130]

[127] See Armstrong, ch. 6 of this volume, pp. 112–13.

[128] *KD* 13: 'There was never any use in securing safety from other men, if the heavens, and what is beneath the earth, and in general what is in infinite space are suspect to us.'

[129] Col. 27,27–9 Dorandi. My new text reads ἵνα̣ [μὴ . .] . . . [τοῖς ἀ]|ναγκαίοις ἐ̣π̣ακτο[ὺς προσ]|άγωσι θορύβ̣ο̣υς ('in order that . . . they not introduce unnecessary troubles and add them to the unavoidable ones').

[130] On this point see ch. 10 by Kirk Sanders in this volume, pp. 231–4.

CHAPTER 6

Epicurean virtues, Epicurean friendship: Cicero vs the Herculaneum papyri

David Armstrong

Philodemus claims in *On Death* (*De morte*) that Epicureans, 'though unaware through some unavoidable cause that now, and quickly, the paragraph-mark and end of life was approaching, the minute this becomes visible to the eye, can take swiftest survey of it in a manner that is a mystery unspeakable to the uninitiate (ἀρρήτως τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσιν). Because of their having enjoyed everything, and because of the complete lack of perception that they know will engulf them, they breathe their last in such calm as if they had never turned their attention away from death for a moment.'[1]

Similar language of mystery and initiation is frequent in Epicurean ethical discourse. The 'mystery' of friendship is set forth in *VS* 52: 'Friendship dances round the whole civilized world, heralding to us in very deed to awake and call each other blessed' (ἡ φιλία περιχορεύει τὴν οἰκουμένην κηρύττουσα δὴ πᾶσιν ἡμῖν ἐγείρεσθαι ἐπὶ τὸν μακαρισμόν). Cyril Bailey ignores the mystery-initiation language in his note on the passage.[2] A. J. Festugière, however, showed convincingly that '[t]he whole sentence is full of reminiscences of the language peculiar to Greek mysticism'.[3] The 'heralding' is that of the Eleusinian mysteries, which from the very start had hereditary heralds, or Kerykes – as well as that of Hermetic mysticism. 'Awaking' is also a term with mystic connotations, as in the Pauline sentence 'Awake thou that sleepest (ἔγειρε ὁ καθεύδων) and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.'[4] 'Calling each other blessed' (μακαρισμός) evokes the typical greeting between initiates: 'thou art blessed' (μακάριος εἶ). Festugière did not mention περιχορεύει ('dances round about'), but

This chapter was first given as the Clark Lecture in Classics at Brigham Young University in February 2007; I am grateful to the audience's comments there, especially to Richard Lounsbury for reminding me that many ancient sources rank Cassius higher than Brutus. Many thanks for criticism and help with this chapter are also due to participants at the Mackinac conference, especially Jeff Fish, Kirk Sanders and Michael Wigodsky.

[1] Col. 39,15–25. [2] Bailey 1926: 383–4.

[3] Festugière 1955: 46–7 n. 45. On Epicurean mysticism about friendship and the gods, cf. Koch 2005.

[4] *Eph.* 5.14.

this too has a connection to the mysteries. Dio Chrysostom, comparing Stoicism to an initiation in true religion and Epicureanism to an initiation in selfishness and low-mindedness, describes the stars and planets as 'literally dancing round us forever' in the sky (ἀτεχνῶς περιχορευόντων αεί) to reveal the divine nature to us, 'just as the initiating priests sit the new initiates down enthroned and dance round them in a circle' (καθάπερ εἰώθασιν ἐν τῷ καλουμένῳ θρονισμῷ καθίσαντες τοὺς μυομένους οἱ τελοῦντες κύκλῳ περιχορεύειν).[5]

What are we to make of this? Philodemus' reference to a wise person's tranquillity in the face of death as a mystery inexplicable to the uninitiated is clearly just a metaphor. He is thinking primarily of the power of meditation: continuous mental attention (ἐπιβολὴ τῆς διανοίας) to the universality of death, so that awareness of it is ever present, even when one's attention is turned elsewhere.[6] This state of mind is not easily attainable without continual practice and training, but these are all Philodemus really means by 'mystery' and 'initiation'.[7] Epicurus, or one of his circle, said friendship also wakes us up from our everyday stupor into a more divine world, like the cries of the heralds and the dancing initiates at Eleusis. Without further argument and explanation, however, that pronouncement too seems mere metaphor. The Epicureans are known in all surviving accounts to have been good friends and even to have acted altruistically to each other, and they explicitly defended the propriety of doing so. But if they could not further explain how such behaviour is compatible with their school's commitment to hedonism, then Philip Mitsis and others have been right to argue that their position is ultimately unsatisfying.[8]

Furthermore, for all that Epicurus' disciples say about his 'god-revealing mysteries' (ὡς ἀληθῶς θεόφαντα ὄργια),[9] the actual mystery religions of the ancient world have lost most of their reputation for profundity in modern scholarship. Rather than bestowing on their initiates a feeling of transcendence or an intimation of immortality, they are in some contemporary accounts credited with no more than creating 'complacency' about this life and one's prospects in it.[10] However, a slightly more favourable

[5] Dio Chrys. 12.33–4.
[6] Phld. *De morte* cols. 38,14–39,25; on which, see Armstrong 2004: 45–54.
[7] Cf. Tsouna 2007a.
[8] See, e.g., Mitsis 1987 and 1988a: 89–128. A. A. Long (1986a: 305–6, with n. 22) has pointed to *VS* 52 as proof that friendship was itself regarded as a pleasure by the Epicureans, and other texts suggest it is a pleasure worth sacrificing to have. Cf. Konstan 1994; 1997: 109–13; O'Connor 1989; and Capasso 1988: 65–83, which is based on an unusually wide range of texts.
[9] Metrod. fr. 38 Körte.
[10] Cf. *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edn., s.v. 'mysteries' (italics mine): '[T]he offer (*sc.* in the Eleusinian mysteries) of a blessed existence in the Elysian fields after death . . . received no special

assessment of ancient mystery religions may be all that is needed to do the Epicureans justice in accounting for their use of associated terminology. Jonathan Z. Smith has recently proposed a distinction between 'locative' and 'utopian' religions.[11] The former, by various kinds of 'sanctification' and various means of asserting order against chaos, place one more firmly and securely in life here and now; the latter help one escape into a better world instead. Smith argues that the actual pagan mysteries, like early Christianities of various kinds, were more 'locative' than 'utopian'. His distinction may also prove helpful for an account of whatever 'mysteries' the Epicureans claimed to celebrate. The Epicureans certainly believed in gods. It makes no difference here whether the 'idealist' or 'realist' account of those gods is correct:[12] on either story, everything about the world of the gods is inaccessible to human sense and 'visible' only to reason, λόγῳ θεωρητά. Thus in Epicureanism the only possible use of thinking about gods or mysteries is 'locative'; i.e., to help us achieve, as Smith puts it, 'stability and confidence with respect to an essentially fragile cosmos . . . whose appropriate order must be maintained by acts of conscious labor'.[13] Theology must help us live the good life here and now.[14]

The Herculaneum papyri offer texts that flesh out the role of these initiatory insights in Epicureanism. As one would expect of 'locative' mysticism, this role proves largely supportive of what David Sedley has called a 'tough instrumentalist' view of practical virtues,[15] according to which their value is entirely dependent on the contribution they make to securing the most pleasant possible life. But these virtues themselves require so much hard work, so much altruism toward 'friends' in the broadest possible sense (which encompasses fellow soldiers and fellow citizens), and so much sacrifice of momentary pleasure for long-term goals, that they might seem within a hedonistic framework to be impediments to happiness rather than necessary conditions for it. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Epicurean pedigree of Torquatus' exposition of the four cardinal virtues (courage, temperance, prudence and justice) as given in *De finibus* 1.42–54 has been called into question by scholars for whom the vocabulary employed appears either overly Stoic or just overly indebted to ordinary

emphasis, being a projection of *complacency* into the world beyond, not a compensation for the sorrows of this one. The point probably holds good for *all* mystery cults, indigenous or "oriental" . . . until the 3rd cent. AD' (emphasis added).

[11] J. Smith 1990.

[12] For defences of the idealist and realist view respectively, see Sedley, ch. 3, and Konstan, ch. 4, of this volume.

[13] J. Smith 1990: 121. [14] Cf. J. Smith 1993: 67–207; cf. 1990: 121–4. [15] Sedley 1998b: 150 n. 31.

Roman political discourse.[16] Sedley himself has argued forcefully against dismissing Torquatus' account on such grounds. According to Sedley, Epicurus is committed to showing that since only pleasure is intrinsically valuable, all other goods must derive their value from the pleasure they generate; '[a]nd this means not so much working through the items in his own preferred value system, as dealing one by one with the values which others, philosophers and non-philosophers alike, would be likely to put forward for inclusion'.[17] Epicurus' reason for treating values conventional to both the Platonist ethical tradition and Roman political society does not derive from any privileged position these hold within his own moral framework but from the fact that they are the most prominent explananda standing in need of an account that explains their value in derivative rather than intrinsic terms. So courage, for example, is said to be achieved by the use of a proper, Epicurean understanding of the nature of pain and death in order to resolve associated anxieties. Epicurus does not intend by this claim to imply that everyone attempting to be brave is already in some sense an Epicurean philosopher; only that the relevant goal at which courage aims is, in fact, attainable only through the enlightenment provided by Epicurean philosophy. In short, while Sedley concedes that there is a good deal of non-Epicurean morality included in Torquatus' exposition, it does not follow that this material did not originate with Epicurus himself.[18]

Torquatus' exposition of the virtues of pleasure, and friendship, in Book 1 may therefore be authentically Epicurean, but it is certainly not complete. Torquatus himself responds to Cicero's attack in Book 2 with the somewhat emphatic statement that he will postpone a proper reply until he has consulted Siro and Philodemus and is better prepared. Cicero agrees that he and Triarius will wait until Torquatus has done so. The implication is that with preparation and instruction from experts, there is still more that an Epicurean could say.

In fact, we are now in possession of texts from Philodemus that supply answers to questions left unanswered in Torquatus' exposition of the virtues, and of friendship. All of these texts combine Sedley's 'tough instrumentalist' approach with at least a modest appeal to (locative) 'mysticism'. All preach 'non-Epicurean' morality that is in harmony with Epicurus. And since, as Sedley's account implies, the Epicurean sage is only the most capable and self-aware among possible relevant exemplars, all of the texts also assess favourably the courage, politics and friendships of laymen and non-Epicurean philosophers alike.

[16] See, e.g., Mitsis 1988a: 69–70. [17] Sedley 1998b: 149.
[18] Ibid.: 149–50; cf. Mitsis 1988a: 69–70.

In this chapter, I shall focus on three specific passages, or sets of passages, from Philodemus' practical philosophy, each of which invoke the language of mystery religions. The first of these, from the treatise *On Death* (= cols. 33,37–35,34), was appealed to by Arnaldo Momigliano in his groundbreaking discussion of Roman Epicureans in politics.[19] These columns discuss how non-philosophical people as well as philosophers or philosophically minded politicians could manage to endure unjust condemnation to death by a mob or a tyrant. This form of heroism and tranquillity, claims Philodemus, is not reserved for Epicureans or philosophers generally, but manifests itself frequently even in common life.

The second passage occurs in the context of an argument, which takes up most of Philodemus' *On Rhetoric* (*De rhetorica*) 2–3, that rhetoric is not of the essence of politics. Rhetoric is acknowledged as an 'art' that may be politically useful but is nevertheless less beneficial in that regard than practical experience. While politics itself is held to be neither good nor bad, and a 'good' politician need not be a 'good' man *simpliciter*, Philodemus does maintain that philosophy can help those would-be politicians who study it to be 'good' in every sense of the word, both through the influence of philosophical study on their general character and through its effects on their specific efforts for the larger society's benefit. A political life is a risky course, but the possible benefits may justify the risk. Once again, this fact is attested not just in unusual or heroic circumstances, but in the course of ordinary political careers, even those of laymen.

Finally, I survey Philodemus' views in *On Frank Criticism* (*De libertate dicendi*), *[On Choices and Avoidances]* (*De electionibus et fugis*), and especially in *On the Gods* (*De dis*) 3 regarding why and how friendship constitutes a pleasure. While friendship for us 'weak' humans originates from considerations of utility, mutual defence and support, the pleasure of friendship is entirely independent of any such needs, as evidenced by the quasi-essential role friendship plays in the gods' own existence. The desire of wise initiates to assimilate themselves to the gods as far as possible (or just to be their own best selves) serves as a basis for their mutual friendship and also helps create a more general attitude of goodwill to all men.

1 LOOKING IN POLITICS FOR LOVE AND SAFETY

The question of Epicurean grandees as key participants in Roman warfare and politics has been a difficult explanandum, given that political life is

[19] Momigliano 1941: 154; cf. Fowler 1989: 127 n. 34.

anything but privileged within an Epicurean framework. An indispensable aid to studying such figures is Catherine Castner's prosopography of Roman Epicureans.[20] Castner herself assumes that Epicureans who were also diligent politicians, generals and experts in the law must have been superficial in their allegiance to Epicurus' philosophy.[21] On this point she follows Cicero, who liked to claim that Epicurus had flatly rejected participation in politics. While no statements to this effect survive among Epicurus' actual surviving fragments,[22] Castner is far from alone among contemporary scholars. In the relatively recent collection *Philosophia Togata*, for example, no less than three separate authors advocate a similar viewpoint.[23]

Yet among the ranks of Epicurean Roman senators were risk-taking heroes like T. Manlius Torquatus, Cicero's choice as the defender of Epicurean ethics in *De finibus*, and C. Cassius Longinus, the assassin of Caesar. Torquatus was Cicero's supporter against the conspiracy of Catiline. In Cicero's speech in defence of Sulla from the following year, Torquatus is accorded great respect as the opposing counsel. (In fact, Torquatus won that case.) He is the likely addressee of Catullus' *Epithalamion* (poem 61) for his marriage to an Aurunculeia at about the same period. There appear to be two principal reasons why Torquatus was for Cicero *the* person to expound the Epicurean theory of virtue. The first concerns his status as descendant of such formidable examples of Roman virtue as Manlius Torquatus Imperiosus, consul in 354 BC, who executed his own son for disobedience. As a result, difficult orders came to be known proverbially in

[20] Castner 1988.

[21] On p. xv of her introduction, for example, Castner (1988) writes: 'Since most Roman Epicureans (Lucretius is the exception) were superficial in their understanding and practice of Epicurean tenets, it is impossible to identify Romans as Epicureans by their habits and activities.' Cf., e.g., p. xvii ('By Cicero's time, the Epicurean ethical doctrines have been debased to the point where a Calpurnius Piso could use the doctrine of pleasure as the ultimate good as an excuse for debauchery') and p. 35 ('the essentially ornamental role that Epicureanism played in the lives of most of its known Roman adherents'). Similar claims are made throughout the work.

[22] We have no direct evidence that Epicurus ever categorically said μὴ πολιτεύεσθαι, as Cicero three times claims (*Att.* 14.20.5, *Fam.* 7.12; cf. *Leg.* 1.39 = fr. 8 Us.). The nearest to Epicurus' real words we seem to come is *non accedet ad rem publicam sapiens nisi si quid interciderit* ('the wise man will not be in politics unless there is some occasion for it'; Sen. *De otio* 3.2).

[23] Griffin and Barnes 1989. The authors in question are M. Griffin, D. P. Fowler and P. A. Brunt. The following comments by Brunt (p. 197) are representative: 'How many were "light half-believers of their casual creeds"? What can we make of the alleged Epicureanism of an Atticus, occupied in all the anxieties of money-making, or of a L. Piso or C. Cassius, still determined despite the teaching of the Master *contendere nobilitate, noctes atque dies niti praestante labore / ad summas emergere opes rerumque potiri*?' Cf. N. Horsfall 1989: 112. Horsfall seems to regard Atticus as a dubious Epicurean because he stayed out of politics, as Epicurus allegedly recommended, and was rich; whereas Piso, Pansa, and Torquatus are labelled dubious Epicureans because they went into politics. A more sensible view of Epicurean ethics as laid down for the governing classes is found in Asmis 2004. Benferhat 2005 treats Roman Epicurean involvement in politics much more seriously than Castner.

the Roman army as *iussa Manliana.* How, Cicero asks, can an Epicurean possibly live up to such ancestors?[24] The second, unstated, reason is the fact that Torquatus, like *De Finibus*' Stoic advocate, Cato, had recently died a hero's death in Africa, fighting for the Pompeian and Republican cause against Caesar. Torquatus killed himself after his ship was surrounded by enemies at Hippo Regius in 47, a death no less heroic than Cato's own suicide at Utica in 46. Cicero says elsewhere of Torquatus that he was not so much an orator as a great man of politics, and that *gravitas* and *integritas* characterized his entire life.[25] But for all that, Torquatus remains a second-best in comparison with Cato. His arguments prove ultimately unsatisfying to Cicero, who believes Torquatus fails to prove that even he himself pursued the virtues for the sake of pleasure rather than for their own sake: 'virtue rightly described closes the gates to pleasure' (*bene laudata virtus voluptatis aditus intercludat necesse est*).[26]

Cassius, who converted to Epicureanism in the last years of his life, likewise had a prior career in politics and the military. Of Caesar's two leading assassins, Brutus, the Academic, has frequently been regarded as the first-ranking hero, largely because his self-sacrifice is explicable in terms of his own philosophical principles. By contrast, Cassius, the Epicurean, is often relegated to secondary status, because his self-sacrifice seems inexplicable in Epicurean terms. Plutarch wrote a life of Brutus, not of Cassius. He knew Cassius was an Epicurean but represents him as doubting his faith at Philippi.[27] This episode is probably pure fiction concocted by a hostile witness. Plutarch deliberately avoids dealing seriously with Cassius' views while inventing the character of 'Statilius', who was supposedly disqualified by Brutus from participation in the conspiracy because of his Epicurean-inspired pacifism.[28]

Cassius' military distinctions began in youth, when, as Crassus' quaestor, he rescued everything that could be saved from the disaster at Carrhae in 53 BC. This was followed by his successful defence against the Parthians of the entire province of Syria, which he took over until a legitimate governor could arrive. His military reputation was such that when Caesar captured him after Pharsalia, he made Cassius a legionary general. The experience in austere diet the Epicureans required of their initiates had already been in place long before his conversion: Cassius abstained from wine and drank

[24] Cic. *Fin.* 1.23. [25] Cic. *Brut.* 265. [26] Cic. *Fin.* 2.118. [27] Plut. *Brut.* 39.
[28] Ibid., 12. Sedley 1989, like Fowler 1989 and Griffin 1989: 30–3, thinks that extreme circumstances may have justified to Cassius his participation in politics against the school's general disapproval of it.

only water all his adult life.[29] He also held a traditional Roman priesthood, whose emblems appear on his coins as Liberator.[30] Brutus' pre-eminence in the tradition begins only with imperial literature, when memories of Cassius' military heroism had faded.[31]

In December 46 and January 45, Cicero wrote Cassius a series of letters in quick succession. In one of these (= *Fam.* 15.16), he wonders how Cassius can accept Epicurus' explanation of imagination in terms of the same images that impinge upon the eyes in cases of actual visual perception – images for which the contemporary Epicurean writer Catius, no master stylist in Cicero's view, uses the Latin word *spectra.* In the next letter (= *Fam.* 15.17), Cicero notes that Vibius Pansa, an Epicurean senator, 'has brought so many out of misery and shown himself a true man in these evil times [that] wondrous benevolence on the part of the governing classes accompanied him on his departure'.[32] But such behaviour belies Epicurus' theory of virtue: how could Pansa have won himself the *benevolentia* (= Greek εὐνοία; 'good will') of all the governing class if mere pleasure were his end? On the contrary, claims Cicero, his actions help confirm that virtue must be desirable in itself. In the final letter of the series (= *Fam.* 15.18), Cicero implies that Cassius' Epicureanism is a philosophy of the kitchen and the dinner table, whereas his own philosophical commitments are more demanding. These include unwavering opposition to enslavement by tyrants, and so he finds himself working hard to exorcise the accusing spectre of Plato now that Caesar has deprived him of freedom.

Cassius replied to all three of these criticisms at once:

I am happy to write to you. It is like talking and joking with you face to face, and it doesn't happen because of Catius' 'spectres'. As regards Catius, I shall list for you in my next letter so many clumsy Stoic writers as would make him look a native of Athens by comparison. I am happy Pansa left the City with such good wishes both for his sake and for all of ours. I expect people will understand that cruelty brings hatred from *all* and justice and mercy bring their *love*, and that what bad men try for and lust after comes instead to the good. It is hard to convince men that virtue is desirable in itself. But that pleasure and tranquillity come through virtue,

[29] Sen. *Ep.* 83.2.

[30] Crawford 1974: 498–500. For Epicureans as priests, see Koch 2005: 51–72.

[31] Fröhlich 1899: col. 1731, wonders why Cassius' reputation should be lower than that of 'the insignificant Brutus' and speculates that the explanation may lie in the dying out of Republican memories outside army circles. More recently, the bias toward Brutus in such works as Clarke 1981 has been reassessed; see, e.g., Rawson 1986. Syme 1958: 557 n. 7, had already claimed that Tacitus' tendency to refer to 'Cassius and Brutus' in that order was a way of 'silently correcting a modern myth'; cf. also Syme 1939: 386 n. 41, and Rawson 1986: 119.

[32] *Fam.* 15.17.3.

justice and goodness is both true and capable of proof. For Epicurus himself, the source of all these Catiuses and Amafiniuses who translate his words badly, says that one cannot live pleasurably without living virtuously and justly. Thus Pansa, who pursues pleasure, keeps to virtue, and the folk you call pleasure lovers are in fact lovers of virtue and justice and practice all the virtues at once and keep to them firmly.[33]

Shackleton Bailey's note on this passage glosses Cassius' answer as 'What Pansa's case really proves is that virtue pays.'[34] Cassius actually trumps Cicero's own claim, that Pansa won people to him by good will (*benevolentia*), with the claim that virtue 'is loved' (*amori est*), and vice 'is hated' (*odio est*). Lewis and Short say s.v. *amor* that '*amor* is related to *benevolentia* as the cause to the effect, since *benevolentia* designates only an external, friendly treatment, but *amor* a *real, internal love*' (italics mine). In Greek terms, virtue is facultative not just of εὔνοια, but of φιλία.[35]

This suggests a deeper note in Cassius' Epicureanism, a theory that one should do good to all men, not merely to secure their protective goodwill, but because their friendship and goodwill is a pleasure in its own right. When Torquatus finds himself frustrated by what he considers the lack of comprehension of his own arguments exhibited by Cicero's attempted refutation of them in *Fin*. 2, he proposes to consult Philodemus and Siro for answers:

[Torquatus:] I have people to refer these questions of yours to, and though I have answers, I prefer to look to greater experts (*malo paratiores*).

[Cicero:] Our friends Siro and Philodemus, I suppose, excellent and very learned men (*familiares meos . . . cum optimos viros, tum homines doctissimos*).

[Torquatus:] You suppose rightly.[36]

Siro's few surviving fragments have nothing to contribute here. Philodemus' do.

In the first of the relevant fragments, from the treatise *On Death*, we might say that Philodemus does what neither Cicero nor Plutarch do; for Cicero avoids the emotional issue of Torquatus' recent death in *De finibus* except by implication, and Plutarch imagines Cassius wavering from his Epicurean commitment at Philippi. Philodemus directly addresses the topic

[33] *Fam*. 15.19.1–3. On this letter, cf. Griffin 1999: 344–6.
[34] Shackleton Bailey 1977: 381.
[35] So also in Philodemus' *On the Good King according to Homer* we are told approvingly that Hector won from the Trojans not mere benevolence but φιλοστοργία, family-like affection and love (col. 5,25 Dorandi); see p. 89 of Fish's ch 5 of this volume.
[36] *Fin.* 2.119.

of what happens if all the behaviour intended to secure love, protection and safety from other men fails, and one is ruined and put to death unjustly, without even any reward in terms of glory and honour. I quote here in full a rather lengthy paragraph (= *On Death* cols. 33,27–35,34), which, in the post-Sullan Rome where Philodemus lived and associated with senators like Cicero and his own patron Calpurnius Piso, could not lack political resonance:

Then again, it might seem forgivable to be disturbed when one is going to die violently under the condemnation of a jury, or of a tyrant, like Palamedes and Socrates and Callisthenes.[37] For this certainly is one of those things highly unexpected and rare in its occurrence to wise men; because so far from their practising any of the conducts that lead to this, they have not even the characteristics (of those who do). But just because it's not impossible – and still more in the case of those who haven't attained perfection – for this to happen: to remain completely unhurt is not easy; but it is possible to endure it altogether nobly, and be troubled very moderately by it, because of such considerations as follow. When a person is in fact liable at law to shameful punishments, whether decided by a majority or by a tyrant, and comes to his death by them, he is indeed wretched, but because he came to such a judgement when living, not because he will come to harm when he has died on account of his loss of honour. But when a man has lived honourably and in a manner pure of all stain and then, by envy and slander and conspiracies of truly wicked men, is brought into some such misfortune, he will see that the pain that comes upon him is disturbing him no more than in sickness, but he knows . . . he will become far above them. And the manner of his death he will neither think worthy of blame, nor miserable for himself, nor miserable because men outside his own circle take it so, because neither does everyone think so, nor even many. And if everyone did think so, he still would have the certain knowledge that he will have kept his life unimpeachable and blessed, in total indifference to human gnats, however countless. And the idea that he alone has encountered this fate does not trouble him. For in fact he knows that myriads even of the most distinguished have encountered envy and slander both in democracies and at the courts of rulers, and at the hands of tyrants – the best men most of all – and princes by the hand of princes. He also has faith that those who condemned him have been punished throughout their own life by the vice inside them, and that because of him they will be tormented by many pangs of repentance, and probably also will be chastised yet more terribly by others. But I am amazed at those who think it impossible to go on living if condemned, and not by good men, but by the worst of them, beasts rather. Do they think that those have lived happily and will live happily, who are very evil, but merely get off the charges, or are not accused at all by such people as these? Also, do they not think the life even of the most

[37] For Socrates, cf. Acosta Méndez and Angeli 1992: 155–6, 185, 234–8 (on Epicurean attitudes to Socrates generally, see Obbink 1996: 379; Kleve 1983); for Callisthenes, cf. Capasso 2005: 47–52; and for Palamedes, ibid.: 51 n. 1.

intelligent of us to be wretched, if in fact it is a misfortune to be vulnerable to such people, anticipating, very likely, that this will come round to themselves also, since that is the work of fortune? But it is so certain that truly virtuous people can endure such things nobly, that one can observe even some ordinary men not just enduring with neck unbowed, but turning their back with contempt on those who put them there, never mind Socrates – and Zeno the Eleatic and Anaxarchus[38] as some relate – and others of the philosophers of the past.[39]

This defence of the martyred just man and its liberal admission that many other schools and many non-philosophical people know how to endure persecution with calm, despising their persecutors exactly as would an Epicurean wise man,[40] stands in marked contrast to Cicero's and Plutarch's superficiality. The defence Sedley offers regarding Torquatus' account of the virtues applies equally here. Though the exempla of facing unjust death are conventional enough and come from a variety of schools, the actual arguments merely expand on Epicurus' own words in *KD* 17: 'The just man is utterly imperturbable, the unjust man full of the greatest disquiet' (ὁ δίκαιος ἀταρακτότατος, ὁ δ' ἄδικος πλείστης ταραχῆς γέμων). Philodemus' just man, and many others who have not even studied philosophy, recognize that unjust enemies are simply one form of disaster, like a disease or a falling rock, that can strike anyone. But these enemies are themselves completely miserable in a way that a disease or a rock cannot be. Mere immunity from punishment gives no happiness. The appeal to inner security, ἀταραξία, is both similar and in striking contrast to Lucretius' *suave mari magno* passage (= Lucr. 2.1–4): 'It is sweet when the winds tear at the waves on the great sea to watch another's dire trouble from the land: not because it is sweet pleasure that another is in distress, but because it is pleasant to see from what evils you yourself are free.' In Philodemus' version, the wise person on the rack *does* find the thought of his enemies' confusion and distress an additional pleasure superadded to his own inner security and peace.[41]

[38] On Zeno of Elea and his martyrdom, see von Fritz 1972; Schorn 2004: 383–87; for Anaxarchus, see Brunschwig 1993; Dorandi 1994a, 1994b. For Zeno and Anaxarchus as *exempla*, cf. also vol. II of Pease 1955–8 on Cicero *ND* 3.82, with many parallels.

[39] The translation is my own; for the full Greek text, see now Henry 2009.

[40] I have argued elsewhere (Armstrong 2004) for a 'mixed' audience of adherents of various schools and even some non-philosophers for the body of *On Death* 4; cf. Armstrong 2008, where I treat *On Anger* as written, by contrast, for an audience of Epicurean students only.

[41] The passage also goes against Mitsis' contention (1988a: 69–70) that Torquatus' 'moral censoriousness' in using terms like *iniustitia* combined with *improbitas, libido, ignavia* (1.50) or terms of approval like *liberalitas, caritas, benevolentia* (1.52) is 'uncharacteristic of the Epicurean contract'.

When Philodemus says that he knows of many 'princes' who died by the hand of other princes, he must also mean 'senators of high birth and patricians'. Philodemus' 'kingship-treatise', *On the Good King according to Homer* (*De bono rege*), is dedicated to Calpurnius Piso and offers, through a discussion of Homeric and Hellenistic kings, advice for Roman senators of high birth. Philodemus came to Rome during or just after the age of Marius and Sulla. The topic of unjust death at the hands of a people or a tyrant cannot have been taken as merely rhetorical by his upper-class Roman audience. Not just falling foul of a *demos*, but even conspiring against a tyrant for the sake of one's country and one's friends, Philodemus implies, was perfectly just behaviour. Zeno and Anaxarchus offer possible examples, though Philodemus' use of the phrase 'as some tell' (ὥς τινες ἱστοροῦσιν) may indicate that he, as an historian of philosophy, personally finds the accounts of their death either romanticized or confusedly reported. Callisthenes' alleged participation in the Pages' Conspiracy against Alexander represents yet another example. It is also noteworthy that at least some members of Philodemus' audience are concerned with their reputation and place in history. This fact explains his reassurance that the opinion of 'those outside' (οἱ ἔξωθεν) is not worth considering, even if it is wholly unfavourable: the innocent victim will not think his death a disgrace 'because men outside his own circle take it so, because neither does everyone think so, nor even many'. Even if the majority of people did in fact think so, only the good opinion of those who know us and are themselves good people counts, as Philodemus elsewhere in *On Death* reassures his hearers: 'to a man of good disposition no good man who has fully known him is ill-disposed, and those are the ones whose enmity is hurtful' (τ[ῶι] δὲ ἀγαθῶι κατὰ διάθε|σιν οὐδεὶς ἀγα[θὸς] ἐπεγνωκὼς αὐτ[ὸ]ν| γίνεται δυσ[μεν]ὴς ὑφ' ὧν ἐ[χθ]ραίνεσ|θαι λυπηρόν ἐ[στι]ν).[42] It is nevertheless noteworthy that Philodemus does think his hearers' concern with the loss of their own reputation and honour, their δόξα and τιμή, worth addressing.[43]

2 RISK AND REWARD IN ORDINARY POLITICS

The question of how the wise politician would react to unjust condemnation was so commonly discussed as an extreme case for ancient ethical

[42] Col. 20,11–14.

[43] For a discussion of the 'nuances' and 'qualifying conditionals' with which Epicurean general statements on politics were limited, see below; cf. Roskam 2007: 36–56, and Fish's ch. 5 of this volume.

casuistry that it seems probable that Epicureans before Philodemus had given a similar answer. There are additional commonplace questions for which they also presumably provided answers. Torquatus' defence of bravery as a virtue necessary to pleasure,[44] or something very much like it, must have figured in Epicurean ethics from the beginning. Greeks and Romans were not always defying tyrants, but they were, if they were free citizens, everywhere liable to military service as a condition of citizenship, and to loss of citizenship, property or even life for cowardice. Consequently, if the Epicureans had been thought by their opponents to discourage military service as commonly as they were said to forbid political participation, they would certainly have encountered strong prejudices. But they never took any such position. Epicurus said only that 'the virtue of bravery does not come naturally, but is acquired by reasoning out what is good for one' (τὴν ἀνδρείαν μὴ φύσει γίνεσθαι, ἀλλὰ λογισμῷ τοῦ συμφέροντος).[45] Epicureans are often accused in ancient literature of luxury and selfishness but never of cowardice. If there were historical examples of Epicureans throwing away their shields and saving their lives by desertion, one would expect their ideological opponents to have made these famous.[46] Given the prominence of military matters in the life of ancient Greek and Roman citizens, it seems safe to assume that the Epicureans also had more to say about the associated virtue of bravery, and that the substance of their views is well represented by Torquatus' brief but striking defence. Torquatus acknowledges that there is nothing attractive per se in military labours, in enduring bodily pain with patience and assiduity, in loss of sleep, or even in bravery itself, except insofar as these procure us a life free from worry and fear. One should simply carry in mind the Master's maxims to the effect that death is nothing to us and that great pains end quickly with death, while lesser ones allow many intervals of pleasures.[47] Even friendship in its broadest sense – as a relationship that holds with one's family, fellow citizens and ultimately with oneself – makes an appearance: the ill effects of cowardice include causing men to betray parents, friends, country and even themselves.[48]

What is more discussed is why Epicureans should be in politics at all. Geert Roskam has now provided us a solid foundation for any discussion of

[44] *Fin.* 1.49. [45] DL 10.120 (= fr. 517 Us.).

[46] There is of course the Epicurean-leaning Horace's reference to having abandoned his shield at Philippi (*Carm.* 2.7.10: *relicta non bene parmula*), but cf. Nisbet and Hubbard 1978 *ad loc.* Horace claims more seriously at *Ep.* 1.20.23 to have earned the approval of great Romans in both war and peace (*primis urbis belli placuisse domique*).

[47] See, e.g., *KD* 2 and 4. [48] *Fin.* 1.49.

the political views of Epicurus, his immediate circle, later Epicureans like Philodemus, and even Epicurean predecessors like Democritus.[49] Roskam introduces the important concept of 'conditional qualifying', according to which the Epicureans exempt a few absolute truths (e.g., pleasure as the τέλος) from questioning but subject everything else to qualification or nuancing.[50] So 'live unnoticed' (λάθε βιώσας), unlike 'pleasure is the *telos*' or 'death is nothing to us', is a maxim that, according to Roskam, 'has its exceptions'.[51] But not to engage in politics 'unless there is some occasion' obviously prompts a call for further clarification as to what might qualify as an 'occasion': *quid intercideri*t?[52] If *that* question can be answered, then political life will be permissible.

Philodemus clearly approved of the political careers of Romans beyond Torquatus and Cassius, like those of his patron Calpurnius Piso, to whom he addressed *On the Good King according to Homer,* and C. Vibius Pansa Caetronianus, to whom we now know that Philodemus addressed at least Book 4 of *On Rhetoric.*[53] In *On the Good King*, Philodemus takes for granted the view that nobles, whether Homeric or Hellenistic – and, by implication, Roman grandees like Piso – are born into certain responsibilities that cannot be abandoned for Epicurean quietude, but must be dealt with extensively and positively.[54] As we have seen, Pansa's attainments as a 'virtuous' Epicurean politician were themselves the subject of Cassius' reply to Cicero defending pleasure as the ultimate object of virtue. Pansa also figures in Cicero's correspondence, most relevantly as having converted Cicero's (and later Horace's) friend, the jurist Trebatius Testa, to Epicureanism while part of Caesar's camp at Samarobriva in the 50s BC. Cicero's letter to Trebatius on this occasion is a paradigm for his frequently facile deprecation of Epicureanism, both in his letters and his philosophical works:

> I wondered why you quit writing back to me; my dear Pansa says you've gone Epicurean! Some army camp! What would you have done if I'd sent you off to Tarentum, and not Samarobriva . . . How are you going to defend the civil law now there's only your own case for you to take, and not your fellow Romans' cases? How will you divide common property, when there is no common property

[49] Roskam 2007. [50] Ibid.: 33–41.

[51] Ibid.: 36. On the intended scope of the maxim 'Death is nothing to us', see Sanders 2008b as well as his ch. 10 of this volume.

[52] See note 22 of this chapter, p. 110.

[53] Dorandi 1996. The risks of politics and 'unjust' condemnation were both well known to Pansa, whose father was proscribed by Sulla (Dio Cass. 45.17.1).

[54] Jeffrey Fish is currently preparing a new edition, with commentary, of this treatise; for further discussion of its contents, see also his ch. 5 of this volume.

for those who measure all things by their own pleasure? How can you consent to swear on the Stone Jove, now you know Jove can never be angered? What will happen to the citizens of poor little Ulubrae, your clients, now you believe one ought 'not to do politics'?[55]

Cicero implies that Epicureans are too lazy to write letters to friends; they have no motivation to face discomfort in a barbarian land; they do not care enough about anyone else's rights to be jurists; they have nothing to pray for or swear by; and they are flatly and unqualifiedly forbidden to engage in politics. Trebatius, however, obviously believed none of these propositions. The evidence of Horace's *Satires* 2.1, which is addressed to him, indicates that he remained long after Cicero's own death not only a recognized legal authority but also a committed Epicurean.[56]

Cicero's gibes depend for their validity on systematically ignoring 'qualifying conditions' of the sort discussed by Roskam. Such conditions did not prove particularly hard to come by in the case of those men qualified for politics both by natural talent and by birth. But just as it has taken a long time to undo Cicero's and Plutarch's transformation of qualified Epicurean statements into more readily parodied absolutes, so also has it taken a long time to incorporate Philodemus' addressees into the discussion of his work and views.[57] It is therefore not surprising that little attention has yet been directed toward Pansa, whom Dorandi has proved was the addressee of at least part of *On Rhetoric*.[58] Pansa was a member of both Caesar's and Philodemus' circles, though admittedly not as prominent in either as Piso. Following Caesar's death, Pansa served as consul in 43, and subsequently died at Mutina together with his colleague Hirtius, also an Epicurean, fighting against Marcus Antonius. He may in fact be the addressee of *Rhet.* 3 as well as 4. It is hardly a stretch to read the remarkable ending of *On Rhetoric* 3 as addressed to him and other senators of similar rank, ordinary Roman politicians of lesser status than men like Torquatus and Piso. What we have here is, in Roskam's terms, another 'qualifying' passage, specifying conditions on which involvement in politics can prove valuable. But it is also more. The passage serves in addition as a peroration, and a closer inspection reveals how powerfully and emphatically it makes its point.

[55] *Fam.* 7.12.

[56] See especially Trebatius' arguments at ll. 5, 60–2 and 80–1 against writing satire, which reflect the prudential side of the Epicurean theory of justice. But Trebatius also reflects the more enterprising, 'conditionally qualified' view found in, e.g., the writings of Philodemus as to what is permissible in public life, ultimately conceding that Horace's powerful circle of friends and his innocent attitude to satire offer sufficient protection. Horace, calculating the risks correctly, is welcome to write satire.

[57] For a pioneering effort to do so in the case of Vergil and his set, see Armstrong et al. 2004.

[58] Dorandi 1996.

Philodemus argues in *On Rhetoric* 2 and 3 that sophistical or professional training in rhetoric fosters skill in ornate and pleasing composition – and ranks as training in an 'art' (τέχνη) – but not in influencing assemblies or juries. This latter ability comes only from actual practice in politics, which he insists is not an art but a 'knack' (τριβή) that is acquired by experience and yields no certain rules for success.[59] Philodemus nevertheless concedes that the practical politician might profit from oratorical exercises having as their subject matter real-life questions needing to be decided one way or another, as opposed to epidictic or 'panegyrical' topics that centre on mere rhetorical display.[60] However, neither rhetorical training nor political experience guarantee that good results will follow a man's entry into politics. This topic is pursued so insistently and repetitiously throughout most of Books 2 and 3 that the force of the latter's peroration, which deals with the true role of virtue in politics, has been missed.

In prefacing his conclusion, Philodemus states that the remaining question is whether the orator can be a good politician *qua* orator. That he is not so *qua* sophistical or epidictic orator is clear from the fact that these skills are completely independent of political experience. The political orator possessed of political experience can, of course, be a 'good' politician in the sense of an efficient one. But if 'good' is intended in its ethical sense, he is not a 'good' politician *qua* political orator either, since both men of good and of very bad character have been political orators.[61] Philodemus continues:

> And so indeed, because that is the case, we (*sc.* Epicureans) think the political faculty (δύναμις) neither brings good to the people who possess it nor to their cities, taken in and for itself,[62] but that it is often the cause of incurable evils, insofar as that thing is often to be called the 'cause' which gives the first occasions to something (αἴτιον τὸ διδὸν ἀφορμάς). But when it is taken up with perfect virtue (μετὰ . . . καλοκαγαθίας λαμβανομένην) it contributes many and great good things to cities, while to its possessors sometimes greater (i.e. good) things than what is to be found in private life, and often greater evils;[63] and to this we

[59] Cf. the discussion of *technê, tribê,* and *empeiria* in Blank 1998: xvii–xxxiv.

[60] *Rhet.* 3 col. 8a,1–14 Hammerstaedt.

[61] *Rhet.* 3 cols. 12a,21–14a,17 Hammerstaedt.

[62] Philodemus nevertheless lists politics among the useful arts at *De mus.* col. 33,16 Neubecker.

[63] *PHerc.* 1506 col. 57,34–8; Hammerstaedt prints a variant text which translates more or less as follows: 'but to its possessors is no hindrance to having more (good) things than in private life . . . [and] in a way will be said to be both partial cause of having more (?) goods, many of them, and partial cause of having more evils (?) and to this' etc. (ἐστιν ὅτε πλείωι τῶν ἐν ἰδιωτείαι | μὴ κωλύειν ἔχειν [...]αν ἐν τίνι | δὲ τρόπ[ωι] ῥηθήσε[ται] καί παραιτί|αν τοῦ πλ[.]... ἀγαθὰ ἔχειν πολλὰ | κακὰ πλεί[ωι π]αραιτ[ί]αν, καί τούτοις κτλ.). According to Hammerstaedt (80), 'Der überschüssige Text in (35–8) bedarf noch der Klärung.' I would read ἔν τινι, as my translation shows.

believe life itself witnesses. And, by Zeus, if one, adding (προσβάλλων)[64] to what we have said, claims it is necessary for the 'good' politician to have many of the virtues, and that cities are saved not by orators, nor by politicians, but by good men, he is speaking correctly. It would be a fine thing, to be sure, if the politician had also practised in philosophy (φιλοσοφίαι χορεύσειεν),[65] that he might be still more vividly and energetically a good man (ἵνα καὶ νεανικώτερος[66] ἀγαθὸς ᾖ); and for this reason we Epicureans say that philosophy, both generally, when it accompanies a personal disposition for politics (πολειτικῇ διαθέσει),[67] and when it gives suggestions appropriate for political administration (τῇ πολειτικῇ διοικήσει), will make a sky-high difference for the better (διαφορὰν οὐρανομήκη ποήσει πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον).[68] But it cannot be excluded that (οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καί)[69] a person could become a 'good' orator and politician just by possessing great generosity and personal goodness and self-restraint and wisdom generally (ἐπιείκειαν καὶ χρηστότητα καὶ τὴν ἄλλην μετριοπαθίαν τε καὶ φρόνησιν) as these things are found in laymen (ὡς ἐν ἰδιώταις), out of his own nature combined with his habitual pursuits and the ready wit and presence of mind that follows necessarily upon these (ἔκ τε τῆς φύσεως καὶ τῆς ἀγωγῆς καὶ τῆς ἀκολούθου τούτοις ἀγχινοίας).[70]

Philodemus personifies *philosophy itself*, not philosophers, as aiding politicians practised in it – like some members of Philodemus' audience – to achieve 'sky-high' results, whose value to the state and one's 'friends' in the broadest sense is such as to outweigh the question of risk. Since whether the politician's own life is to be better or worse has already been discussed – it may prove to be either, 'as life itself witnesses' – what tips the scales in this case must be the difference such a person makes for

[64] Hammerstaedt: 'wenn jemand *gegen* das, was wir gesagt haben, einwendet', but cf. Vooys 1933–41: vol. II, s.v. προσβάλλων, where the word is rightly translated *adicio*.

[65] These politicians are φιλοσοφίαι χορεύσαντες, men trained in the 'mystic dance' of philosophy, as implied by the aorist tense; not full initiates, for which a perfect would be more suitable. Hammerstaedt (on col. 15,18–19) notes (p. 80) that χορεύω is also used at *Rhet*. 2 cols. 35b,20–24,263 Longo Auricchio, = vol. I, p. 141 Sudhaus: παιδε[ί]αι χορεύσαντες. Those with 'practice in education' are contrasted to the 'unlettered' or 'rustic' (ἀγράμματοι (Epicur. fr. 263 Us.) or ἄγροικοι (Hermarchus fr. 37 Longo Auricchio = 44 Krohn)).

[66] A Philodemean idiom, on which cf. *De dis* col. 12,3 with Diels 1917: 42 n. 1.

[67] Cf. Epicur. fr. 555 Us.

[68] The word translated as 'sky-high' comes from Epicurus (fr. 183 Us. = Plut. *Non posse* 1097E): 'you have given sky-high proofs (οὐρανομήκη σημεῖα) of your good will toward me'. Aristotle says (*Rh*. 1408b 11–20) that using words like οὐρανομήκης or πελώριος can signify either deep emotion or rhetorical irony.

[69] Οὐ μὴν ἀλλά, as Denniston 1950: 28 says, denotes 'that what is being said cannot be gainsaid, however strong the arguments to the contrary: marking, in fact, the deliberate surmounting of an obstacle recognized as considerable'. 'It cannot be gainsaid' that there may be a statesman who, despite being a layperson, is as good as a serious student of philosophy at producing excellent results on the basis of natural talents sharpened by practice and instinct.

[70] *Rhet*. 3 cols. 14a,19–16a,8 Hammerstaedt.

others.[71] Thus the uncertainty an Epicurean politician must feel about the quality of his own life as compared with that of the ἰδιῶται (which is itself purposely ambiguous between philosophical 'laypersons' and people who lead a private rather than public life in political terms) is balanced out by the 'great goods' he can hope to achieve by participating in politics, the 'sky-high difference' he can make with the aid of philosophy. In a parallel passage in Book 2, Philodemus foreshadows Book 3's conclusion by anticipating the possibility that a philosophical politician could outperform, perhaps by a great deal, all other politicians:

> Everyone who demands that the affairs [of the city] be put in his hands supposes that he himself [possesses completely] the research and exercise that takes place in assemblies and law courts – says Metrodorus – by practice of political experience. However, it cannot be gainsaid that it is perfectly evident (οὐ μὴν ἀλλά . . . ἐναργέστατόν ἐστιν) to everyone [in every way] that a philosophical and learned man (φιλόσοφος ἄνθρω[πος καὶ γ]ραμματικός) who is shrewd (ἀγχινοίαν ἔχων) and undertakes affairs at home for it[72] is sometimes very far superior to all others (πολὺ καὶ πάντων . . . δ[ιή]νεγκε).[73]

The strong verbal parallels with the end of *On Rhetoric* 3 (οὐ μὴν ἀλλά, διήνεγκε = διαφορά, and ἀγχίνοια), must mean that Metrodorus is also the ultimate source of that book's peroration.[74] Both passages are examples of what Syme would have called encouragement to a kind of political participation that avoids the 'fanatic'.[75] One must first calculate risks against possible rewards. But *if* that is done (an instance of Roskam's 'qualifying conditional'), it is permissible to go ahead and risk life and fortune for friends, including fellow citizens.

Roskam and Erler, among others, have considered whether this positive view, expressed briefly in *On Rhetoric* and at much greater length in *On the Good King according to Homer*, might be specifically intended for only a limited audience, namely, one comprised of Roman politicians.[76] Certainly, one could cite a good deal of Epicurean material from elsewhere that would seem to contradict Philodemus'

[71] Perhaps making a 'sky-high' difference for the better in politics was itself counted among the pleasures that Epicurus admitted belong to glory; see, e.g., fr. 559 Us.

[72] Cf. τῇ πολιτικῇ διοικήσει, above (*Rhet.* 3 col. 15,10–11 Hammerstaedt); see also LSJ s.v. διοίκησις in general.

[73] *Rhet.* 2 col. 34b,34–39, following the translation of Chandler (2006), with alterations.

[74] Cf. Sedley 1989: 108–9, 117.

[75] Syme 1939: 57, notes that Cassius 'was of the Epicurean persuasion and by no means a fanatic'.

[76] I agree with Erler (1992a: 195–8; 1992b: 315–17; and 1994: 319), against the doubts expressed in Roskam 2007: 111–12, 128–9.

'qualifying' views of the excellences of 'good' politicians.[77] But the views found in *On Rhetoric* 3's peroration seem to be Philodemus' own elaboration of the propositions he had already cited in Book 2 from the writings of Metrodorus. This fact complicates any attempt to dismiss them as merely concessions tailored specifically and exclusively to a contemporary Roman audience. Epicurus and his circle were clearly not without answers to the questions of practical politicians, or even rulers, interested in their school. As new questions and situations arose, the later Epicurean consultants of Roman Republican politicians presumably attempted to produce additional answers in the same spirit. Philodemus' viewpoint at the end of *Rhet*. 3 seems clear and unambiguous. So too is the final compliment there directed to grandees in the audience who might achieve the same stellar results on the basis of their own high character, even without philosophy's help. While Philodemus himself gives many arguments to deter his students from participation in the dirty and dangerous business of politics,[78] he nevertheless seems to have believed that for those with the requisite natural talents and resources, the 'sky-high' good one might do others justifies the not inconsiderable risk.

Committing oneself to Epicureanism would require any Roman politician to abandon not just Stoic and Platonic idealism but also crucial elements of the ancient governing class' male identity, including its traditional commitments to selfless virtue and the suppression of the emotions. Such a person's reward from the likes of Cicero and Plutarch was a kind of artful misrepresentation of his position, one that could be propagated without immediately being given the lie. It is encouraging that the relics of Herculaneum are little by little making it possible to redress the balance.

3 EPICUREAN FRIENDSHIP: HUMAN ORIGINS AND DIVINE ESSENCE

Cicero separates Torquatus' account of the virtues (= *Fin*. 1.43–54) from his account of friendship (= 1.65–9) by a fair-sized section on the pleasures of memory and philosophical knowledge (= 1.55–64). One of the unfortunate effects of this arrangement is to leave the impression that virtue and friendship are discrete topics, and that virtue is somehow less necessary for friendship than for pleasure. Neither the discussion of the virtues nor that of pleasure is echoed anywhere in the section devoted to friendship. The connections between these topics are in fact much tighter than Torquatus' exposition would lead one to believe.

[77] Cf. Roskam 2007: 101–29. [78] Ibid.: 103–29.

According to the *Letter to Menoeceus*, Epicurus explicitly maintained that the virtues, all of which have their ultimate source in wisdom (φρόνησις), are indispensable to the pleasant life, so that 'it is not possible to live pleasantly without living intelligently, nobly and justly' (φρονίμως καὶ καλῶς καὶ δικαίως), and vice versa.[79] Torquatus' own praise of the traditional virtues – wisdom, temperance, bravery and justice – is primarily limited to their role as aids to achieving both peace of mind and security. To have no vices that draw censure affords one at least a superficial 'safety from men' (ἀσφάλεια ἐξ ἀνθρώπων).[80] Folly, intemperance, cowardice and injustice all compromise one's safety by incurring others' hostility, and all imply insecurity with regard to pain and death as well as ignorance of what is truly valuable. No doubt these sentiments all stem ultimately from Epicurus' pen. But it strains credibility that the value of genuine virtues, such as those exhibited by Pansa in securing the goodwill of the governing class and the universal love of his countrymen, is completely exhausted by their contribution to self-protection. Cicero's failure to have Torquatus account for the role the virtues play in the formation of friendships, and as sources of positive pleasure, is a particularly notable, and regrettable, omission.

The gloss on the relevant passage from the *Letter to Menoeceus* contained in Philodemus' *[On Choices and Avoidances]* is more illuminating:

> [One cannot live pleasurably without living intelligently, nobly and becomingly],[81] and also bravely, temperately, generously (μεγαλοψύχως), in a way that makes friends (φιλοποητικῶς), with goodwill to mankind (φιλανθρώπως), and in general without all the other virtues existing in oneself; because the greatest errors in our choices and avoidances occur when people who think the opposite [i.e. that pleasure can be attained otherwise] and thus are in the grip of the vices act as they do.[82]

What Philodemus means by generosity, friend-making and universal goodwill is expanded upon at the end of the treatise, where he describes the old age of a virtuous Epicurean, free of the disturbances about death and money that plague his peers:

[79] *Ep. Men.* 132.

[80] On 'security from men' (ἀσφάλεια ἐξ ἀνθρώπων) as primarily dependent on others' goodwill and friendship, see Roskam 2007: 37–9. It is also perfectly good Epicurean usage to talk in similar contexts of avoiding 'harm from men' (βλαβαὶ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων); see DL 10.117 and, for a discussion, Armstrong 2008: 91–2.

[81] The preceding brackets indicate that the phrase in question is a supplement. While the sense seems virtually certain, among the bracketed words only 'without' is fully preserved in the surviving papyrus.

[82] *De elect.* col. 14,1–14 Indelli/Tsouna-McKirahan.

[H]e has no need of heaping up much money. He does as well for the present time as one might expect. Having fully understood which troubles are productive, he works rather more slackly, except when it is for the sake of friends (πλὴν διὰ φίλους), and, since he is jealous of his time more than anything else, only when it is necessary to him. He has never cast off from the mooring of philosophy from early childhood on; and with confidence that all . . . in his life (will go well?), however long it lasts, he shares, when what is necessary to him for living is put aside, all the rest . . . and because he does not cut off the expectation of a long life, he is always beginning new projects and making new friends (ἐνεργείας ἀεὶ καινὰς ἐνίσταται καὶ φιλο[π]οιίας), and pays attention to his property, as if he will go on taking care of it, and thinks of the events of his past life as if they may concern him in the future. He treats with great consideration as many other human beings as he possibly can (καὶ πολυωρεῖ τε τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὅσους δύναται πλείστους), and is thankful (εὐχαριστεῖ) to those that show friendly feelings to him, and has hopes of sharing things with them and receiving good things from them in his turn, though it isn't for that most of all . . . (*sc.* for any practical return) (that he makes these friendships).[83]

The circle of virtues that begins with wisdom expands to include the continual making of new friends, goodwill toward all without exception, and gratitude toward everyone who reciprocates that goodwill. Philodemus represents his ideal older Epicurean (in all likelihood a self-representation), like other older and retired people, as at last having the necessary leisure to devote time to such virtues. There is no hint that the 'friends' in question are limited to fellow Epicureans: one displays φιλανθρωπία universally and makes friends of all those who respond in kind.[84]

Epicurus repeatedly emphasizes that friendship among human beings originates in the need for mutual support and protection. The textual evidence is admittedly slim as to whether he shared Aristotle's belief that 'friendship is itself a virtue or entails virtue (ἀρετὴ ἢ μετ' ἀρετῆς)'.[85] *Vatican Sayings* 23, however, adds to the standard account of friendship's origins the claim that all friendship is either 'a virtue in and of itself' (ἀρετὴ δι'

[83] *De elect.* col. 21,2–22 Indelli/Tsouna-McKirahan. The translation provided is my own; Indelli and Tsouna-McKirahan leave untranslated the words at the end (= ll. 21–2), καίπερ | [οὐ] ταύ[τ]ῃ μάλ[ισ]τα προ[...]ε.

[84] My account here follows Obbink 1997: 279–81. On Philodemus' possible references to himself and his life history in *De morte* col. 38,3–12, cf. Armstrong 2004: 47 n. 50. I cannot agree with Brown 2009 that Epicurean friendship was reserved, even in principle, for other Epicureans, or that Epicurean politics was practised only to secure *Epicureans*' goodwill and safety. Many texts and evidence suggest otherwise. In addition to the works of Philodemus, one may point to, for example, the identification by Torquatus of expanding classes of fellow citizens (regardless of philosophical affiliation) in army life as 'family', 'friends' and 'fatherland' (*Fin.* 1.49); and to Atticus' extensive and devoted circle of 'friends' outside Epicureanism (for I assume Atticus was himself an Epicurean).

[85] Arist. *EN* 1155a4.

ἑαυτήν, as in the MS) or 'chosen for its own sake' (αἱρετὴ δι' ἑαυτήν, as in Usener's proposed correction). Either reading is significant, but here too consideration of a series of texts from Philodemus' works may help to decide the matter. For Philodemus, friendship in its ideal form transcends its beginnings as a response to our human needs and frailties. In fragment 28 of *On Frank Criticism*, he offers the following justification for an Epicurean student baring his personal problems to his teacher:

> We can show by reasons that as numerous and beautiful as are the things that come to us by friendship (φιλία), none is so great as having someone to whom one shall tell what is in one's heart and whom one shall hear speaking back. For very greatly does our nature desire (ὀρέγεται) to reveal to others what it is thinking.[86]

Here, then, is the primary motivation for friendship in its highest form: a reaching out (ὄρεξις) for shared self-expression common to all intelligent individuals.

Confirmation can be found in the lives of the Epicurean gods themselves. Although the gods are beyond any need for mutual support and defence, friendship stands at the heart of their life as described by Philodemus in *On the Gods* 3.[87] Their motivation for friendship derives solely from the pleasure it can provide them:

> So that even if association (συμφυλία) for [*sc*. the supply of] external needs to make them live together is not there, they share their affections[88] for it is not possible to hold together in association without any social intercourse at all (ἐπιμειξίας). And certainly even for us, the weak, who require friendship for external needs in addition, one has no needs in relation to friends he has lost . . . [and yet] *our feeling of wonder at their similar characters to our own . . . holds* [*us*] *together* [*in even*] *the highest affection*.[89] And such other needs as the gods have, they accept from each other, even though they can also acquire these things for themselves, as we

[86] I translate the text as given in Konstan et al. 1998.

[87] Holger Essler has kindly allowed me to see a working draft of his new edition of *De dis* 3. In my desire not to anticipate the appearance of his new text, I cite it here only in the first quotation, which has already appeared (together with Essler's own translation and commentary) in Essler 2009. The rest of the material to which I appeal is already fairly clear in Diels 1917. A renumbering of columns is to come, but in the interim I retain Diels' numeration. Naturally, my translations are also provisional, while we await the appearance of a full, final text from Essler.

[88] Or: 'share their feelings'.

[89] The italics indicate that the text here is uncertain. The original for the entire sentence is (tentatively) as follows: ἀμέλει δὲ κ(αὶ) ἐφ' ἡμῶν τῶν ἀσθενῶν, κ(αὶ) πρ(οσ)δεομένων πρὸς [τ]ὰ χρ[ει]ώδη τῆς φιλίας, οὐκέτι πρ(ὸς) τοὺς φίλου[ς ἀ]ποβληθέντας ἔχει χρείας [..... ἀλλ' α]ὐτὸς ὁ τ[ῶ]ν ἤ[θ]ῶν τῶν ὁμοίων [θ]αυμασμὸς ἐ[πὶ κ(αὶ)] τῆς ἄκρας οἰκειώσεως σ[υν]έχει. But the point may well be that the 'transmission of affections' toward friends endures even after death and is a pleasure independent of practical need even in mortals, who are weak and have such needs (as *KD* 1 makes clear, being in need is 'for the weak' (ἐν ἀσθενεῖ)).

ourselves sometimes do from those who have such things i.e. as we would like but do not need.[90]

Philodemus follows this up with a discussion of whether the gods can be properly called each other's 'friends' and 'benefactors':

However, one should not think each and all of the gods are friends, in the sense in which we are commonly said to be 'friends'. For it is not possible for [gods] infinite in number all to come to each others' knowledge. For which very reason, one could not truly call all [wise men?] 'friends' of those who are mortal and wise . . . [E.g., if a friend to the gods is someone showing respect] to the gods, and he reveres their nature and their character . . . and attempts to approximate it (συνεγγίζειν), and [so to speak] longs to touch it and associate with it (θιγεῖν [καὶ σ]υνεῖναι) let him call wise men friends of the gods, and the gods friends of the wise; but we are not likely, I suppose, to call such things friendship, so it is better to describe the facts themselves, and not force our opinions about them pointlessly. And therefore, that the gods do favours for each other, by somehow giving a share in certain things of their own as if to beings that are in need of them, is not to be accepted. For each of them is independently capable of providing himself with the most perfect pleasure.[91]

Besides restating the claim that friendship in the case of the gods does not originate in any need, this passage assumes that the gods' life is normative for that of wise human beings. The wise can 'assimilate' themselves to the gods in their own friendships. Just as the gods cannot individually befriend each and every one of the infinitely many other gods that exist, so too any given sage can be friends with only a relatively few of the many wise people in the world. For the rest they feel goodwill. Both feelings are pleasures.

The particular pleasure of conversation surfaces as a subject of discussion later. The passage in question, which rests directly on the authority of the Founders, famously concerns whether the gods breathe and speak:

One must believe with Hermarchus that the gods draw in breath and exhale it, for without this, again, we cannot conceive them as such living beings as we have already called them, as neither can one conceive of fish without need in addition of water, nor birds [without additional need] of wings for their flight through the air; for such [living beings] are not better conceived [as without need of their environment] . . . nor should one claim that there are either prose or metrical sounds unaccompanied by breathing in and out, as neither is there snow without whiteness nor fire without heat; and we must claim that the gods use both voice and conversation to one another; for we will not conceive them as the more happy or the more indissoluble, [Hermarchus] says, by their neither speaking, nor

[90] Fr. 87.13–19 and fr. 83.1–6; see Diels 1917: 5 for his translation.
[91] Frr. 84.15–20 and 84.26–85.7.

conversing with each other, but resembling human beings that cannot speak; for since we really do employ voice, all of us who are not disabled persons, it is even the height of foolishness that the gods should either be disabled, or not resemble us in this point, since neither men nor gods can create utterances in any other way. And particularly since for good men, the sharing of discourse with men like them showers down on them indescribable pleasure. And by Zeus one must suppose the gods possess the Hellenic language or one not far from it, and that their voices in expressing rationality are clearest . . . [92]

The contention, perhaps not entirely serious, that the gods speak Greek has achieved a certain notoriety. Much less cited is the undoubtedly serious contention that conversation with like-minded friends showers the wise with indescribable pleasure (ἄφατον ἡδονὴν καταχεούσης). Epicurus, in a letter written shortly before his death, assured his own friends that his happy memory of such conversations with them served as proof against his death pangs.[93]

These various passages seem to weigh in favour of reading *Vatican Sayings* 23 as claiming that friendship is 'choiceworthy in itself' rather than 'a virtue in itself'. Every virtue, according to Epicurus, is practised not for its own sake but as facultative to pleasure in one form or another. *Making* friends may be a virtue, but *having* friends is a pleasure. Even Torquatus' own account of friendship begins by attributing to Epicurus the claim that 'of all the things wisdom can provide for the happy life, nothing is greater, nothing richer, nothing more full of pleasure, than friendship' (*omnium rerum, quas ad beate vivendum sapientia comparaverit, nihil esse maius amiticia, nihil uberius, nihil iucundius*).[94] However, his ensuing discussion nowhere appeals either to the greatness or to the unique quality of friendship's pleasures. Fortunately, here too we find a corrective in the writings of Philodemus.

In the end, the actual texts offer us only a little of the 'divine' and 'mysterious' side of friendship and happiness. Epicurus' 'truly god-revealing mysteries' (ὡς ἀληθῶς θεοφάντα ὄργια) turn out to be like the mystic initiations of pagan religion: 'locative' rather than 'utopian' revelations, placing and stabilizing initiates in the hard work of politics and warfare if that is what they choose, and in the reciprocal obligations of ordinary human friendship. For human beings, unlike the gods, 'tough instrumentalism' and risk-taking are sometimes the only available means to security and pleasure.

[92] Cols. 13,20–25 and 13,33–14.4. [93] So rightly Brown 2009: 184–5. [94] *Fin.* 1.65.

CHAPTER 7

Cicero's use and abuse of Epicurean theology

Holger Essler

The identity of the sources Cicero employed in writing his *De natura deorum* (hereafter *ND*) has been much debated.[1] With regard to the first book's account of Epicurean doctrine in particular, attention has naturally turned to the remains of the Epicurean library found at Herculaneum's Villa dei Papiri.[2] Many of the specifically theological works discovered among these remains have yet to receive a proper modern edition. In the case of their more poorly conserved passages, prudence dictates awaiting more securely established texts. But these same works also contain a good deal of material that may already be referred to with confidence, and which promises to shed new light on, among other things, Cicero's sources for *ND* 1.

The most extensive theological treatises to have survived at Herculaneum are by Philodemus of Gadara.[3] The best known of these, thanks in large part to the recent work of D. Obbink, is the treatise *On Piety* (*De pietate*).[4] Thematic correspondences between this work and the doxographical account in Cicero's *ND* 1 (= 1.18–41) had already been noted

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[1] For an overview, see Dyck 2003: 7–11; Pease 1955–8: vol. 1, pp. 39–45. In what follows, translations of Cicero and Lucretius closely follow, with some alterations, those in Rackham 1933 and Rouse (as revised by M. Smith) 1992 respectively. Quotations from Philodemus' *On the Gods* 3 are based on a personal autopsy of the papyrus done for an edition of the entire work that I am currently preparing. Letters with boldface come from parts of the papyrus that were separated during the process of unrolling, but whose original position can be reconstructed.

[2] The question of whether a copy of one of Cicero's sources for writing *ND* may have been among the works preserved in Herculaneum seems to have been first discussed in Krische 1840: 29–31.

[3] A work by Demetrius Laco on the gods' form is preserved in *PHerc.* 1055. Both the author and title are conjectural; see the discussion in Santoro 2000: 23–8.

[4] Obbink 1996 offers a newly edited text of, and commentary on, the first part of *On Piety*, which is contained in *PHerc.* 1098, 1077, 1093, 229, 1610, 437, 452, 242 and 247; see pp. 88–99 for his discussion of the treatise's title and authorship. Obbink's (forthcoming) edition of the remainder of the treatise – contained in *PHerc.* 1088, 1114, 433, 1788, 1609, 1648, 1692, 1602, 1815, 243, 248 and 1428 – is eagerly anticipated.

by some of the earliest scholars to work on Philodemus' treatise. Diels' monumental *Doxographi Graeci* printed relevant fragments from *On Piety* side by side with Cicero's text.[5] Subsequent investigation of the relationship between the two works has proven fruitful both for the reconstruction of Philodemus' *On Piety* and for the understanding of Cicero's working method.[6]

Rather than revisit this relatively well-explored terrain, I propose in this chapter to look at the parts of *ND* 1 that are *not* closely paralleled in *On Piety*, and to compare these with the remains of Philodemus' other, major theological work preserved among the Herculaneum papyri, *On the Gods* (*De dis*). Only parts of the first and third books of this latter treatise survive.[7] In the early twentieth century, Diels produced separately what remain the latest published editions of each book, for which he consulted neither the papyri themselves nor the original apographs produced shortly after the papyri had been unrolled.[8] A survey of Diels' accompanying commentary leaves the impression that any thematic overlap between *ND* 1 and *On the Gods* is slight in comparison with that between Cicero's work and *On Piety*. References to Cicero in Diels' edition of Book 1 are virtually non-existent, while those in his edition of Book 3 are few and far between. It is my contention, however, that both the extent and significance of the correspondence between parts of *ND* 1 and Philodemus' *On the Gods* have yet to be fully appreciated.

The account of Epicurean theology in *ND* takes up only fourteen paragraphs (1.43–56), the last five of which also engage in polemics directed against the Stoics. The space devoted to actually expounding Epicurean doctrine thus accounts for less than 10 per cent of the first book as a whole.[9] Before turning to an account of the school's own positive doctrines, Velleius, Cicero's Epicurean spokesman, begins with a refutation of what he claims to be the two principal theological errors committed by Plato and the Stoics respectively (1.18–24). These errors consist in the assumptions that god is

[5] Diels 1879: 529–50.

[6] Cf. McKirahan 1996. Various reasons have been suggested to explain parallels in the two treatises: personal contact between their respective authors; the use of one's written work as a source by the other; or the use by both of another, common source – see esp. Auvray-Assayas 1992: 52; and Asmis 1984. For a general discussion of Cicero's attitude toward the various Epicurean movements in Italy during his own lifetime, see also Maslowski 1978.

[7] Book 1 is preserved in *PHerc.* 26, Book 3 in *PHerc.* 152/157.

[8] Diels 1916 and Diels 1917 represent his editions of Books 1 and 3 respectively. Diels based his text on copies of the Oxford disegni originally made by the Rev. J. J. Cohen for use by T. Gomperz, the facsimiles published earlier in the *Collectio Altera* (in the case of Book 1) and *Collectio Prior* (Book 3), and the reports and collation contained in W. Scott 1885.

[9] For a general outline of *ND* 1, see Rouse 1992: xiii–xiv.

the creator of the universe (*opifex et aedificator mundi*) and that the world itself – a revolving, fiery sphere endowed with both sense-perception and mind – is a god. Parallels in Aëtius (1.7.1–8) and Lucretius (5.110–234) to both the structure and content of Velleius' detailed criticisms have been well documented by previous commentators.[10] By contrast, any correspondences with Philodemus' *On the Gods* 3 have gone largely undetected or without comment.

Given the relative obscurity of Philodemus' *On the Gods*, it seems desirable to begin with an overview of its contents. In the last of the surviving fragments, where it has been possible to reconstruct the original columns,[11] the discussion focuses on 'particular virtues' (αἱ εἰδικώτεραι ἀρεταί; fr. 82.3–4). That we are here dealing with the final lines of a section concerning the compatibility of various virtues with the divine is strongly suggested both by references in earlier fragments to examples of such virtues, including courage (fr. 74) and 'sympotic' and 'erotic' virtue (fr. 76), and by Philodemus' use of the perfect tense (δεδειγμένου; fr. 82.3) in claiming to have proved his point generally. Philodemus turns next to friendship (frr. 83–6, cols. 1–3). Having friends is considered a necessary condition of human happiness, but the gods' self-sufficiency entails that they are not dependent upon friendship for their own happiness.[12] Nevertheless, Philodemus informs us, the gods are friends to one another, even if their friendship, unlike that of human beings, does not originate in reciprocal aid. Elsewhere in the treatise (cols. 13,36–14,6) we learn that the gods enjoy mutual conversation of the kind engaged in by Epicurean sages. Despite this similarity, and the admission that the sage's relationship to the gods is somehow special, Philodemus rules out the possibility of friendship proper between humans and gods. From friendship, Philodemus moves to the subject of divine knowledge, broadly construed. He begins with a discussion of divination (μαντική; col. 4) and its implications for divine omniscience (col. 5). Following roughly ten lines of text (= col. 6,11–20), for which the extremely fragmentary state of the surviving papyrus precludes

[10] Cf. Philippson 1939: 18–20; and Runia 1996: 568–9. An extensive treatment of the passage in *DRN* 5 can be found in Schmidt 1990: 162–212, of which the last three pages are dedicated to a comparison of Lucretius' texts with the relevant passages from Aëtius and Cicero.

[11] I follow here the ordering of the fragments as found in W. Scott 1885, which builds upon Scotti 1839. My own recent autopsy of the papyrus confirms that Scott's proposal for ordering frr. 82–9 and col. 1–15 of Book 3 is correct in its essentials; whatever discrepancies do exist are minor and may be ignored for present purposes. (Scott's ordering of the fragments numbered 1–81, which do not figure in the present discussion, is more problematic.)

[12] Aristotle discusses friendship as a necessary condition for happiness in *EN* 1169b3–1170b19. Among the Stoics, Panaitius similarly regards it as such; see Steinmetz 1967.

any confident characterization, we find an argument about desire (col. 6 [sovrapposto],21(?) –7,18) that may have been directed more specifically at the question of whether the gods are capable of desiring any object they know to be bad. The section concludes by linking divine omniscience to omnipotence in a discussion concerning the possibility of the gods knowing or doing anything that is *ex hypothesi* impossible (cols. 7,19–8,5). Philodemus concludes this discussion by illustrating his opponents' method with a direct quotation from Chrysippus.

The next section of the treatise begins with remarks about the habitations of the Epicurean gods, a subject to which I shall later return in greater detail. Within this context, Philodemus also avails himself of the opportunity to correct certain misapprehensions about so-called 'star gods'[13] (cols. 8,5–10,6). There follow somewhat tangential remarks on motion and rest (cols. 10,6–11,40), in which Philodemus, while conceding that all living beings are necessarily in motion, asserts that the perpetual revolution of celestial bodies is a form of motion incompatible with perfect happiness. After this excursus into the celestial spheres, Philodemus turns to a discussion of the gods' distinctive lifestyle. He first discusses their sleep, or at least sleep-like rest (cols. 11,40–13,20), then moves on to the ways in which they respire, speak and engage in conversation (cols. 13,20–14,18). With that, he claims to have covered the subject sufficiently and dismisses further speculation as idle. Given that nature clearly provides everything the gods need to be happy, there is no point, he claims, in investigating every tedious detail of their existence (cols. 14,18–15,11). Nevertheless, he reiterates, one can be sure that they have better things to do with their time than to travel and revolve endlessly through space in the manner of Plato's imagined divinities.

So much for summary. We may now turn our attention back to certain particularly salient details of the work. First is Philodemus' quotation of Chrysippus at the end of the passage concerning omniscience and omnipotence (= cols. 7,19–8,5). Philodemus' purpose in quoting Chrysippus on the subject of omnipotence is to illustrate the tendency of non-Epicurean philosophers to predicate properties of the gods that are incompatible with the very notion of the divine. In the lines immediately preceding the quotation, Philodemus counters a claim, the details of which are now lost in a lacuna, with the following *reductio*: 'if he were able to do that, he would

[13] The passage has been much disputed; see Woodward 1989: 29 n. 2, for a relevant bibliography. Obbink 1996: 236–8, advances an idealist interpretation; a new edition and interpretation is offered in Essler 2009.

also somehow have the power to make it so that all men were wise and happy and no evil existed'.[14]

Cicero has Velleius employ a version of this same argument in the latter's own denials of the world's creation by a divine *opifex* and of its being governed by divine providence. The world cannot have been created for the sake of human beings, Velleius argues, because the fools who comprise the majority of humanity would not merit such an effort, and there are too few sages to justify it. In addition, the world as we know it presents human beings with such hardships that everyone but the select few in possession of wisdom, lead lives that are in fact miserable.[15] Velleius' describes the actual state of human affairs in terms that are precisely the opposite of how Philodemus claims it should be, were his opponents' claims correct. It therefore seems reasonable to infer that Philodemus' specific target was likewise Stoic assertions of divine providence. This inference gains further support from the juxtaposition of the direct quotation from Chrysippus in the lines immediately following. As regards a possible direct link between Philodemus and Cicero, it is also noteworthy that the distinction between sages and fools is *not* present in the otherwise corresponding passage found in Lucretius (= 5.195–234).

A discussion of divine providence at this point in *On the Gods* 3 is also well situated between Philodemus' preceding treatment of divination and his subsequent remarks on the subjects of the gods' abodes and the existence of so-called 'star gods' (cols. 8,11–10,6). Philodemus follows the Epicurean school's founders in arguing that the gods cannot reside in the midst of the stars' revolutions but must be far removed from our world.[16] His denial of any suitable place for gods in our own world might even be seen as the basis for an a fortiori argument against the identification of god with the world itself, the point that Velleius takes up next in *ND*.[17] Philodemus' concern to refute the existence of star gods remains an underlying current in his discussion of the gods' movement (cols. 10,6–11,42), which begins with the following assertion: 'It should not be thought that they [i.e., the gods] have no other occupation than travelling endlessly through infinity . . . ,

[14] *De dis* 3, col. 7,29–31: εἰ καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἐ[δύ]|νατο, τὴν δύναμ[ιν ἂν εἶχέ π]ως κ(αὶ) τοῦ πάντας | ποιῆσαι σοφοὺς κ(αὶ) μακαρίους κ(αὶ) μηδὲν κακόν.

[15] *ND* 1.23.

[16] *De dis* 3, col. 9,22–3.: οὐ γ(ὰρ) ἀχωριστεῖν κ(αὶ) συμπεριπολεῖν | τοῖς ἄστροις ὑπολη[π]τέον τοὺς θεούς ('for one must not suppose that the gods are inseparable and revolve together with the stars'); col. 9,40–2: τῶν [γ]ὰρ κατ᾽ ἄλ|ληλα πιπτόντ(ων) ἐμποδιστικῶν μακρὰ[ν] δεῖ ποι|εῖν ('for we must make them out to be far from the hindering factors that clash against each other').

[17] *ND* 1.23–4.

since anyone who spends his entire life revolving is not happy.'[18] That the gods' activities are not restricted to the eternal and repetitive motions of the heavenly bodies provides one more reason for rejecting the ascription of divinity to any of these bodies.

Velleius for his part adduces similar considerations at two different, and prominent,[19] points in *ND*. Near the beginning of his speech, Velleius briefly disparages the notion of a spherically shaped god in the following terms: 'Thus I ask what kind of life there is for that round god? That he revolves around with such speed that cannot even be conceived? I cannot see where in this a clear mind and happy life might have a place.'[20] At the very end of his speech, following the doxography and the positive account of Epicurean doctrine, Velleius once again sets his sights on his original opponents. In contrasting the Epicurean view concerning the gods' way of life with the views held by his opponents, Velleius directly addresses his remarks to Q. Lucilius Balbus, *ND*'s Stoic spokesman,[21] thereby removing any doubt as to the identity of these opponents as the Stoics.[22] Whereas the Epicurean gods are genuinely blessed and immortal, the Stoic god is just the opposite: 'This is the god whom we should call happy in the proper sense of the term; your Stoic god seems to us to be grievously overworked. If the world itself is god, what can be less restful than to revolve at incredible speed round the axis of the heavens without a single moment of respite? But repose is an essential condition of happiness.'[23]

There are also other interesting connections to be made between these passages in Philodemus and Cicero respectively. In his initial remarks, Velleius had first brought forward a number of objections directed against Plato (*ND* 1.19–20) but offered only the most cursory of comments on Stoic *pronoia*: 'While as for your Stoic Providence, Lucilius, if it is the same thing as Plato's creator, I repeat my previous questions, . . . If on the contrary it

[18] *De dis* 3, col. 10, 7–11 οὔτε γὰρ οἰητέον ἔργον | μηθὲν ἕτερον ἔχειν αὐτοὺς ἢ διὰ τῆς ἀπειρί|ας αἰωνοδεύ[ε]ιν (. . .) ο[ὐ γὰρ] εὐτυχὴς ὁ [ῥυ]μβονώμ[ε]νος ἅπαν|[τα] τὸν βίον. I take αἰωνοδεύ[ε]ιν as a purposefully coined neologism, modelled after the likes of ἡμεροδρόμος, νυκτεγερτέω and νυκτιπλοέω. This seems preferable to the division αἰῶν' ὁδεύ[ε]ιν, which leaves the temporal accusative without the usual definite article. In any case, the clear target is the kind of position endorsed in, e.g., Pl. *Tim.* 37d.

[19] Krische 1840: 22, already noted the connection between these two passages in terms not only of their content but also their placement.

[20] *ND* 1.24.

[21] On the characters and setting of *ND*, see Dyck 2003: 5–6; and Pease 1955–8: vol. 1, pp. 24–9.

[22] *ND* 1.51.

[23] *ND* 1.52. If the supplement αἰωνοδεύ[ε]ιν in the corresponding passage in Philodemus (= see note 19 of this chapter) is correct, Philodemus too is addressing not only the peregrinations of individual heavenly bodies but also the restless movement of the world as a whole.

is something different, I ask why it made the world mortal, and not everlasting as did Plato's divine creator?'[24] In what follows, Velleius targets shared elements of the Platonic and Stoic views, leaving this section of the text without any argument addressed specifically to the Stoic conception of divine providence. We do, however, find such an argument at the end of Velleius' speech, as part of his *peroratio* against the Stoics: 'Who would not fear a prying busybody of a god, who foresees, thinks about, and notices all things, and believes that everything concerns him?'[25] The points raised here, which centre on god's knowledge of and active involvement with the world, mirror Philodemus concerns in *On the Gods* 3, cols. 4,20–8,5. At col. 7,19–21, for example, Philodemus counters claims of divine omniscience by offering an example of something putatively unknowable, in this case, the exact number of waves there have been since the time of Deucalion.[26] Earlier in the same column, Philodemus affirms the gods' complete lack of interest in matters alien to their own divine nature.[27] This claim is of particular relevance for the aspect of divine omniscience that, as Velleius' formulation suggests, most concerned the Epicureans: the gods' interest in specifically human affairs and actions. If nothing associated with human nature is of concern to the gods, no person need fear that they will take note of his personal shortcomings or misdeeds.

The final argument Velleius directs against the Stoics concerns their doctrine of necessity and fate: 'This is where, first, this fatal necessity of yours comes from, which you call εἱμαρμένη, so as to claim that whatever happens flows from eternal truth and forms an endless and continuous chain of causes. But how much is this philosophy worth, to which everything seems, as it does to old women – and silly old women at that – to come about by fate? And then, there is your doctrine of divination (μαντική) . . .'[28] With these remarks, Velleius comes full circle to the critique of providence with which he began his speech back at *ND* 1.18. He again calls attention to a practical consequence of the relevant Stoic doctrine. Stoic defences of divination are closely tied to their views on fate and necessity. The Epicureans were in turn vocal critics both of divination as an art and of the doctrines used by the Stoics to provide theoretical support for it. Here too we may

[24] *ND* 1.20. [25] *ND* 1.54.

[26] The use of such examples is a common ancient trope in combating claims of divine omniscience. In his commentary on this passage, Diels references Alexander of Aphrodisias' own example of measuring the infinite (*Fato* 201.10); see Diels 1917: 19–21, cf. Porph. *C. Chr.* fr. 94; Plin. *NH* 2.27.

[27] *De dis* 3, col. 7,6–7: [τ]ῷ̣ τῇι φύσει μαχομένων οὐ|δενὸς οὔ̣τε βο̣ύ̣λησιν οὔτ᾽ ὄρεξιν ἔχει ('He has neither desire nor propensity for things that are against his nature').

[28] *ND* 1.55.

detect a connection between *ND* and *On the Gods* 3. Divination is one of the three specific topics of discussion in the sections immediately preceding column 7,[29] and the direct quotation from Chrysippus in column 7 itself (= col. 7,34) is from a work entitled *On Divination* (Περὶ μαντικῆς).

Of course, these connections – the common focus on providence and cosmological concerns, the shared arguments and opponents – are neither as overt nor as unequivocal as those between the doxography section of *ND* 1 and Philodemus' *On Piety*.[30] Nevertheless, careful comparison between Velleius' speech and *On the Gods* 3 is particularly helpful in identifying the red thread running through what might otherwise seem a confused jumble of disparate topics in Philodemus' treatise. Consider the words with which Philodemus transitions to his discussion of the gods' dwelling places: 'Let that suffice (*sc.* on this topic) as well as the two [*sc.* other] topics set out, even if some might think their analysis would be more suitably dealt with in a[31] continuous treatise – because they are all somehow connected to the current addition.'[32] The three topics in question had already been correctly identified by A. A. Scotti, the first editor of *On the Gods* 3, as divination and the extent of the gods' knowledge and power respectively.[33] Subsequent discussion to date has focused almost exclusively on the question of whether these three topics were themselves the 'current addition' (πρόσθεσις, *supplementum*), as Diels supposed,[34] or this addition should be identified with everything following the section that runs through column 3 concerning friendship, as Wigodsky favours.[35] No one, however, has yet explained what Philodemus means by his claim that the relevant topics are 'somehow connected'. The connection, I suggest, is the same that gives sense and structure to Velleius' discussion of cosmology in *ND* 1.

As a further test of this claim, we may examine whether similar parallels can be detected in the case of the topic that Philodemus addresses immediately following the section on the gods' motion. Philodemus' introduction of this new topic, which is marked in the papyrus by a *coronis* at col. 11,40, is abrupt: 'Now let us consider whether one should suppose that the gods fall asleep.' Such a question about the gods' way of life comes as something of a surprise after more than 150 consecutive lines of

[29] Diels 1917: 20. [30] Cf. note 6 of this chapter, p. 130.

[31] I take the definite article (τοῦ) in a generalizing sense. The alternative, taking it to refer to *On the Gods* itself ('*this* continuous treatise'), seems precluded by the context.

[32] *De dis* 3, col. 8,5–9: τοῦτο μὲν οὖν, τάχα δὲ | κ(αὶ) τὰ προκείμενα δύο σκέμματα – εἰ κ(αί) τισιν δόξει | τοῦ συνεχοῦς ὑπομνήματος οἰκειοτέραν ἔχειν | τὴν διάληψιν – ὡκονομήσθω{ι} διὰ τ[ὸ] κ(αὶ) τῆι νῦν | προ ʽσ′θέ[σ]ε[ι] πως συνῆφθαι.

[33] Scotti 1839 *ad loc.* [34] Diels 1917: 21–2. [35] Wigodsky 2004: 225 n. 6.

ruminations on cosmology. One might attempt to mitigate the apparently abrupt transition by linking sleep to rest, i.e., that which is opposed to motion.[36] There is, however, an even more direct connection to be made between sleep and cosmology. Velleius again points the way with the first of his arguments directed against both Platonic and Stoic conceptions of creation: 'Moreover I would put to both of you the question, why did these deities suddenly awake into activity as world-builders, while having slept for countless centuries?'[37] Even more illuminating is a corresponding passage in Aëtius. Philippson had already made the connection between the passages in Cicero and Aëtius, noting not only several parallels in their content but also a strong resemblance in the structure and order of their arguments.[38] For example, both Cicero (*ND* 1.18–24) and Aëtius (1.7.4–8) address their respective opponents first separately, then jointly (*ND* 1.21 *ab utroque autem sciscitor*, Aët. 1.7.7 κοινῶς οὖν ἁμαρτάνουσιν ἀμφότεροι). Aëtius himself offers two distinct arguments against a divine creator, of which I quote here the second: 'Both of them err equally, in assuming that god takes care of human affairs or even arranged the cosmos for that reason. . . . And again the god of whom they speak either did not exist during the preceding eternity, when matter was without motion or moved without order, or he was sleeping or awake. But the first cannot be accepted, since god is eternal. Nor can the second be accepted: if god had been asleep for eternity, he would have been dead, since death is eternal sleep.'[39]

There is already some slight thematic correspondence between the first of the options described by Aëtius and the discussion of motion in *On the Gods* 3 that precedes Philodemus' discussion of divine sleep. The correspondence is, however, much more pronounced in the case of Aëtius' second option. Like Velleius, Aëtius introduces the possibility of god being asleep. But whereas Velleius adds additional questions concerning the possibility of measuring time prior to the onset of the creative process, as well as whether god should be conceived of as either idle or attempting to avoid fatigue, etc.

[36] There is, of course, a longstanding debate in antiquity as to whether a wise man retains his identity while asleep; see SVF 3.229a; DL 10.121, 135; *PHerc.* 346, fr. 3 and col. 7; and Bignone 1936: 120–3.

[37] *ND* 1.21.

[38] Philippson believed the passage in Aëtius to be Epicurean in origin and refers it ultimately, together with the corresponding account in Lucretius (= 5.110–234), to the twelfth book of Epicurus' *On Nature*; see Philippson 1939: 18–20 (cf. also Sedley 1998a: 136, which argues for *Nat.* 11 rather than *Nat.* 12 as the source). Effe 1970: 23–5, posits an Aristotelian origin, but cf. Runia 1996: 568–9.

[39] Aet. 1.7.8: κοινῶς οὖν ἁμαρτάνουσιν ἀμφότεροι, ὅτι τὸν θεὸν ἐποίησαν ἐπιστρεφόμενον τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἢ καὶ τούτου χάριν τὸν κόσμον κατασκευάζοντα· . . . καὶ πάλιν ὁ θεὸς ὃν λέγουσιν ἤτοι τὸν ἔμπροσθεν αἰῶνα οὐκ ἦν, ὅτ' ἦν ἀκίνητα τὰ σώματα ἢ ἀτάκτως ἐκινεῖτο, ἢ ἐκοιμᾶτο ἢ ἐγρηγόρει ἢ οὐδέτερον τούτων. καὶ οὔτε τὸ πρῶτον ἔστι δέξασθαι, ὁ γὰρ θεὸς αἰώνιος· οὔτε τὸ δεύτερον, εἰ γὰρ ἐκοιμᾶτο ἐξ αἰῶνος ὁ θεός, ἐτεθνήκει· αἰώνιος γὰρ ὕπνος ὁ θάνατός ἐστιν.

(*ND* 1.21–2); Aëtius puts forward an argument that manages to seem more purely Epicurean in its concise appeal to the notion or concept of god. Making use of the traditional pairing of death with (eternal) slumber,[40] he equates god's being continually asleep prior to creation with his being dead. Such a possibility is of course incompatible with the notion of god's immortality. But rather than stop there, Aëtius develops the point further, and more radically, by asserting that even the possibility of sleep is foreign to god's nature: 'But god is not even capable of sleep, because his immortal nature and what is close to death are far removed from each other.'[41]

If Philippson is right in positing an Epicurean source for Aëtius here, we would reasonably expect Philodemus to align with the unambiguous proclamation that god is not even capable of sleep (οὐδὲ δεκτικὸς ὕπνου θεός). In fact, Philodemus begins his answer to the relevant question ('whether one should suppose that the gods fall asleep') along lines that mirror the argument in Aëtius: 'At first sight it seems inappropriate, because in these kinds of circumstances there is a violent change in living beings and one that bears close resemblance to death.'[42] He shows understandable caution in dealing with an argument that had long been employed by the Epicureans against opponents of the school, and which he accordingly does not wish to undermine. In the end, after a subtle discussion of relevant details, he reluctantly concedes to the gods at most something analogous to rest (col. 13,19). Although Philodemus' own focus is theological, the strong parallels with Cicero and Aëtius suggest that cosmological questions are at least implicit in Philodemus' discussion, and that he is aware of the cosmological implications of granting to the gods any form of sleep. Once again, resemblances with Cicero's *ND* are instrumental in helping us to reconstruct the larger framework within which Philodemus is working. Here, as elsewhere, Philodemus' own presentation seems to take much for granted. Cicero's *ND* in particular helps us to make sense not only of the sequence of topics Philodemus follows in *On the Gods* 3 but also of his frequently abbreviated and highly technical exposition.

Let us now turn around and ask what we can learn from Philodemus about Cicero's *ND* 1. Most efforts in this regard have focused on applying the concept of μετάβασις ('inference from analogy') from Philodemus' *On*

[40] See, e.g., Lucr. 3.921–30 (cf. 1.133 *somnoque sepultis*). Reinhardt 2004: 33, lists additional examples.

[41] Aet. 1.7.8: ἀλλ' οὐδὲ δεκτικὸς ὕπνου θεός, τὸ γὰρ ἀθάνατον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ ἐγγὺς θανάτου πολὺ κεχώρισται.

[42] Phld. *De dis* 3, col. 12,2–5: ἄτοπον μὲγ γὰρ ᾔναι δοκεῖ προ|χείρως διὰ τὸ μετακόσμησιν νεανικὴν ἐν ταῖς | τοιαύταις καταστάσεσι γίνεσθαι περὶ τὰ ζῷ|α κ(αὶ) πολλὴν ἔχουσαν θανάτωι πρ(οσ)εμφέρειαν.

Signs (*De signis*) or that of ὑπέρβασις ('passing over' or 'transcendence') from his *On the Gods* 3 in order to interpret the highly disputed passage regarding transition and similarity (*similitudine et transitione*) in *ND* 1.49.[43] Neither approach has to date met with general acceptance, and I shall set the issue aside here so as to avoid the surrounding controversies. K. Sanders has also recently made use of fragments from *On the Gods* 3 to explicate the meaning of Velleius' claim that the form possessed by the gods is *quasi corpus* (*ND* 1.49; cf. Cotta's rejection of the claim at 1.69–75).[44] As Sanders correctly notes, however, the fragments in question contain direct quotations from Epicurus, which complicates any attempt to draw conclusions from them about the relationship between Cicero and Philodemus himself, as opposed to Epicurus or his writings. The same holds true for the large section of *ND* devoted to Cotta's claim that the Epicurean conception of divinity is incompatible with Epicurean physics (= 1.65–75).

There is, however, another large section of Cotta's speech that does commend itself: his treatment of anthropomorphism. In refuting the proofs offered by Velleius (*ND* 1.46–7), Cotta expands his critique to include a number of objections and counter-arguments against inference from analogy generally (1.87–98). The thematic correspondences between arguments in Cotta's refutation and the objections by the opponents in Philodemus' *On Signs* are already well known. In both works the argumentation exhibits similar structure and method. Since Cotta is portrayed as an Academic, E. Asmis has suggested similarly identifying Philodemus' opponents in *On Signs* as Academics.[45] If this is correct, we again have an instance of Cicero's text helping us to understand Philodemus. But C. Auvray-Assayas' recent analysis of these same passages shows that the reverse may also be true. Only by utilizing the testimony offered by Philodemus' work *On Signs* is Auvray-Assayas able to support her conclusion that the arguments Cicero has Cotta put forward against Epicurean theology are well informed about technical details of Epicurean 'Canonic'.[46]

Let us have a closer look at the structure of this section of Cotta's speech. Cotta's attack on Epicurean anthropomorphism is itself much longer than

[43] For the use of *On Sign*'s concept of μετάβασις, see Philippson 1916b and 1918; cf. also Lemke 1973: 44–7, 70–3. Diels 1917: 27–8, was the first to see here an application of *On the Gods*' concept of ὑπέρβασις. Purinton 2001: 184–7 and 203–9, represents the most recent such attempt.

[44] The fragments in question are numbers 6 and 8 in Diels' edition; see Sanders 2004. G. Arrighetti had earlier suggested the attribution of a qualified form of sleep (ποιὸς ὕπνος, col. 13,1) to the gods, a *quasi somnus*, as itself a further development of the theory of *quasi corpus*; see Arrighetti 1961: 121; cf. Longo Auricchio 1988: 128–37.

[45] Asmis 1996: 174–6; cf. Asmis 1984: 198–9.

[46] Auvray-Assayas 1992: 62.

the positive account by Velleuis to which it responds, and, as previously noted, includes general objections and remarks in addition to specific responses to Velleius' own arguments. In order to prove that the gods' form is like our own, Velleius had adduced three distinct arguments. The first was an appeal to the *consensus omnium*, a principle of which he had previously made extensive use in proving that the gods exist.[47] From the putative fact that no one has ever experienced a god in any form other than human, Velleius concludes that no differently shaped gods in fact exist (*ND* 1.46). Cotta first objects by pointing to unique objects or events of which we have no direct experience, such as the sun, moon and the movement of planets, but whose existence is nevertheless beyond doubt. He then proceeds to express doubts about the reliability of Velleius' claims concerning inference from *consensus* generally. It would be impossible to conduct a complete survey of all living things on earth, claims Cotta, but to deny the existence of some of them for that reason is absurd, just as it would be for people raised in a landlocked location to deny the existence of the sea only because they had never seen it for themselves (*ND* 1.87–8). The opponents described in *On Signs* display a similar methodology. For example, they dispute the inference from the fact that something does not exist within our experience to the claim that it does not exist anywhere (col. 1,9–11); they bolster their case with references to unique objects (μοναχά) such as the magnet stone and the square number four (cols. 1,9–2,3); and they likewise deny the possibility of a comprehensive survey of all phenomena (col. 19,12–19).[48] Regardless of whether one harbours doubts about the genuine Epicurean pedigree of Velleius' arguments[49] or wishes to follow Auvray-Assayas in concluding that Cotta's charge is directed against the foundations of Epicurean semiotics as laid down already by Epicurus himself,[50] it seems undeniable that Cicero or his source is well informed regarding anti-Epicurean critiques found in, among other possible sources, one of Philodemus' works.

I pass over Velleius' second argument, in which he infers the gods' anthropomorphism from their perfection and beauty, and which has no direct parallel in Philodemus,[51] and turn instead to the third. This argument

[47] Cf. the detailed discussion of this passage in ch. 3 by D. Sedley in this volume, pp. 33–6.

[48] The magnet stone is also treated by Lucretius at 6.906–1055.

[49] As does Kleve 1978: 74.

[50] Auvray-Assayas 1992: 54.

[51] Doubts have been raised regarding the Epicurean pedigree of this argument as well; see, e.g., Kleve 1978: 71–4. Earlier scholars took the arguments to be genuine; see, e.g., Diano 1942: 39–40; DeWitt 1954: 295; and Farrington 1967: 117. There are Epicurean texts that seem to employ the gods' beauty as part of an argument; see, e.g., Lucr. 5.1170; Phld. *Piet.* col. 10,9–16 (Schober 1988: 84). Runia 1996: 562, points out both resemblances and differences between Plato's argument for the shape of the cosmos and Velleius' argument for anthropomorphism.

takes as its starting point the assumption that virtue is a necessary condition for perfect happiness, possession of which figures in the very concept of the gods. Virtue in turn presupposes reason, and reason is found only in things with human form. Accordingly, the gods must have human form in order to enjoy perfect happiness (*ND* 1.48). Cotta objects to the apparent arbitrariness involved in Velleius' choice of shared properties: 'In fact, Velleius, if once we embark on this line of argument, see how far it takes us. You claimed that reason can only exist in human form, but someone else will claim that it can only exist in a terrestrial creature, in one that has been born, has grown up, has been educated, consists of a soul and a body liable to decay and disease – finally that it can only exist in a mortal man . . . Reason exists in a man only in conjunction with all the attributes that I have set out; yet you say that you can conceive god even with all these attributes taken away.'[52] What the Epicureans have not shown, according to Cotta, is why reason should be somehow necessarily related to human form but only contingently to various other human properties (being born, mortal etc.).

An inference similar to the one made by Velleius can be found in a discussion by Demetrius Laco about the form of the gods (= [*Form.*], col. 15), as well as in Zeno of Sidon's discussion of inference from analogy, as quoted by Philodemus in *On Signs* (= col. 22,17–28). In the latter we find also a version of Cotta's objection, albeit cast in more general terms. This objection is attributed to the group of anonymous opponents referred to in *On Signs*, who in this instance criticize the allegedly arbitrary way in which the Epicureans select their bases of correct inference:[53] 'From what kind of similarity should one infer? From men to men, for instance? And why from men to men rather than from living things to living things? But should we infer from the living to the living? And why thus rather than from bodies to bodies?'[54] In contrast to *ND*, whose setting does not allow the Epicurean speaker to rebut his opponent's criticisms, *On Signs* follows its recitation of these unnamed opponents' charges with Epicurean counter-arguments.[55] Of greatest relevance is a section of the treatise that quotes notes from Zeno's lectures taken by Philodemus' fellow student Bromius:

[52] *ND* 1.98. [53] Cf. Auvray-Assayas 1992: 55.

[54] Phld. *Sign.* De Lacy, col. 5,8–15: ἀπὸ ποίας θ' ὁμοιότ[ητος] ἐπὶ | ποίαν δεῖ μεταβαί[νειν], ἀπ' ἀ|νθρώπων ἐ[π]ʼ ἀνθρώπ[ο]υς λόγου | χάριν, καὶ τ[ί] μᾶλλον ἀπ̣ὸ τού[των] | ἐπὶ τούτους ἢ ἀπὸ ζώιων ἐ|πὶ ζῶια; ἀλ[λ'] ἀπὸ ζώ[ιω]ν ἐπ[ὶ ζῶια; | κ]αὶ τί μᾶλλονˋ ἢ′ ἀπὸ [σωμάτων] | ἐπ[ὶ σ]ώματα.

[55] Cf. the passages cited in Auvray-Assayas 1992: 55–6 nn. 24–8.

Sometimes we shall infer from non-identical objects, inasmuch and insofar as they share in the same community of constant attributes, as for example when in some respects animals resemble only men, but in some they are similar also to the deity. Therefore we shall use to good effect the inference from animals, holding that nothing prevents a god from being similar to man in the use of practical wisdom (φρόνησις), since man alone of living beings in our experience is capable of practical wisdom. A god cannot be conceived of as lacking practical wisdom, but can be conceived of as not having been generated and yet being composed of soul and body; with this he will be living and deathless.[56]

Bromius' account notably stresses the similarity between gods and men in the area of φρόνησις/*ratio* while denying any analogy between them in other respects explicitly referenced by Cotta, namely, being born and being subject to decay and disease. Nor are these the only similarities between *ND* 1.87–98 and portions of *On Signs*.[57] The notion of inconceivability (ἀδιανοησία), for example, which features prominently throughout *On Signs*, also seems to serve as the basis for Cotta's remarks in *ND* 1.96. And Philodemus' assertion that we base our inferences on others' observations, as well as our own direct experience,[58] offers a response to Cotta's claim in *ND* 1.87 that the Epicureans should admit only direct observation.[59]

When we come to the end of Cotta's treatment of anthropomorphism, it is Philodemus' *On the Gods* 3 rather than *On Signs* that invites comparison. Cotta concludes the section on inference from analogy with the words, 'this is not to reason, but to gamble about what you are to say',[60] and begins a vigorous and highly rhetorical attack targeting both the Epicureans' views and their alleged insolence in criticizing a long litany of other philosophers. Even the unlearned masses, claims Cotta, who attribute to the gods not only the possession of limbs but also their use, do better than the Epicureans, who instead confine the gods to complete idleness and inertia.

This rhetorical assault, which has no parallel in either Velleius' speech or any other known text, may well be Cicero's own contribution. But rather than providing an emphatic conclusion to Cotta's criticisms, it is

[56] Phld. *Sign*. De Lacy, col. 22,11–28: ποτὲ δὲ [ἀπὸ τ]ῶν οὐκ [ἀπ]αραλ|λάκτων, ἐ[φὸ] καὶ καθὸ μ[ετ]έχει | τῆς αὐτ[ῆς γε] κοινότη[το]ς τῶν | ὁμοίων α[ὐτοῖ]ς συμπτωμάτων, | οἷον ὅταγ[τινὰ] μὲν ἀνθρώποις μ[όνο]ις ἐ[οίκ]η<ι>, τινὰ δ' ἐο[ικότα τ]ῳ[ι θ]ε|ῷ· [ζ]ῶιά ἐστιν. εὐστόχως ἄ[ρα τ]ῆι ἐ[κ] | ζώ[ι]ων μεταβάσει χ[ρησόμεθα], | νο[μίζοντες] οὐδὲν [κωλύειν | μὴ τῶι φρονεῖν μ]ὲν ἀνθρ[ώποις] | ὡ[μοιωμένον] τὸν θεὸν ὑπ[ά]ρχ[ειν] | δ[ιὰ τὸ τὸν] ἄνθρωπον φρο̣ν[ή]||σε[ως μόνον τῶν] παρ' ἡμῖν ζώιων | δεκτικ[όν, φρ]ονήσεως δὲ χωρὶς | μ[ὴ νοεῖσθ', ἀλλ]ὰ̣ μὴ γεννᾶσθαι | συνεσ[τηκένα]ι̣ δ' ἐκ ψυχῆς καὶ | σώμα[τος· καὶ ἔσ]τ̣ο̣ι ζῶιον σὺν | τούτωι [καὶ ἀθ]ά[νατον].

[57] For a list and analysis, cf. Auvray-Assayas 1992: 57–61.

[58] Phld. *Sign*. De Lacy, col. 16,35–6; col. 20,38; col. 32,13–18.

[59] Cf. Erler 2003b: 152.

[60] *ND* 1.98.

followed immediately by a fresh start of sorts. The list of questions with which *ND* 1.103 begins is puzzling in several respects. One is struck initially by the introduction of entirely new topics so close to the end of Cotta's speech. Even more striking is the fact that yet another, similar list of questions appears in the very next paragraph. This arrangement deserves closer scrutiny.

The questions Cicero puts into the mouth of both Velleius and Cotta on various occasions presumably reveal the intended organization of the ensuing sections.[61] Cotta's speech contains three such sets of questions, the first of which appears close to the beginning. After some introductory remarks, Cotta begins his refutation by pursuing Velleius' own initial topic, the gods' existence: 'In an inquiry as to the nature of the gods, the first question that we ask is, do the gods exist or do they not.'[62] He starts off with a general argument against the *consensus omnium* and then returns to the Epicureans specifically: 'I grant that there are gods; so teach me (1) where they come from (2) where they are (3) what they are like in body, (4) soul, [and] (5) way of life.'[63] This passage recalls the words offered by Cicero *in propria persona* near the very start of the entire *ND*, which help both to justify the work and to define its scope: 'For many things are said about (3) the shape of the gods and (2) their location and habitation and (5) their mode of life.'[64]

As Pease noted, however, 'the questions asked above [i.e., in *ND* 1.65] are a good deal jumbled, overlapping, and interrupted in the answers made to them. Moreover Cotta here . . . is refuting Epicurean views not advanced by Velleius, giving clear indication that Cicero uses a source arranged in a different order and not very closely adapted in thought to that which was the source of Velleius' exposition'.[65] Cotta immediately (*ND* 1.65–8) follows up his set of questions with a discussion of (1); however, he then passes over (2) and moves directly to (3) with his lengthy treatment

[61] Philippson 1940: 23, conjectured that even these questions reflected the original arrangement of Cicero's source, and that Cicero himself then chose to follow up only on those that had also been addressed in the speech attributed to Velleius. If Philippson is correct, looking at these sets of questions would provide us a glimpse into the topics treated in Cicero's source but passed over by him during the process of his own composition.

[62] *ND* 1.61. [63] *ND* 1.65; the numeration within this and the subsequent quotations is my own.

[64] *ND* 1.2. The conventionality of Cicero's (and Cotta's) approach to the subject matter seems confirmed by Sextus Empiricus. Sextus structures his own discussion of the gods in *Outlines of Scepticism* (= *PH* 3.2–18 and 218–22) similarly, asking in turn about the gods' existence, their character and whether there is such a thing as providence. In discussing the gods' character, Sextus also adds questions concerning both their origin and habitation that correspond to (1) and (2) in Cotta's speech (see esp. *PH* 3.6).

[65] Pease 1955–8: vol. 1, p. 361 *ad loc.*

of anthropomorphism (1.76–102). One can also detect within these same sections a reference to (4) in the discussion of the attempt to establish the gods' anthropomorphism from their rationality (1.87–9). Finally, (5) is referred to briefly in 1.102, though a more extensive treatment is postponed until 1.111–14.

In between, we find the second set of apparently programmatic questions, those of *ND* 1.103. Out of the five topics raised in his first set of questions, Cotta has properly addressed only three, the gods' origin and their bodily and spiritual nature. He has skipped the subject of their habitation and not yet come to the question of their way of life. His second set of questions repeats these two unaddressed points before adding an entirely new consideration to the list: 'However, granting your view that god is the image and the likeness of man, (2) what is his habitation, his dwelling, his place? And then (5) what is the manner of his life, (6) by means of what is he – as you wish him to be – happy?'[66] Once again, one expects Cotta's choice of questions to be programmatic, setting the agenda for the ensuing sections of his speech.

This expectation is, however, upended in the current case. Instead, after some brief arguments as to why any plausible theology must attempt to answer these various questions, Cotta effectively repeats them, with some additional variations – introducing the entire new set of questions with the surprising conjunction *igitur* ('therefore'): 'About your deity, therefore, I want to know first, (2) where he dwells; second, (7) what motive he has for moving in space, if he ever does so move; thirdly, it being a special characteristic of animate beings to desire some end that is appropriate to their nature, (8) what is the thing that god desires; fourthly, (4) upon what subject does he employ his mental activity and reason; and lastly, (6) how is he happy, and (5) how eternal? For whichever of these questions you raise, you touch a tender spot. An argument based on such insecure premises can come to no valid conclusion.'[67]

In the next paragraph, Cotta begins a new argument by quoting directly from Velleius' speech (*sic enim dicebas*; 1.105). Cotta's use of *enim* suggests continuity, but in fact what follows has nothing to do with his preceding questions. The section from which he quotes is that which follows immediately upon Velleius' exposition of the gods' '*quasi corpus*'. Cotta had previously attacked the arguments of this section, also making use of direct quotations, in *ND* 1.69–75. The intervening paragraphs of Cotta's speech (i.e., 76–104) have relatively little direct correspondence with Velleius'

[66] *ND* 1.103. [67] *ND* 1.104.

argument, but they do show affinities with Philodemus' *On Signs.* The two paragraphs containing Cotta's second and third sets of questions (= 1.103–4) come at the conclusion of this long section, before Cotta returns to Velleius' own words. The questions are not themselves keyed to Velleius' speech nor to Cotta's own preceding discussion of inference from analogy. Their purpose seems to be to show the defectiveness of Epicurean theology by listing all the difficulties for which it has no explanation. The concluding lines of *ND* 1.105 ('For whichever of these questions you raise, . . . [a]n argument based on such insecure premises can come to no valid conclusion') suggests a kind of argument *ex silentio*, perhaps insinuating that Epicurus and his followers said nothing about these points precisely because the school's doctrines prevented them from saying anything plausible in their regard.[68] Any such insinuation, as we shall see, is patently false, but the question remains from where Cicero derived the list of 'unanswered' questions contained in *ND* 1.103–4.

If we exclude the few points to which Cotta has previously offered substantive replies, we are left with the following list of alleged gaps in Epicurean theology:

(2) the gods' habitation;
(5) their way of life;
(6) the means and motive of their happiness;
(7) the reason why they move (if indeed they do); and,
(8) an account of their desires.

Most of these items, as it turns out, coincide precisely with the subject matter of the final part of Philodemus' *On the Gods* 3. Philodemus has specific sections dedicated to the dwelling places of the gods (cols. 8,5–10,6), their motion and rest (cols. 10,6–11,40), and divine desire (col. 6 [sovrapposto],21(?)–7,18). The reason for the gods' happiness is also summarized in the very last column (col. 15,1–8); and the sections on virtues and friendship (frr. 82–86, cols. 1–3), as well as that on language and conversation (cols. 13,20–14,18), can be seen both as descriptions of their way of life and as accounts of their happiness.[69] Such discrepancies between deficiencies alleged by Cicero and corresponding treatments in Philodemus' treatise have led some scholars to suppose that Philodemus was writing a reply either to Cicero's work or to his Academic

[68] Of course, the polemical assertion that one's opponents have nothing to say against an objection need not imply absolute silence on the subject; it may suggest only that they did not propose any answers deemed worthy of serious consideration.

[69] For further discussion of these passages, see Armstrong's ch. 6 in this volume.

source.[70] There are facts, however, for which this proposed explanation proves inadequate.

After posing his third set of questions in 1.104, Cotta proceeds in sections 105–10 to quote and refute Velleius directly. Within this part of his speech, there are two paragraphs that correspond to nothing in Velleius' account, but which provide a general argument against the Epicurean theory of perception based on *eidôla* ('images'). The appearance of many examples from Roman history suggests Cicero's own hand at work. Cotta begins in typical fashion by conditionally granting the theory he finds objectionable: 'Suppose that there are such images constantly impinging on our minds.'[71] His first objection, that the eternity and happiness of the gods could not be inferred on the basis of such images, is later echoed by Sextus (*Adv. math.* 9.44), who registers the same objection against those philosophers who claim that the first men derived their religious beliefs from representations in dreams. This is the only argument of its kind Cotta offers before altering his approach and turning to a more direct attack on the theory of *eidôla* generally. The general objections Cotta raises correspond to what Cicero has to say against Democritus' theory of dream images and concepts of non-existent beings in *De divinatione*,[72] and so it is not surprising to find a pejorative reference to Democritus here (1.107) as well. While Cicero is conceivably drawing on standard arguments against atomistic theories of perception and concept formation, it is worth noting that most of Cotta's objections are countered or explained by Lucretius in Book 4 of *De rerum natura*. Lucretius there (4.732–44) explains the notion of non-existing beings by appealing to a centaur, the same example employed by Velleius. The choice of examples is by itself of doubtful significance, given that gods and centaurs had been paired together as examples of non-existent beings at least since the time of Aristotle.[73] Of greater importance is the fact that the material found in *DRN* 4 almost certainly reflects a much earlier Epicurean treatment, which, as Sedley has suggested, may stretch as far back as Epicurus himself.[74] Clearly, Cicero was capable of charging his opponents with having left gaps in their doctrines even when they had in fact treated the relevant issues long before and at considerable length. This fact alone should suffice to raise doubts as to whether the alleged

[70] See, e.g., Woodward 1989: 32; cf. Dyck 2003: 174, 185, 187, 193 and 200.
[71] A practice that, as Pease (1955–8: vol. 1, pp. 360–1) already noted, is followed constantly throughout Cotta's speech.
[72] See esp. *Div.* 2.138–9. As Philippson (1940: 43) has observed, Cicero is fond of quoting himself.
[73] Arist. *An. post.* 2 89b32; cf. Mansfeld 1993: 185.
[74] See Sedley 1998a: 149–50, which compares Diog. Oin., fr. 10 v, 2–6; and Plut. *De def. orac.* 420B–C.

gaps Philodemus is often supposed to have filled with his *On the Gods* ever actually existed.

But there might be still further cause for doubt. In addition to shared examples, Cotta employs the same technical vocabulary found in Lucretius. Note for instance the similarity between Lucretius' *quod cuique libido venerit . . . mens cogitet* ('the mind thinks of whatever one is inclined to') in 4.779–80 and *praesto sint simulacra* ('images are present') in 4.798 with Cotta's *simul ac mihi collibitum est praesto est imago* ('an image is present as soon as I please') at *ND* 1.108.[75] The lines from *DRN* that seem to be echoed and united in Cotta's question bracket Lucretius' own treatment of the relevant subject. Even more striking is the fact that Lucretius also introduces his passage with a question (*quaeritur in primis quare*; 4.779). The beginning of Cotta's discussion of images contains yet another apparent echo of questions posed by Lucretius in *DRN* 4. Compare, for example, *quae moveant animum res . . . , et unde . . . veniant* ('what things stir the mind . . . and from where they come'; 722–3) with Cicero's *quae autem istae imagines vestrae aut unde* ('what is the nature and origin of these images'; *ND* 1.107). It is difficult to resist the impression that Cicero has not only followed the order of arguments in Lucretius, but that he has also recycled Lucretius' own questions, in a slightly altered form, for use by Cotta. K. Kleve was the first commentator to voice this impression, though he himself conjectured that Cicero was working not with *DRN* directly but with a source that had tailored Lucretius' text accordingly.[76] I can see no reason to conjecture without further evidence the existence of such an intermediary. Cicero was certainly capable of making the requisite alterations to Lucretius' text himself. His references elsewhere to the *spectra* coined by Catius and the Epicurean theory of perception to which they are related (*Fam.* 15.16.1 and 19.1) reveal both a familiarity with Epicurean epistemology and a propensity to ridicule it. Cicero's generally lax attitude toward his sources is also borne out by R. McKirahan's recent study of Cicero's treatment of source material throughout *ND* 1, which includes a comparison with Philodemus on this very point.[77] Concentrating on those sections of *ND* 1 that reference other authors whose works are, at least in part, still extant, McKirahan concludes that Cicero is far more prone to misrepresentation and polemic.[78] The highly selective use

[75] While *collibet* does appear in comedy, it does not occur in epic. The only example in hexameters is Hor. *Sat.* 1.3.6. Cicero also employs the term in *Fam.* 15.16.2, again in connection with Epicurean epistemology.

[76] Kleve 1961: 56 n. 3. [77] McKirahan 1996. [78] Ibid.: 876–8.

of questions raised by one's own opponents without further reference to their subsequent responses certainly fits this profile.

Given that the composition of *ND* postdates Lucretius' death, there can be no possibility of seeing in Lucretius' poem a response to criticisms advanced by Cicero. Such a direction of influence is also extremely unlikely in the case of Philodemus' *On Signs*, which expressly reports the teaching of a preceding generation of Epicureans, Demetrius Laco and Zeno of Sidon. Nevertheless, the close correspondence between aspects of Cotta's criticisms and elements of these two Epicurean works (especially the programmatic questions in *DRN* 4 and various statements credited to Philodemus' unnamed opponents in *On Signs*) is certainly suggestive of a connection. The more reasonable supposition would seem to be that Cicero was taking his cues very selectively from the Epicureans, mining their works for potentially critical material while ignoring their own responses to it.

Might the same be true in the case of Philodemus' *On the Gods* 3? At first blush, the evidence in favour of such a conclusion appears weaker. Unlike *On Signs* and *DRN* 4, the extant remains of *On the Gods* 3 contain neither the stated objections of opponents nor pointed questions used to introduce various topics. In this treatise, Philodemus is much more concerned with laying out his own doctrine and relating it to those of the school's founders than with dialectically engaging the views of others. Consequently, there seems to be little by way of material that would be serviceable for an anti-Epicurean polemic. Of course, it is a relatively easy matter to transform direct statements along the lines of 'as far as the motion of the gods is concerned one has to conceive it in the following way' (*On the Gods* 3, col. 10,6–7) into questions such as 'I want to know . . . what motive he has for moving in space, that is if he ever does so move' (*ND* 1.104), but such loose correspondences cannot by themselves establish any likelihood of direct contact between the two texts.[79]

Nevertheless, commonalities between the two texts extend well beyond superficial resemblances and a shared arrangement of topics. As previously noted, Cotta includes between his sets of questions a series of arguments meant to justify his insistence on answers to the various points at issue. With regard to the gods' habitation in particular, Cotta adduces the following consideration: 'As for locality, even the inanimate elements each have their own region: earth occupies the lowest place, water covers the earth, to air is assigned the upper realm, and the ethereal fires occupy the highest

[79] The various correspondences between Philodemus *On the Gods* 3 and Cotta's speech are conveniently assembled by Philippson 1940: 35–8.

confines of all. Animals again are divided into those that live on land and those that live in the water, while a third class are amphibious and dwell in both regions.'[80] Everything, he claims, must have its proper place, and the gods should be no exception. The idea that the elements and living beings each have proper places goes back at least to the time of Empedocles.[81] Plato adopts it in the *Timaeus* (39e–f), and it is likely that Democritus endorsed it as well.[82] A version of the view is also attested to in a clearly Stoic-influenced passage in Philo (*Gig.* 7–8), which might ultimately depend on Posidonius.[83] Cotta's own argument has been thought to have similarly Stoic origins,[84] despite the fact that the Epicureans also made use of this concept, as Lucretius confirms. *DRN* 3 and 5 offer nearly identical arguments for the theses that minds cannot exist apart from bodies and that both are mortal. The specific formulation in Book 5 reads as follows: '[J]ust as in the upper air there can be no tree, no clouds in the salt sea, as fish cannot live on the fields, blood cannot be in wood, nor sap in stones. It is fixed and ordained where each thing can grow and abide. Therefore the nature of the soul cannot come into existence alone without body and it cannot be far away from sinews and blood.'[85]

None of these various passages, however, affords a parallel for the use to which Cotta puts the shared idea that every living being has a proper place. His own argument is an inference from analogy: given that every creature of which we are aware has its own proper habitat, so too should the gods. He therefore chastises the Epicureans for omitting discussion of this topic and for failing to assign their gods such a dedicated dwelling place. In Philodemus' *On the Gods* 3, however, we find not only a discussion of this very issue, but one whose surviving lines contain clear resemblances to Cotta's argument. The portion of the papyrus in which Philodemus presumably spelled out in detail his account of the gods' habitation regrettably does not survive, but the comments with which he prefaces his discussion are themselves noteworthy. According to Philodemus, the observed phenomena 'demonstrate that every nature has a different location suitable to it. To some it is water, to some air and earth. This is also the case for animals as well as for plants and the like. And for the gods especially there has to be [*sc.* a suitable location].'[86] Philodemus' argument parallels Cotta's

[80] *ND* 1.103. [81] See, e.g., DK 72B. [82] See Diod. Sic. 1.7.5. [83] Diels 1917: 23.
[84] Dyck 2003: 186–7; cf. also *ND* 2.42–4. [85] Lucr. 5.128–33; cf. 3.784–9.
[86] Phld. *De dis* 3, col. 8,20–3: ἅπερ ἔδειξε[ν] ἄλλους ἄλλαις φύσεσιν | οἰκείους (ἐΐνᾳι) κ(αὶ) τοῖς μὲν ὑγρά, τοῖς δ' ἀέρα καὶ γῆν. τ[ο]ῦ|το μὲν ζώιων, τοῦτο δὲ φυτῶν κ(αὶ) `τῶν ´ ὁμ[οί]ων, | μάλιστα δὲ τοῖς θεοῖς δεῖ.

not only in the use of certain examples (sea- and land-dwelling animals) but also, and more importantly, in its conclusion. There are to my knowledge no instances beyond these two passages in which the widely accepted principle of a proper place is employed to reason about the habitation of the gods rather than to describe the cosmological order of the world. The foundational role this principle plays in Philodemus' own treatment of the subject, as well as the fact that he offers arguments in its favour, make it unlikely that he has himself taken it over from any opponent, be it Cicero or one of his sources. As in the cases of *DRN* and *On Signs*, we are again left with the impression of a dependence that runs in the opposite direction: from an Epicurean source, whether *On the Gods* 3 or an even earlier work on which Philodemus himself may have drawn, to Cicero.

Indirect support for this conclusion can also be found in the use Cicero seems to have made of Philodemus' other surviving theological treatise, *On Piety*. As Obbink notes, if Cicero was indeed making direct use of *On Piety*, 'he rolled very quickly through the first half of the work to pore eagerly over the heated attack on philosophers in the second half'.[87] Here too Cicero would appear more interested in polemics than in the elaboration of positive Epicurean doctrine, skipping over extensive passages in order to concentrate selectively on others. As a result, a good deal of source material that we might think highly relevant to Cicero's purposes is nowhere to be found in his final product.[88]

As others have pointed out, the structure of *ND* itself, juxtaposing the presentation of each school's doctrine with a refutation by a philosopher from another school, would have presented Cicero with considerable difficulties, in particular in composing the series of polemical responses.[89] In the absence of any available work dedicated solely to an attack on Epicurean theology, of which we have no evidence, we might imagine Cicero trolling through a more general source or sources picking out the arguments that referred specifically to the Epicureans while holding others in reserve. There is, however, an attractive alternative. We are in fact familiar with ancient collections of specifically anti-Epicurean theological arguments derived from various schools: they are to be found not in isolated works by opponents of the school but rather in the very treatises of later Epicureans attempting to defend their doctrines against opponents'

[87] Obbink 1996: 98. Tsouna 2001b: 171 suggests that Cicero in *Tusc*. 1.31 is making use of Phld. *De morte* cols. 12–38.

[88] Had, for example, the defence of Epicurus' piety found in the first half of *On Piety* been incorporated into Velleius' speech, it might have balanced Cotta's criticism of Epicurus' life.

[89] Cf. Philippson 1940: 21.

objections. By looking to the points these authors choose to address, one could be confident of producing a relatively comprehensive list of arguments deemed pertinent by even the Epicureans themselves. It is of course no more certain in the case of *On the Gods* than with *On Piety*, *On Signs* or *DRN* that Cicero drew his material directly from Philodemus or Lucretius rather than from a common source or an available epitome.[90] The best one can hope to establish in such cases is a certain plausibility. The dispersal of the arguments I have discussed over several different works might itself seem to weigh in favour of the latter alternative. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the most likely source or sources for Cicero's anti-Epicurean arguments are in fact the works of Epicureans themselves. This surprising conclusion also suggests an answer to a related question that has long puzzled commentators on *ND*: why would Cicero have requested a copy of Phaedrus' *On the Gods* after he had already started writing his refutation of Epicureanism?[91] I suspect that he was in search of yet more material for his anti-Epicurean polemics.

[90] Usener 1887: lxv–lxvi, collects the evidence for Cicero having philosophers closely related to him make epitomes of philosophical doctrines that he wished to discuss in his writings. Philippson 1939: 37, supposed something similar to have been true in the case of *ND* 1, which he argued was based on an epitome by Philodemus. His argument relies heavily on the reference by Ambrose (*Ep.* 63, 13 Maur.; fr. 385a Us.) to *Philodemus* (Maur.: *filominus* codd.) *in epitomis* in connection with matter thematically related to *ND* 1.49.

[91] Cicero's request is found in *Att.* 13.38.1; 39.2; on which, see Dyck 2003: 7.

CHAPTER 8

The necessity of anger in Philodemus' On Anger

Elizabeth Asmis

Philodemus' *On Anger* (*De ira*; = *PHerc.* 182) ends with a surprise. As he concludes his book, Philodemus tells the reader that the assumption of harm is not a sufficient condition of anger. In response to an opponent, Philodemus argues that just as it does not follow that a person becomes wise if he is literate, so it does not follow that a wise person becomes angry if he assumes that another has harmed him. The assumption of harm is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition. Just as it is necessary for a person to know his letters if he is wise, so it is necessary for a person to assume harm if he is angry. But just as being literate does not make someone wise, so the mere assumption of harm does not make a wise person angry in every case.[1]

The surprise is this: Philodemus has been claiming all along that anger is inescapable (ἀνέκφευκτος) for human beings. As a general kind (γένος), he asserts, anger is inescapable for everyone.[2] In particular, natural anger is inescapable 'for the nature of humans'. Consequently, the well-reasoning person will inevitably (πάντως) experience natural anger.[3] Even the wise person will experience some cases of anger.[4] Philodemus has also presented a number of arguments in which the assumption of harm, in cases where harm is inflicted voluntarily, is cited as the reason a wise person gets angry.[5] Now he tells us that the assumption of harm is not sufficient to make a

[1] The objection occurs at col. 47,18–41; it is answered by Philodemus at cols. 49,28–50,8. Except where indicated, I use the text and line numbering of Indelli 1988a.

[2] Col. 40,2–6 (Wilke modified): 'So much more does the argument remain that the genus [anger] is inescapable for everyone' (κα|ταλεί̣π[εται καὶ πολὺ μᾶλ|[λ]ον ὁ [διαπ]είθων λ[όγο]ς ἀ|[νέκφ]ευ̣κτον [εἶναι τ]ὸ γέ|[νος π]αντ[ί]). I omit Wilke's addition <δή> before καί as unnecessary.

[3] Col. 40,18–26. Even his opponent, Philodemus adds, is unable to escape all anger, but is 'inevitably (πάντως) receptive of some anger'.

[4] Col. 41,30–1: συσχεθήσεταί τισιν ὀρ|γαῖς ὁ σοφός.

[5] At col. 40,32–40, Philodemus constructs an argument in which voluntary harm is the occasion on which the wise person becomes angry. Subsequently, he frames an objection that includes the claim that the wise person is angry 'because he is voluntarily harmed' (col. 41,32–4). The same claim appears

wise person angry. What else is needed, then, to make a wise person angry? If the assumption of harm is not sufficient, why should anger be necessary at all?

Recent studies of Philodemus' treatise have done much to illuminate the problem. Kirk Sanders and Voula Tsouna, in particular, have paid close attention to the ending of Philodemus' book; and I am much indebted to them.[6] My aim in this chapter is to build on their work by suggesting that we look to Epicurus' classification of desires for a possible solution. Epicurus divided desires into natural and 'empty'; and he divided natural desires in turn into necessary and unnecessary. As a result, there are three kinds of desire: natural and necessary, natural and unnecessary, and unnatural and unnecessary (or 'empty'). The third kind is due to 'empty' opinion.[7] My question is: did Philodemus similarly divide anger into three kinds? He drew a sharp contrast between natural and 'empty' anger. Did he, in addition, divide natural anger into necessary and unnecessary anger? If so, not all cases of natural anger are necessary; only some are, and that is sufficient to make anger inescapable. Further, not every assumption of harm will produce anger. In some cases, the assumption of harm leads necessarily to anger; in other cases, anger may follow naturally but is not necessary.

We start out, then, with the question: what must be added to the assumption of harm to make anger follow in every case? To judge by Philodemus' illustration, the answer is: a lot.[8] Epicurus, we are told, did indeed hold that a person cannot be wise without being literate.[9] Obviously, knowing how to read and write is hardly sufficient for wisdom. It is a very minor requirement. Is the assumption of harm similarly minor?

In this chapter, I will first look closely at the exchange between Philodemus and his opponents at the end of *On Anger*. Next, I will investigate what makes anger natural. I follow up with a brief discussion of how the

in an objection at col. 46,18–40, as well as in the final objection at col. 47,18–41. These arguments will be discussed in detail below.

[6] I could not have written this chapter without the benefit of reading Kirk Sanders' unpublished paper 'The Conclusion of Philodemus' *De ira*', and Voula Tsouna's chapter on anger in her recent book on Philodemus' ethics (2007a: 195–238). I agree with Tsouna (2007a: 237) that it does not follow from the fact that anger is inescapable that the wise person will feel natural anger every time he believes himself harmed. Tsouna points out that circumstances such as the 'triviality of the offence, the unworthiness of the offender, and also elements of his disposition, temperament, and upbringing' may prevent the sage from becoming angry. Sanders 2009 makes clear that the sort of cause that Philodemus requires in his final objection corresponds to what the Stoics called a 'cohesive' (συνεκτικόν) or 'complete' (αὐτοτελές) cause. This is what the Stoics regarded as a sufficient cause (SVF 2.346).

[7] Epicur. *Ep. Men.* 127, *KD* 29 and fr. 456 Us. [8] So Tsouna 2007a: 237. [9] S.E. *Adv. math.* 1.49.

Epicurean conception of anger is related to the definitions of other philosophers. After this, I turn to Epicurus' classification of desires and suggest that it provides a model for Philodemus' classification of anger. Although Philodemus informs us at length about his conception of natural anger, he nowhere draws an explicit distinction between necessary and unnatural anger. In fact, the only direct piece of textual support lies in the surprise he offers at the end of his book. There are, however, good arguments for supposing that he did draw the distinction. I shall suggest that the surprise ending of *On Anger* rests on a distinction between necessary and unnecessary natural anger.

I PHILODEMUS' REPLY TO HIS OPPONENT: THE ASSUMPTION OF HARM

First, then, let us look at the conclusion of Philodemus' treatise. Luckily, his final argument is very well preserved, coming as it does at the end of the papyrus roll. It thus offers a useful starting point for a foray into the rest of Philodemus' text, which is riddled with holes and often difficult to construe. His argument is a response to the last of three objections made by unidentified opponents. I give below the text (cols. 49,28–50,8) and my translation with subdivisions:

ὁ δ[ὲ] τελευταῖος λόγος ἀπέ|ραντός ἐστιν ἐκ τοῦ τὴν | ὀρ[γ]ὴν χωρὶς ὑπολήψεως τοῦ | βε[β]λάφθαι μὴ γίνεσθαι καὶ | τοῦ τὸν σοφὸν ἑκουσίω[ς] βλά|πτεσθαι συνά[γ]ων τὸ καὶ [ὀ]ργί|ζεσ[θ]αι, καθάπ[ε]ρ γὰρ χωρὶς | τοῦ γράμματα μαθεῖν οὐχ οἷ|όν τ[ε] {μαθεινουχοιοντε} γε|νέσθαι σοφόν, ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ εἰ γράμ|ματά τις ἔμαθεν ἐποισθή|σεται τὸ καὶ σοφὸν αὐ|τὸν ὑπάρχειν, οὕτως οὐδὲ | τῶι προσ̣τησαμέν[ωι ὑ]π̣ο̣|λ̣ήψεσιν τοῦ βεβλάφθαι || τὴν ὀργὴν ἐπακολουθεῖν, | ἄλλως δ᾽ ἀδυνατεῖν, τὸ | [πά]ντως ὀ[ργ]ισθήσεσ[θ]αι | τὸν ἔμφασιν εἰληφό̣τ̣α̣ | βλάβης, ἂμ μή τις ἐπιδ̣εί|ξηι κ̣[αὶ] δραστικὸν αἴ[τι]|ον ὀ̣ρ̣γ̣ῆς εἶνα̣ι τ[ὴ]ν̣ ὑπό|ληψιν τ[ῆ]ς [βλ]άβης.

The last argument is invalid in that it concludes from (a) the fact that anger does not occur without the assumption that one has been harmed and (b) the fact that the wise person is harmed voluntarily (c) that [the wise person] is angry. Just as without learning letters it is not possible to become wise, yet the conclusion will not follow that if someone has learned letters he is wise, so, for the person who has set up the claim (a1) that anger follows upon assumptions of having been harmed – but otherwise it is impossible – , the conclusion will not follow (c1) that a person who has obtained an evidently true impression of harm will be angry in any case ([πά]ντως), unless someone shows that the assumption of harm is, in fact, a cause that produces anger.

Philodemus first strips the opponent's argument to its basic structure in order to make clear the fallacy. It is indeed evident that premises (a) and (b) do not yield the conclusion (c). For the conclusion to follow, premise (a) must be recast from stating a necessary condition (that 'without which' anger will not happen) to a sufficient condition (a cause that makes anger happen in every case). After using an example to illustrate the fallacy, Philodemus restates the opponent's argument by filling in some of the opponent's own wording (as we shall see). In this more elaborate version, the first premise (a1) construes the opponent's claim that anger 'follows' on assumptions of harm as a claim that anger does not occur without such assumptions. In the conclusion, the assumption is linked with an 'evidently true impression' (ἔμφασις). The conclusion (c1) is that the (wise) person 'will be angry in any case' (that is, 'will invariably be angry', or 'will be angry for sure').[10] This is a restatement of the unadorned conclusion (c) that the wise person 'is angry'.

To see the full force of Philodemus' objection, we need to look at the opponent's complete argument, as outlined previously by Philodemus. This is how Philodemus presents it (col. 47,18–41):

συνέχεταί τε | οὐδὲ τ[αῖς] ματαίοις ὀργαῖς | ὁ μάταιος [γε]νόμενος κε|[ρ]αυνόπλ̣[ηκ]τος, ἀλλὰ κα|τὰ τὰς ὑπολήψεις τὰς προ|[η]γουμένας· ὁ μὲν βεβλά|[φ]θαι δοκ[ῶ]ν, ὁ δὲ κ̣αὶ μεγά|λ̣ως, [ὑπὲρ μὲν ἐνίων τ]ὰς ὑπολήψεις | οὐκ ἔχων [ταύ]τας, ὑπὲρ ἄλ|λων δ᾽ ἔχω[ν], ἐπ᾽ ἐκείνοις | μὲν ἀόργητός ἐστιν ἐπὶ | δὲ τούτοι[ς ἐ]ξίσταθ᾽, ὥστ᾽ εἰ | τὸ διερεθί[ζε]σθαι κοινῶς | ὑπολήψε[σι]ν̣ ἐπακολουθεῖ, | βλαπτόμ̣[ενος] δ᾽ ὁ σοφὸς ὑ|πό τινος [ἑκου]σίως ὑπο|λαμβάνει βλάπτεσθαι, τη|λικοῦτο δὲ μόνον ὅσον βέ|βλαπται, πάντως

[10] There is a disagreement about the reading [πά]ντως, which was supplied by Gomperz and is accepted by Wilke and Indelli; Kirk Sanders (unpublished MS, cited in note 6 of this chapter, p. 153) has proposed [γοῦ]ν πως. (The Oxford apograph of this column in fact appears to give the beginning of the line as . . . ΝΠѠC.) Either reading fits my interpretation. I translate Sanders' text as: 'will be angry in some way at any rate'. On this reading, the point, I take it, is that the person will invariably be angry in some way. Sanders offers a different translation and interpretation. He translates: it does not 'follow at any rate that the person who has received an impression of harm will be angered in a particular way'. What is at issue, Sanders proposes, is the particular way in which the wise person gets angry. He takes Philodemus' objection to be: the argument does not show the particular manner in which the wise person gets angry, that is, that he gets angry in a moderate, natural way. His new reading, Sanders suggests, saves consistency with the rest of the treatise by preserving the claim that the assumption of voluntary harm is a sufficient condition of anger. As I see it, adverbial πως (in Sanders' reading) is indefinite (meaning 'in some way', but not 'in this particular way') and refers back to the way in which the opponent said the wise person will get angry – that is, briefly. The particle γοῦν ('at any rate') gives emphasis to the indefinite adverb πως. One might convey the emphasis by simply using italics: it will not follow that the wise will be angry in *some* way, whatever it is. Philodemus restates in this way the opponent's own conclusion 'he will get angry in any case (πάντως), though briefly' (col. 47,35–36).

μὲν ὀργισ|θήσεται, βραχέως δὲ διὰ | τὸ μηδέποτε μεγάλης ἔμ|φασιν βλάβης λαμβάνειν, οὐ|δὲν εἶναι παρὰ μέγα τῶν ἔ|ξωθεν ἡγού[με]νος.

The useless person does not succumb to cases of useless anger as someone struck by lightning, but according to preceding assumptions; one person has the opinion that he has been harmed, another that he has been harmed greatly. Not having these assumptions [in some cases], but having them in others, he is without anger in the former cases, but gets carried away in the latter.

Consequently, if (a) to be irritated follows in common (κοινῶς) upon assumptions and (b) the wise person, when he is harmed by someone voluntarily, assumes that he is harmed, but only as much as he has been harmed, (c) [the wise person] will be angry in any case (πάντως), but briefly because he never has an evidently true impression of great harm, since he thinks that nothing of externals counts for much.

The opponent's argument consists of a comparison between the 'useless' type of person and the wise.[11] 'Useless' (μάταιος) is a term that Epicurus was fond of. It has a derisive sense in ordinary language. Epicurus uses it to condemn empty hopes and other irrational attitudes,[12] false opinions,[13] futile investigations,[14] and persons lacking sense.[15] It is equivalent to 'empty', with the special connotation of futility. The 'useless' person succumbs to 'useless' anger.[16] The opponent's employment of the term is a sign that he is directing his argument specifically against the Epicureans. The Epicurean 'useless' person is not to be confused with the Stoic fool (ἄφρων) or bad person (φαῦλος), terms the Stoics applied to everyone except the wise. Although the 'useless' person is the opposite of a wise person for the Epicureans, there is a range of 'well-reasoning' (εὐλόγιστοι) people. These include 'people of refinement' (χαρίεντες), who rank just below the wise at the very top.[17] The 'useless' person is at the bottom; and what makes him so is not merely an imperfect rationality, but a propensity for senseless, self-defeating excess.

Though without sense, the useless person acts on assumptions that 'precede' his anger. As the opponent puts it, he is not simply 'struck by lightning'; to put it another way, his anger does not come out of the blue.

[11] Cf. Schofield 1996: 227.

[12] Epicur. *VS* 62, 65; cf. fr. 116 Us. By the translation 'useless', I do not mean 'useless to others', but 'of no use whatsoever', least of all to oneself.

[13] *KD* 24; cf. *Ep. Hdt.* 67. [14] *Ep. Pyth.* 97. [15] *Ep. Men.* 125, 127.

[16] At col. 42,21–5, Philodemus writes that it is 'useless' (μάταιον) to desire punishment as something enjoyable. This is a particular kind of empty anger; see note 27 of this chapter, p. 159.

[17] For the well-reasoning person (εὐλόγιστος), see col. 40,17. At col. 39,34, 'the people of refinement' appear a step below the wise person; cf. the persons 'next' to the wise at 36,32. The 'refined' also appear in col. 49,1 and 11–12.

The useless person may assume harm (simply) or great harm. When there is no assumption of harm, he does not get angry. When he does assume harm, he 'gets carried away' ([ἐ]ξίσταθ'). The verb is pejorative, signifying out-of-control anger.[18]

Now take the wise person. Proceeding by analogy, the opponent first sets up the premise that the wise person's anger, just like that of the useless one, 'follows on' (ἐπακολουθεῖ) assumptions. The term 'follows on' corresponds to the previous use of 'preceding' (προηγούμεναι). Generalizing, the opponent asserts that anger follows 'in common' (κοινῶς) upon assumptions; that is, assumptions are 'common' to wise and useless persons. The term 'irritated' (διερεθίςεσθαι) is a general description of anger, covering the anger of both wise and useless persons. The first premise, then, asserts a feature that is common to wise and useless persons alike. The second premise states how the assumptions of wise persons differ from those of useless ones. There are two differences: the wise individual becomes angry only at voluntary harm; and he holds an accurate assumption regarding the harm he has suffered. Significantly, there is no mention of voluntary harm in the case of the useless individual. The reason is that this makes no difference to him. As Philodemus showed earlier in his treatise, the useless person flares up in anger at anyone or anything, whether or not someone is harming him voluntarily. He is irritated by nods, whispers, laughter; and he gets angry at children, flies, sows, anything at all, animate or inanimate.[19] Further, as we learn in the opponent's conclusion, the wise person never assumes great harm, since he recognizes that nothing that comes from outside counts for much. By contrast, the useless person sometimes considers himself greatly harmed.

On the basis of these two premises, the opponent concludes that the wise person will invariably (or 'in any case', 'for sure'; πάντως) be angry, though only briefly. In common with the useless person, he will be angry whenever he assumes harm; in contrast with him, his anger will always be brief. According to the opponent, the wise person, too, will be angry whenever he assumes harm, though not in the same way as the useless person.

As diagnosed by Philodemus, the opponent's argument rests on an equivocation: the opponent uses the term 'follow' (ἐπακολουθεῖν) in the sense of 'follow invariably (πάντως)', or 'follow by logical necessity', whereas the appropriate sense is 'cannot happen without'. In Philodemus' view, this is

[18] Philodemus also uses the verb in this sense at col. 38,32. Chrysippus used the term to describe persons who have succumbed to passion (SVF 3.475 and 478).

[19] Cols. 25,29–26,6; see also fr. 13.23–6 (children), col. 17,18–20 (flies and gnats) and col. 18,33 (sows).

the sense in which the wise person's anger 'follows' on an assumption of harm. Similarly, we may add, there is an equivocation on the term 'precede' (προηγεῖσθαι): the assumption of harm 'precedes' in the sense that something else follows, but not in the sense that the assumption leads invariably to what follows.

The two verbs are examples of terms used by philosophers of various persuasions in a general, non-technical sense.[20] The term ὑπόληψις ('assumption') is another example. It was used widely to designate a belief, whatever its precise nature.[21] It takes the place of a technically laden term, such as δόξα ('opinion') or συγκατάθεσις ('assent').[22] There is just one technical term in the opponent's argument that points to a philosophical school other than the Epicureans; this is ἔμφασις. The Academics used the term to designate an impression (φαντασία) that appears true to the person having it, as opposed to one that appears false. As an apparently true impression, an ἔμφασις is persuasive, but lacks the mark of a necessarily true impression.[23] The term is, strictly speaking, alien to Epicurean epistemology; for Epicurus held that every sensory impression is free from error. It appears, however, that later Epicureans appropriated the term to designate the type of impression that was ordinarily considered true. Philodemus uses ἔμφασις in just this sense in an argument of his own earlier in *On Anger*.[24] Both the opponent and Philodemus, moreover, use it in this sense in their exchange. The opponent's use of the term ἔμφασις, therefore, does not provide evidence that he is an Academic, although there may be other reasons (as I shall suggest) for identifying him as such.

According to the opponent, then, the assumption of harm leads inevitably to anger in the case of the wise person, just as in the case of the useless person. Philodemus objects that it does not necessarily lead to anger in the case of the wise person. What else, then, must be added to the assumption of harm in the wise person's case?

[20] Neither term appears as a technically precise term in any list of causes. On the Stoic view of 'preceding' causes, see Sharples 1983: 132–3. As a general conception, a 'preceding' cause must be distinguished from the technical Stoic conception of a 'prokatarktic' cause (SVF 2.346, 945 etc.). Likewise, Philodemus' use of the term δραστικόν in his response (col. 50,6) is not a technically precise usage, but simply indicates a cause that 'makes' something happen (though on this point, see Sanders 2009). All three terms cover a variety of technically defined concepts of causality.

[21] The Epicureans are said (DL 10.34) to have used 'assumption' interchangeably with 'opinion' (δόξα); cf. *Ep. Men.* 124. Among the Stoics, Chrysippus wrote a work *On Assumption* (DL 7.201; cf. 7.197). The term occurs repeatedly in reports about the Stoic theory of the emotions; for example, SVF 3.378, 386 and 456. The Sceptics made a practice of attacking 'dogmatic assumptions', as Sextus Empiricus amply attests.

[22] It is worth noting that the opponent implicitly assigns an opinion to the useless person by employing the word δοκ[ῶ]ν, but does not assign an opinion to the wise person. On the Stoic view, the wise person never holds an opinion; on the Epicurean view, he does, just like any other person.

[23] S.E. *Adv. math.* 7.169. [24] Col. 40,34, cited below.

2 PHILODEMUS' CONCEPTION OF NATURAL ANGER

A definition would provide an initial answer. We look in vain, however, for a definition of anger in general, or natural anger, in the surviving portions of Philodemus' treatise, or anywhere else in Epicurean writings. But neither should we expect a definition in the strict sense, for the Epicureans rejected the use of definitions. In place of a definition, they used a verbal 'outline' (ὑπογραφή), or summary description, to state the salient features of an ordinary conception (called a *prolêpsis*). Such an outline, which merely recalls the ordinary conception, was intended to prevent confusion among disparate conceptions.[25]

In the case of anger, Philodemus distinguishes a broad use of the term *thumos* from a narrow use, 'rage', understood as an excess of anger. He tells us that *thumos* taken in the 'most common' sense admits of being moderate. In the narrow sense, it is 'intense in extent' or even 'an impulse toward what is enjoyable'. In this narrow sense, it is madness (μανία).[26] This distinction is intended to reflect ordinary usage. In particular, Philodemus' description of *thumos* as a kind of madness may be viewed as an 'outline' of how people ordinarily use the term in a narrow sense. Over against the broad and narrow uses of *thumos*, Philodemus also assigns a broad and a narrow use of the term *orgê*.[27] In the broad sense, *orgê* signifies anger in general and is equivalent to *thumos* in the broad sense. In the narrow sense, *orgê* designates moderate anger and is opposed to *thumos* in the narrow sense.

In common with Aristotle, moreover, Philodemus uses the adjective ὀργίλος ('irascible') to designate someone who is prone to excessive anger,[28] and the adjective ἀόργητος to denote a person without anger.[29] Likewise,

[25] See Asmis 1984: 42–4. [26] Cols. 43,40–45,12.

[27] At col. 45,28–32, Philodemus uses *orgizesthai* in a broad sense to cover both *orgê* and *thumos* in their narrow senses. At col. 41,9, he applies the term *orgê* to the Epicurean conception of natural anger.

[28] The term occurs repeatedly; see esp. col. 28,26. Aristotle distinguished between a mean, gentleness (πραότης), and two excesses, (a) lack of anger (ἀοργησία) or insensibility (ἀναλγησία) and (b) irascibility (ὀργιλότης); see *EN* 1108a4–9 and 1125b26–26b10, and *EE* 1220b38 and 1231b5–26.

[29] Cols. 34,33 and 47,28. Annas (1993: 199) suggests that Philodemus uses the term ἀόργητος (meaning 'unangered') to apply to the naturally angry person, who, in her view, is close to someone without emotions. Armstrong (2008: 85) also takes the term to apply to the naturally angry person, although he takes the meaning to be 'not irascible' rather than 'unangered'. In my view, ἀόργητος (which is regularly used to mean 'without anger') cannot apply to an angry person, whether naturally or excessively angry. In Philodemus' usage, just as in Aristotle's, ἀόργητος ('without anger') is the contrary of ὀργίλος ('irascible'), and the naturally angry person is in-between. At cols. 34,31–35,6, Philodemus discusses the appearance of irascibility in a person who is 'without anger' (ἀόργητος). As he argues, a person without anger will give the appearance of being irascible (ὀργίλος) for a short time only. If the appearance lasts for a longer time, 'he is not calm (βαθύς), but only not such as he seems'; that is, he does have anger, but this is not the anger of an irascible person. Although he seems to have excessive anger, he in fact has only moderate ('natural') anger. Philodemus is here attempting to save Epicurus from the charge that he was irascible because he sometimes seemed

he describes the moderately angry person as 'gentle'. In a unique usage, he also refers to someone without anger as 'deeply calm' (βαθύς).[30] Philodemus thus demarcates a range that is similar to Aristotle's tripartite division, although (as we shall see) his conception of moderate anger differs fundamentally from that of Aristotle and his followers.

These distinctions yield a rough 'outline' of the narrow conception of *orgê* as a moderate emotion. Fortunately, Philodemus also offers a detailed analysis of the Epicurean conception of natural anger. This is a philosophical refinement of the ordinary conception of moderate anger. In effect, Philodemus' analysis yields a quasi-definition of natural anger. Philodemus, however, does not just hand it to the reader; the reader needs to put it together herself. As I suggest, his analysis reveals two main components of natural anger, corresponding to two meanings of the word 'natural', one biological and the other cognitive. The biological component applies to anger in general; the cognitive component distinguishes natural from excess anger. The two components correspond roughly to the Aristotelian distinction between genus and differentia. 'Natural anger' is natural in two ways: in common with all cases of anger, it is rooted in the biological 'nature' of humans (and indeed all animals) as susceptible to death and pain; and, specifically, it arises from a recognition of the 'nature' of what happens. The two components are necessarily conjoined: anger would not occur if humans were not susceptible to death and pains, and it would not be natural if it did not rest on a recognition of what happens by nature.

Accordingly, 'natural anger' fits the 'nature' of humans as rational animals, who have both biological vulnerability (as animals) and the power to use reason (as rational beings). Anger as such is inescapable for all humans insofar as we are susceptible to death and pain; but, since we have the ability to make good use of reason, only the 'natural' kind of anger is inevitable for humans. Philodemus himself correlates natural anger with the 'nature' of humans by explaining that what makes anger 'inescapable for the nature of humans (ἀνθρώπων φύσει)' is the fact that the well-reasoning person (εὐλόγιστος) 'experiences natural anger invariably [or: for sure] (πάντως)'.[31]

Philodemus sets out the first component of natural anger in an explanation of human weakness. His starting point is Epicurus' first Key Doctrine.

so: even persons with 'the most opposite disposition', Philodemus points out, can give the opposite appearance.

[30] Cols. 28,39–40 (πραότης and βαθύτης); 34,37 (βαθύς); and 44,27–8 (ἡμερώτατος, used of the wise person).

[31] Col. 40,18–22: τῆι δὲ φυσικῆι πάντως πε|ριπίπτειν, δι' ἣν αἰτίαν | ἀνέκφευκτον αὐτὴν ἐ|δείκνυμεν ἀνθρώπων | {η} φύσει.

Here Epicurus denies anger and gratitude to the gods on the ground that these belong to a condition of weakness. What Epicurus means by 'weakness', Philodemus explains, is a 'constitution and nature (φύσις) that is receptive of death and pains'.[32] This condition applies to all animate beings except god.

The second component is embedded in a discussion of whether anger is good or bad. Behind this discussion is the Stoic claim that all anger is bad, since it arises from a bad disposition (διάθεσις). Using the Epicurean goal of pleasure as his measuring stick, Philodemus states that it is necessary to make a distinction. On the one hand, the feeling (πάθος) of anger as such is bad; for it is 'distressing or analogous to what is distressing'. It is something 'stinging' or 'biting' (δακνηρῶι at col. 37,19 and δηκτικόν at col. 38,7).[33] On the other hand, anger is good 'in combination with a disposition'. He explains (col. 37.20–39):

ἡμεῖς δὲ τῶι | καὶ κατὰ φωνήν τινα πα|ραλογισμὸν ἐντρέχειν | οὐχ ἁ̣πλῆν ποιούμεθα | τὴν ἀπόφασιν, ἀλλὰ τὸ | μὲν πάθος αὐτὸ κατὰ δι|άληψιν ἀποφαινόμε|θα κακόν, ἐπειδὴ λυπη|ρόν ἐστιν ἢ ἀνάλογον | λυπηρῶι, κατὰ δὲ τὴν | συνπλοκὴν τῆι διαθέσει | κἂν ἀγαθὸν ῥηθήσεσθαι | νομίζομεν· συνίσ-ταται | γὰρ ἀπὸ τ̣ο̣[ῦ] βλέπειν, ὡς ἡ | φύσις ἔχει τῶν πραγμά|των, καὶ μηδὲν ψευδο|δοξεῖν ἐν ταῖς σ[υ]μμε|τρήσεσι τῶν ἐλα[ττ]ω̣|μάτων καὶ ταῖς κολά̣σ̣ε̣|σι τῶν βλαπτόντων.

Since there is something misleading in our speech, we do not make a simple statement. Making a distinction, we declare that the feeling (πάθος) itself is bad, since it is distressing or analogous to something distressing, but in combination with one's disposition we consider that it will even be said to be good. For it is composed (a) from seeing how things happen by nature and (b) from not having false opinions in the comparative measurement of losses and in the punishment of those who harm us.

Taken by itself, the feeling of anger is painful, hence bad. Joined to a 'good' (σπουδαία, col. 38,18) disposition, on the other hand, the feeling is good. What makes it good is that the disposition (a) recognizes the 'nature' of what happens and (b) does not have wrong opinions about losses and punishments. In general, Philodemus indicates that an emotion has two aspects: the feeling itself, which is of either pleasure (hence good) or pain (hence bad); and the cognitive disposition that gives rise to this feeling, and

[32] Col. 43,32–4, including: ἡ δεκτικὴ | κατασκευὴ καὶ φύσις θανά|του καὶ ἀλγηδόνων.

[33] At col. 38,7–8, Philodemus explains that 'insofar as it is biting, it arises about the least things' (κ̣α̣θὸ δηκτικόν ἐ[στ]ί | τι, π̣[ερ]ὶ ἐλάχιστ̣[α γίνε]|ται). Then the text breaks down. Although the immediate grammatical antecedent is natural anger, it makes much better sense to take this as a reference to empty anger (mentioned just previously), which is stirred by the slightest perceived offence.

which is itself good or bad in turn.[34] In short, an emotion is a feeling joined to a cognitive disposition. When the disposition is good, the emotion is good, even though the feeling itself may be bad. Conversely, when the disposition is bad, the emotion is bad even if there is a feeling of pleasure. The same term, πάθος, applies both to the 'feeling itself', considered apart from the disposition, and to the feeling in combination with a cognitive disposition (the 'emotion').[35]

Philodemus' wording in the cited passage is very careful. Requirement (a) is stated very succinctly, and it sounds grandiose. That one should recognize 'how things happen by nature', literally 'how is the nature of affairs', recalls the aim of physical investigation (φυσιολογία): that one should recognize 'the nature of what exists' (ἡ φύσις τῶν ὄντων).[36] Philodemus, it appears, has constructed the expression 'the nature of affairs' (ἡ φύσις τῶν πραγμάτων) as an ethical counterpart to the physical inquiry concerning 'the nature of existing things'. The nature of affairs – that is, of events, deeds, circumstances and so on – belongs to the realm of human action, just as the nature of existing things is the subject of physical inquiry. Further, there is a special point to the use of the word 'nature'. Put prominently in first place, the word identifies the entire explanation as an analysis of 'natural' anger. Natural anger is, in brief, a feeling that arises from a recognition of the 'nature' of what happens.

Requirement (b) supplies details about what one must recognize. It serves as an exegesis of the programmatic demand to recognize 'the nature of affairs'. Philodemus' first concern is to eliminate false opinions. His position represents a direct attack on the Stoic claim that anger, like all passions (πάθη), is tied to false opinions. It is also worth noting that Philodemus uses the negative 'not having false opinions' rather than a positive formulation. It suggests that not making mistakes is enough; there is no need to know everything about the situation.

There are two kinds of things that one should not make mistakes about: first, the comparative measurement of losses; and, second, the punishments for those who harm. Each of the four terms 'comparative measurement',

[34] See further Tsouna 2007a: 48. On 'disposition' in general, see Procopé 1993: 375.

[35] I differ from Konstan (2006), who argues that the term πάθος, as used by Epicurus, necessarily designates a feeling that is not linked to cognition. In my view, Epicurus' usage is consistent with that of later Epicureans: πάθος is a genus that may be divided into two kinds, mere πάθος and πάθος linked to cognition. In the generic sense, the term πάθος designates the feeling of pleasure or pain as such (the feeling 'itself'), considered apart from cognition; in a narrow sense, it signifies either a non-cognitive reaction (a feeling stripped of cognition) or an emotion (a feeling joined to cognition).

[36] See *Ep. Her.* 45.

'loss', 'punishment' and 'harm' has been carefully chosen to distinguish the Epicurean conception of natural anger from other philosophical conceptions. The term 'loss' or 'diminution' (ἐλάττωμα) is not found in other analyses of anger. Philodemus uses ἐλάττωμα elsewhere in the treatise to refer to the losses suffered by a person as a result of excessive anger.[37] These losses may be enormous; for great anger is attended by 'countless disasters'.[38] Here, I suggest, the term refers both to the loss that has been, or will be, inflicted by another and to the losses that may yet be incurred through one's own response to such loss. The naturally angry person makes a 'comparative judgement' (συμμέτρησις) of these losses. His aim is to make sure that his anger will result in a net gain rather than a loss for himself; otherwise, the anger would be 'empty'.

Punishment is directed against those who inflict harm. Not to make mistakes about punishments involves, among other things, not punishing without a cause, not punishing continuously, and not inflicting excessive punishment.[39] One should also recognize that anger is not necessary to punishment or self-defence. Some Peripatetics, Philodemus tells us, held that to remove anger from the soul is to cut out the sinews (νεῦρα) that make punishment and self-defence possible. In their view, anger makes people bold and unconquerable; without it, they are servile flatterers. Against these Peripatetics, Philodemus argues that it is possible to fight wars, engage in contests and reduce others to bitter subjection, all without anger; and that anger, indeed, can blind a person to his safety and sap his strength.[40]

In punishing another, one must avoid, above all, the mistakes of inflicting punishment as an act of revenge and desiring it as something enjoyable or virtuous, or as an end in itself.[41] This is another mistake attributed by Philodemus to some Peripatetics. The wise individual resorts to punishment as an 'extreme necessity', and he experiences it as 'extremely unpleasant'; it is like drinking wormwood or undergoing surgery.[42] Paradoxically, Philodemus uses these two examples of an extreme remedy, drinking wormwood and submitting to surgery, to underscore the point that the person who inflicts the punishment, not the one being punished, is undergoing a cure. The naturally angry wise individual imposes an extreme remedy on

[37] Cols. 24,18 and 39,6. [38] Col. 42,16–19; see also note 47 of this chapter, p. 164.

[39] These kinds of punishments are rejected at col. 24,25–7.

[40] Cols. 31,24–34,24; cf. col. 42,28–30. Cf. Aristotle's observation at *EN* 1126a6–7 that a person who does not get angry seems not to be in position to defend himself (μὴ ὀργιζόμενός τε οὐκ εἶναι ἀμυντικός).

[41] Cols. 32,23–9, 42,21–8 and 44,15–18.

[42] Col. 44,15–23. Similarly, the wise person 'submits to [rebuking others] without pleasure and as if it were wormwood' (Phld. *De libert. dic.* col. 2b,6–8).

himself in order to heal the losses that have been or may yet be inflicted on him. Even though the punishment may also serve to cure the offender, what makes it so extremely unpleasant for the wise – like drinking wormwood – is that it is the necessity he imposes upon himself, despite the greatest reluctance.

It is a fundamental tenet of Epicurean ethics that pain as such is bad, whereas pleasure as such is good. In Epicurus' words, 'every pleasure is good because it has a nature that is akin (φύσιν . . . οἰκείαν)'.[43] By contrast, he implies, pain is 'alien' (ἀλλότριον) to us.[44] Under certain circumstances, however, pain may be good, just as pleasure may be bad. This happens when, as a calculation (λογισμός) of the circumstances tells us, we need to endure pain in order to achieve the overall goal of pleasure (whose height is the absence of pain). As Epicurus writes, we rely on a 'comparative measurement (συμμέτρησις) and recognition (βλέψις) of what is advantageous and disadvantageous'.[45] Philodemus applies this doctrine to anger. Using the term συμμέτρησις, he analyses natural anger as an emotion that depends on making a hedonistic calculus. A recognition of the situation triggers anger, which is painful (and, as we shall see, 'alien' [ἀλλότριον]), as a means of achieving the overall goal of pleasure through a comparative measurement of losses.

In describing the disposition from which natural anger arises as σπουδαία, Philodemus uses a Stoic term to make an Epicurean point. What makes the disposition 'good' (σπουδαία) is not the perfect knowledge that produces perfect mental harmony or symmetry (συμμετρία), as the Stoics held, but error-free beliefs consisting of comparative measurements (συμμετρήσεις) of benefits and losses. On the Stoic view, lack of anger is a condition of συμμετρία; anger exceeds this condition.[46] On the Epicurean view, natural anger belongs to a disposition that makes appropriate measurements. Unlike the reasoning of a Stoic sage, these measurements concern consequences as the ultimate goal. By contrast to natural anger, Philodemus writes, empty anger is bad insofar as it arises 'from an utterly wicked disposition and draws with it countless troubles'.[47] What makes

[43] *Ep. Men.* 129; cf. *KD* 7.

[44] At *Ep. Hdt.* 53, Epicurus writes that particles coming from outside the sense organ move it in a way that is either akin (οἰκείως) or alien (ἀλλοτρίως).

[45] *Ep. Men.* 129–30, including: τῇ μέντοι συμμετρήσει καὶ συμφερόντων καὶ ἀσυμφόρων βλέψει ταῦτα πάντα κρίνειν καθήκει. Cf. Cicero's use of the term *compensatio* ('weighing') at *Tusc.* 5.95.

[46] According to the Stoics, a rational impulse has a 'symmetry' that is in accordance with reason; a person who succumbs to a passion exceeds this symmetry, just as a runner exceeds the symmetry of the impulse of walking (SVF 3.462). On Stoic psychic symmetry, see further SVF 3.471a; cf. 3.83.

[47] Cols. 37,39–38,5.

the disposition bad is that it fails to make the measurements required to escape pain.

Continuing his attack on the Stoics, Philodemus also considers the condition of not being receptive of anger. This, too, is bad. Philodemus cites Menander as saying that 'whoever does not get angry when he is slandered and treated badly gives proof of the greatest wickedness'.[48] One might be tempted to think that Philodemus is here setting out sufficient conditions of anger: slander and bad treatment, it seems, must provoke anger in any person who is not wholly bad. The poet's opinion, however, cannot be assumed to match the philosopher's, even if the philosopher uses it to bolster his position. Philodemus has a clear polemical purpose: he cites Menander in order to subvert the Stoic position that invulnerability to anger characterizes the perfectly good person. He then qualifies his agreement with Menander by adding that sometimes the lack of anger is due to 'prior excitation or raging madness about other things', as shown by the fact that a person 'will get carried away by the slightest things at his feet'.[49] This qualification is consistent with the view that insensitivity to anger is primarily (even if not entirely) a form of moral callousness. Although the prior obsession or rage may have other causes, it may also be due to moral depravity. On the whole, it is clear that Philodemus considers insensitivity to anger as a perversion of human nature: by nature, humans cannot escape anger, even though some persons may develop an extreme insensitivity to it.

There is, then, a complex set of beliefs that gives rise to natural anger. Putting together the biological component with the cognitive component, we obtain something approaching a definition: natural anger is a (1) feeling of distress (or something analogous to it) (2) that arises from a recognition of the nature of events, that is, from not having wrong opinions regarding (a) the comparative measurement of losses and (b) the punishment of those who harm us. The complex set of judgements required under (2) arises from a 'good disposition'. As a brief explanation of natural anger, this analysis is entirely appropriate. It still lacks, however, some crucial details. Most conspicuously, it does not mention that the harm to which the naturally angry person responds is voluntary. Yet, as we saw earlier, what provokes the anger of the wise is voluntary harm. How does this requirement fit in?

[48] Col. 38,22–6: κα|κῶς γὰρ ἀκούων καὶ πάσ|χων ὅστις οὐκ ὀργίζε|ται, πονηρίας πλεῖστο[ν] | τεκμήριον φέρει.

[49] Col. 38,27–33.

Philodemus mentions voluntary harm, as well as providing further details about the feeling of distress and the limits of anger, in a case study of the wise person. This study is a response to a certain Nicasicrates, who objected (cols. 38,36–39,7):

τὴν φυσικὴν ὀργὴν μὴ | μόνον κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν | φύσιν λυπεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ | ἐπισκοτεῖν τοῖς λογι[σ]|μοῖς ὅσον ἐφ᾽ ἑαυτῆι κα[ὶ τὸ] || πρὸς τὴν [μετὰ] φίλων συμβίωσι[ν] ἀν[ε]κτὸν κα|τὰ πᾶν καὶ ἀπ[αρ]ενόχλη|τον ἐμποδίζ[ειν καὶ] πολ|λὰ τῶν κ[ατη]ριθμ[ημέ]|νω[ν] ἐλα[ττ]ωμάτω[ν] | συνε[πι]φέρει·

. . . natural anger is not only distressing in its own nature, but also overshadows calculations as far as is in its power, prevents one from living with friends in a way that is bearable in every respect and without trouble, and draws with it many of the enumerated losses.

This is clearly an attack on the conception of natural anger defended by Philodemus. While admitting that anger is distressing, Philodemus maintains that it depends on a correct use of reason, and so avoids losses. Nicasicrates' reference to 'enumerated losses' suggests that he is directing his attack against an Epicurean tract which (like Philodemus' own treatise) enumerated the losses incurred by unnatural anger. On the whole, Nicasicrates objects that natural anger is incompatible with the Epicurean goal of happiness, which relies on calculation, friendship and the avoidance of losses. It has been argued by some scholars that Nicasicrates was himself an Epicurean. But if he were, he could not have accepted natural anger with all the disadvantages he assigns to it; and this, in my view, marks him as an opponent of the Epicureans. Instead, Nicasicrates' close engagement with Epicurean argument suggests to me that he was an Academic, using Epicurean assumptions to subvert them.[50]

[50] There has been much debate over the years about the philosophical affiliation of Nicasicrates. Crönert (1906: 89–94; cf. 130 and 182) proposed that he was a Peripatetic, mainly on the ground that the word 'overshadow' was used by Aristotle (fr. 660 Rose) to describe the effect of strong anger (θυμός) on reasoning (λογισμός). (Aristotle also uses the term at *Rh.* 1354b11 and 1406a35. The term clearly does not fit the Stoic conception of anger.) Crönert is followed by Wilke (1914: xxi–xxvi). Ringeltaube (1913: 43–6) endorsed Zeller's suggestion that Nicasicrates was an Epicurean. He used two lines of argument: one is that since the Peripatetics approved of natural anger, Nicasicrates could not have been a Peripatetic; the other is that his description of natural anger at cols. 38,36–39,7 includes Epicurean features; in particular, the claim that it is distressing and that it impedes friendship. Both arguments lose their force if we suppose that Nicasicrates is directing his objections against the Epicurean conception of natural anger. Philippson (1915: 647–8; cf. 1916a: 438) followed Ringeltaube. More recently, Longo Auricchio and Tepedino Guerra (1981: 32–5) have argued in detail that Nicasicrates was a dissident Epicurean; and there is now a weighty consensus in favour of this position (see Procopé 1993: 382 n. 77; Armstrong 2008: 113; and Tsouna in her ch. 9 of this volume, esp. p. 186, with n. 14). In my view, none of the few, brief testimonies that we have about Nicasicrates points to an Epicurean affiliation. At col. 37, 5–7, the only other place in

In response to Nicasicrates, Philodemus proposes to recast his general analysis of natural anger by substituting the wise person, in particular, for the well-reasoning person in general.[51] This substitution allows him to present a paradigm case of natural anger (cols. 40.32–41.9):

βλαβεὶς | ὑπό τινος ἑκουσίως ἢ | λαβὼν ἔνφασιν τοῦ βλα|βήσεσθαι, πότερον ἀδι|άφορον ἀναδέξεται πά|θος, ὥσ̣περ ἐμβλέψαν|τος αὐτῶι τινος, ἢ ἀλλό|τριον, ἐπειδὴ τό γε οἰκεῖ|ον λέγειν ἀπόπληκτο[ν;] || ἀδιάφ[ορον μὲν] οὖν φά|ναι βίαιον, εἰ δ' ἀλλότριον | καὶ γινώσκει, διότι κολασ|θεὶς ἀνασταλήσε-ται καὶ | τοὺς ἄλλους ἐ̣πιστήσει, μα|νικῶς οὐκ ἂν̣ ἔλθοι πά[λι]ν | καθ' ἕνα γέ τινα τρόπο[ν] | δακῴν. τὸ δὲ τοιοῦτο[ν | ὀ]ργὴν [κ]ᾳ̣λοῦμεν.

When harmed by someone voluntarily or having an evidently true impression (ἔμφασις) that he will be harmed, will he [the wise person] have a feeling that is indifferent – just as though someone were looking at him – , or alien? For to say that it is akin is crazy. Well, then, it is forced to say it is indifferent. But if it is alien and he [i.e., the wise person] recognizes that, if punished, [*sc.* the person who has harmed or will harm] will retreat and will stop the rest, he [i.e., the latter] would

which Nicasicrates is mentioned in *On Anger*, Nicasicrates likewise attacks the Epicurean position by objecting that the wise person will sometimes harm himself (since natural anger overshadows reasoning). Apart from *On Anger*, the only text that is substantial enough to permit any conjectures about Nicasicrates' philosophical affiliation is *On Flattery* (= *PHerc.* 1457) col. 10 (Crönert 1906: 91, 130; and Kondo 1974: 54). In this text, Philodemus claims that Nicasicrates 'is somehow or other in agreement with Epicureans' ([ο]ὐκ οἶδα ὅπως ὁμολογεῖ τοῖς [π]ερὶ τὸν Ἐπίκουρον). This claim is translated (misleadingly, in my view) as '*non so come potrebbe essere d'accordo con i discepoli di Epicuro*' by Kondo (ibid.) and as '*non so come . . . possa essere d' accordo con i seguaci di Epicuro*' by Auricchio and Guerra (1981: 33). Even if one adopts Kondo's and Auricchio/Guerra's translation, Philodemus' claim is entirely consistent with an anti-Epicurean stance. The name 'Nicasicrates' may well be Rhodian (as first suggested by Crönert 1906: 91); but this possibility adds no weight to the hypothesis that he was associated with the dissident Epicureans on Rhodes. The little evidence that we have indicates that he was a critic of the Epicureans; and there is no evidence that he adopted any of the basic tenets of Epicureanism. See further Asmis 1990: 2398.

[51] Philodemus' immediate response to Nicasicrates is a set of questions, which include a rejection of the Stoic position that the wise person is without anger (col. 39,23–5). I suggest that at cols. 39,38–40,2 Philodemus goes on to outline the Stoic position on preliminary feelings. I propose the following text: ὀλίγον δέ | τι μόνον ἄν<ευ γ'> εὐδοκησίας | συνε[πι]φέρονται τοῖς φυ| |σικὸν καὶ π̣ερὶ [τ]ὸν σοφὸ[ν] | ἀκαριαῖ[ον] ποιήσουσι. ('They assign only something slight without approval to those who will make something natural and momentary [happen] also in the case of the wise person.') I supply <ευ γ'> as having been omitted by reason of the double ευ. (I am indebted to Ben Henry for pointing out to me that my original proposal of simply adding <ευ> would have produced an unacceptable hiatus.) Those who posit a momentary natural feeling, without approval, are the Stoics. According to them, the momentary, natural prickings that precede assent bear a resemblance to emotions, but are not themselves emotions. εὐδόκησις occurs as a synonym for Stoic συγκατάθεσις ('assent') at SVF 2.988. I take εὐδοκησία to be a variant for εὐδόκησις. A noun ἀνευδοκησία (as found in the editions of Wilke and Indelli) is not attested elsewhere; Philodemus uses the adjective ἀνευ[δ]όκητα in its only known occurrence at col. 25,6. After mentioning the Stoic prickings, Philodemus (col. 40,6–10) goes on to cite another Stoic position, that once a passion gets started it cannot be stopped from becoming excessive (SVF 3.462 and 478, and Cic. *Tusc.* 4.41–2).

not come back in a mad fury after stinging him in some one way. This sort of thing is what we call *orgê*.[52]

When harmed by someone acting voluntarily (or foreseeing that he will be harmed), the wise person both feels alienation and recognizes that whatever punishment he inflicts will deter the assailant as well as others. Though 'stung' initially, he will avoid being harmed by the assailant returning in a fury for a second time. This sort of thing, Philodemus says, is how the Epicureans use the word 'anger' (*orgê*).

We previously encountered the term ἔμφασις ('evidently true impression') in the argument at the end of the book (cols. 47,38 and 50,4). There, the opponent cites the same basic initial conditions: harm voluntarily inflicted, together with an impression of it. To simplify his argument, he omits the prospect of future harm. Here, Philodemus considers both past and future harm. He proposes three possible responses: the wise person will receive the harm as something indifferent, akin or alien. This tripartition reflects Stoic doctrine: the good is akin, the bad is alien, and all the rest is indifferent. Philodemus applies this tripartition to Epicurean ethics. For the Stoics, the answer is clear: anything that comes from outside is indifferent. In fact, the wise person cannot be harmed at all, with the consequence, as Seneca points out, that he is not receptive of anger at all.[53] For the Epicureans, by contrast, all humans are susceptible to harm, for all are susceptible to death and pain. Philodemus thus opts for the answer: when harmed by someone acting voluntarily or when recognizing that he will be so harmed, the wise person experiences a sense of alienation.

Feeling alienated, the wise individual works out a plan of action: in recognition of its deterrent effect, he resorts to punishment. In this way, both the harm and the anger are kept within bounds. The entire response is a paradigm case of natural anger (*orgê*) in the Epicurean sense. Using the participial constructions 'when harmed' and 'when having an impression', Philodemus tells us that voluntary harm is the occasion on which anger occurs, but avoids saying that it leads inevitably to anger. His wording is compatible with either the interpretation advocated at the end of the book by his opponent, that anger follows inevitably on an assumption of harm, or with Philodemus' own clarification (in response to this opposing interpretation) that an assumption of harm is merely a necessary condition of anger.

[52] I follow Indelli's construal of the subjects in the penultimate sentence.
[53] Sen. *Constant.* 9.3; cf. 16.1.

There is more to come. Philodemus adds a badly preserved section in which he apparently explains that a person is also alienated by harm done to his friends, regardless of whether the harm is common to oneself and one's friends (col. 41,17–25). He proposes to ignore this refinement in order to focus on harm done directly to the wise. The reason, he says, is that he wants to show that the wise person is subject to 'some cases of anger' (col. 41,26–31). Then he cites a hypothetical objection (cols. 41,32–42,12):

καὶ φήσει τις· | ἀλλ᾽ εἰ διὰ τὸ βλάπτεσθαι | καθ᾽ ἑκούσιον τρόπον ὀργί|ζεται, βλάπτεται δ᾽ ὑπό | τινων εἰς τὰ μέγιστα, πῶς | οὐχὶ καὶ μεγάλην ὀργὴν | ἀναδέξεται καὶ σφοδρὰν | ἐπιθυμίαν ἕξει τοῦ μετελ|θεῖν; πρὸς ὃν ἐροῦ-μεν, ὅτι | τῶι βλάπτοντι τὰς τοιαύτας | [β]λά[β]ας ἢ φανερῶι [γ᾽ ὄν]τι, || διότι μ̣[εγ]ά[λω]ς βλάψει, | προσαλλοτριοῦται μὲν ἄ|κρως, καὶ μισεῖ – τοῦτο γὰρ ἀ|ḳ[όλο]υθο̣ν – · οὐ μέντοι γε τα|ρα[χ]ὴν ἀνα[δ]έχεται μεγά|λη[ν]. οὐ[δ᾽] ἔ[στ]ι̣ν γέ [πώς] τ̣[ι] πα|ρὰ [μέγα] τ̣ῶν ἔξωθεν, [ὅ]τ᾽ οὐ|δὲ ḳ[α]τὰ τὰς παρουσίᾳ[ς] τῶν | μεγάλων ἀλγηδόνω̣[ν] με|γάλαις συνέχεται τ[αρα]|χαῖς, [πο]λλῶι δὲ μᾶλλ̣[ο]ν̣| κατὰ [τὰ]ς ὀργάς·

Someone will say: 'But if [the wise person] gets angry because he is harmed voluntarily, and he is harmed by someone to the greatest extent, how will he not admit great anger and not have a vehement desire to go after him?'

We will say to him: he is extremely alienated from, and hates, a person who inflicts such harm or will clearly harm him greatly; for this follows. But he does not admit great disturbance; nor does anything of externals count for much. For he does not experience great disturbance at the presence of great pains, but much more so in the case of anger.

Philodemus now supposes that harm inflicted voluntarily on the wise person is extremely great. The objection consists of a question in two parts: will he not feel great anger and have an intense desire to punish the offender? The answer is no: although he will be extremely alienated, someone wise will not experience 'great disturbance'.[54] The reason is that, although extreme harm provokes extreme alienation, externals do not count for much. This is a response to the Stoic contention that externals do not count at all. On the Epicurean view, the body is not an external thing, for it is an integral part of one's own well-being. In cases of anger, what is external is the behaviour of another person who voluntarily inflicts harm. This external event, however, does not count for much, even if it is extremely harmful.

[54] The general Epicurean response, as reported by Seneca (*Constant.* 16.1) is that the wise person considers injuries 'bearable' (*tolerabiles*). Philodemus draws a contrast between anger that hates and anger that merely blames foolishness at *De libert. dic.* fr. 87 Konstan et al. 1998.

To show how little the external event counts, Philodemus draws a comparison with the inner experience of physical pain: the wise person is not greatly disturbed by the inner presence of great physical pain; much less is he disturbed (we supply) by great harm imposed from outside. In other words, if great inner pain does not provoke great disturbance, much less does great external adversity. To gage the difference, let us imagine that a wise person gets angry at someone who has voluntarily inflicted great physical pain on him. In this case, he feels two kinds of disturbance: great physical pain and moderate anger. But the wise individual is not greatly disturbed by the physical pain, and much less so by his anger.

By focusing, then, on the anger of the wise, we can round out our analysis of natural anger as follows. For the wise, natural anger is a (1) feeling of distress (or something analogous to it), (2) prompted by harm inflicted voluntarily, (3) consisting of alienation, which is extreme in cases of extreme harm, (4) without great disturbance, and (5) arising from an accurate assessment of the nature of the situation, in particular, from not having false opinions regarding (a) the comparative measurement of losses and (b) the punishment of those who harm us; which in turn requires the recognition that any loss that comes from outside – no matter how great – does not count for much, and that punishment, even though extremely unpleasant to oneself, prevents a recurrence of harm. This is a paradigm case of natural anger. Even though the well-reasoning person in general lacks the full insight of the wise person, there is no reason to suppose that any of these conditions would not be applicable to the ordinary well-reasoning person.

This analysis provides a foundation for Philodemus' contention at the end of his treatise that the assumption of harm is only a necessary condition of anger. Much more is needed to make a wise person, or any well-reasoning person, angry. In addition to the assumption that one has been or will be harmed, there is need of a rich set of insights concerning the 'nature' of the situation, in particular, an insight into the nature of the loss and of the appropriate punishment. In short, what is required is a 'good disposition'; and this, we have learned, is the disposition of someone who can assess the harm at its true extent, and who knows how to punish with a view to averting further harm. By itself, an assumption of harm is not productive of anger; it is so only when joined by a set of additional judgements that such an assumption makes anger necessary. The analogy used by Philodemus to make his point is indeed appropriate: just as having learned one's letters does not suffice to make one wise, so a mere assumption of harm does not suffice to make one angry. Anger, like wisdom, depends on a certain

kind of disposition. The assumption of harm is a very minor requirement; what is needed in addition is a complex set of judgements, arising from a good disposition, concerning the nature of the harm and the appropriate response to it.

Given the need for a rich set of insights, then, what judgements lead inevitably to anger? What we have learned so far is that there must be a correct appraisal of losses and punishment. But what kind of loss or need for punishment will produce anger in anyone at all, including the wise? Philodemus lays out for us in some detail the sort of judgements that give rise to anger; but he does not tell us specifically which judgements make anger necessary. What is there about the assessment of the situation that makes a person inevitably angry?

As I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, the Epicurean distinction between three kinds of desires (natural and necessary, natural and unnecessary, and unnatural and unnecessary) offers a way of distinguishing between necessary and unnecessary anger. Before we return to the Epicurean doctrine of the desires, however, it will be useful to consider briefly how Philodemus' analysis of anger differs from both Aristotelian and Stoic views. This short excursion will help to sharpen the contours of the Epicurean conception of natural anger, as well as throw light on the necessity of anger.

3 ARISTOTELIAN, STOIC AND EPICUREAN CONCEPTIONS OF ANGER

In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle defines anger as 'a longing (ὄρεξις) for revenge (τιμωρία), accompanied by distress (λύπη), because of apparent contempt (ὀλιγωρία) directed at oneself or what belongs to oneself, when the contempt is inappropriate'.[55] Aristotle adds that there is also a feeling of pleasure, which comes from the hope for revenge.[56] The Peripatetics whom Philodemus attacks in *On Anger* seem to have embraced this definition. It is, however, a stipulative definition, which fails to discriminate between excess and moderate anger, as set out in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1225b23–1226b10). In this text, Aristotle notes that the gentle person (πρᾶος), who occupies a mean between excess anger and no anger at all, aims to be free from trouble (ἀτάραχος; 1125b34) and to act according to reason, and is not vengeful (τιμωρητικός; 1126a2). Philodemus assigns very similar qualities to the person who experiences natural anger.

[55] *Rh.* 1378a30–2; cf. *Top.* 156a31–4.

[56] *Rh.* 1370b10–32 and 1378b1–3. At *EN* 1126a21–2, Aristotle observes that, in the case of the bitterly angry person, the pleasure of getting revenge replaces distress; cf. 1117a5–7.

Taking into consideration the whole range of Aristotle's definitions, we find that Philodemus' conception differs in two key respects. First, Philodemus does not root anger in contempt, but in harm to one's physical and mental well-being. The use of the term 'loss' (ἐλάττωμα) in place of 'contempt' (ὀλιγωρία, etymologically a kind of 'lessening') reflects this difference. The loss that is measured by Epicurean standards differs from the loss due to contempt. Second, Philodemus consistently associates natural anger with punishment (κόλασις), while rejecting the pursuit of revenge (τιμωρία).[57] In contrast with the alleged pleasure of revenge, there is nothing pleasant about punishment; anger is simply distressing, or analogous to distress.

In a discussion of weakness of will (*akrasia*), Aristotle analyses irrational anger as having two components:

> On the one hand, reason or an impression shows that there is violence or contempt. On the other hand, spirit (*thumos*), as though calculating that it is necessary to fight this sort of thing, immediately takes offence.[58]

First, there is a recognition of violence or contempt. Second, the part of the soul that is responsible for irrational anger, 'spirit', performs a sort of calculation that it is necessary to respond with anger, with the immediate result that there is anger. This quasi-calculation differs from the kind of calculation performed by the rational part of the soul. Philodemus takes the presentation of harm as the starting point of anger, corresponding to Aristotle's first component. The opponent at the end of *On Anger* does the same. Both Philodemus and his opponent explicitly add an act of assent, or an assumption, that there is in fact harm, something implicit in Aristotle's analysis. In Philodemus' view, his opponent illegitimately takes the assumption of harm as sufficient for anger. The opponent omits, in effect, a judgement of the sort that corresponds to Aristotle's second component. In the case of irrational anger, as analysed by Aristotle, this judgement is something of a miscalculation, performed by *thumos*. In the case of rational anger, by contrast, the reasoning faculty is understood to perform a correct calculation. Aristotle's analysis thus suggests a way of supplying a sufficient condition for anger: along with the assumption of harm, there must be a judgement that anger is necessary.

[57] See above, note 41 of this chapter, p. 163. Aristotle himself drew a distinction between punishment and vengeance at *Rh.* 1369b12–14: punishment is for the sake of the person on whom it is imposed, while vengeance is for the sake of the person who imposes it.

[58] *EN* 1149a32–4.

The Stoics defined anger as a type of desire (ἐπιθυμία), one of the four main irrational emotions or 'passions' (πάθη). According to Zeno, passions supervene on judgements; according to Chrysippus, they are identical to judgements.[59] Very briefly, Chrysippus defined a 'passion' as an opinion (δόξα), or weak assumption (ὑπόληψις), about an apparent good or evil.[60] Two passions, pleasure (ἡδονή) and distress (λύπη), are opinions about present goods and evils (respectively); the two other passions, desire and fear, concern expected goods and evils (respectively). According to Cicero, Stoic passions are opinions about a great good or evil.[61]

Importantly, the opinion that produces a particular passion includes the judgement that it is appropriate to respond to the apparent good or evil with the relevant passion.[62] As we just saw, Aristotle previously pointed to this requirement. Cicero, for example, defines Stoic distress as 'an opinion of a present evil, which contains [the judgement] (*in qua opinione illud insit*) that one should experience distress'.[63] Elsewhere, he presents the judgement that one should experience distress as a second opinion, additional to the opinion of a great evil.[64] This pairing of opinions is misleading. As Cicero himself makes clear, the additional judgement is not a separate opinion, additional to the one that defines the passion, but a component in the overall opinion that constitutes the passion.

Anger, in particular, was defined by the Stoics as a 'desire for taking revenge (τιμωρία) on someone who is thought to have committed an injustice in an inappropriate way'.[65] This definition looks like an adaptation of the one given by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric*, with the notion of distress (which the Stoics elevated to one of the four main passions) dropping out in favour of desire, and the notion of injustice taking the place of contempt. Both Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* and the Stoics view anger as a desire for revenge.

According to Lactantius, Seneca listed the following definitions of anger:

> Anger is a desire for avenging an injustice or, as Posidonius says, a desire for punishing the person by whom one thinks one has been harmed unjustly. Some defined anger as follows: anger is an impulse of the mind to harm a person who

[59] SVF 3.461. [60] SVF 3.378, 380, 385 and 386. [61] SVF 3.385 (= *Tusc.* 3.24–5); cf. SVF 3.481.

[62] See Brennan 2003: 268–70 and 284–5; and Graver 2007: 41–6. As Graver shows, Cicero's *Tusc.* is a major source for this position; see esp. 3.61, 64, 74, 76, 79 and 4.14. In agreement with Cicero, Andronicus (SVF 3.391) states that distress is a 'fresh opinion of the presence of evil, at which people think they should contract' and that pleasure is 'a fresh opinion of the presence of good, at which they think they should be elated'; cf. SVF. 3.394 (presented by Graver at 2007: 42).

[63] *Tusc.* 3.74. [64] *Tusc.* 3.61; see Graver 2007: 43.

[65] SVF 3.396 (ἐπιθυμία τιμωρίας τοῦ δοκοῦντος ἠδικηκέναι οὐ προσηκόντως); cf. 3.395, 397 and 398.

has harmed or wanted to harm. Aristotle's definition is not far from ours. For he says that anger is a desire to return pain.[66]

The first is an abbreviated version of the canonical Stoic definition of anger. If Seneca's (or Lactantius') wording is accurate, Posidonius substituted 'punishment' for 'revenge' and added 'harm' to the notion of 'injustice'. This is a rapprochement to the Epicurean notion of natural anger and may be an attempt to subsume the Epicurean notion under a definition that embraces various philosophical schools – Epicurean as well as Aristotelian and others. Possibly, Posidonius was influenced by the lively debate between contemporary Epicureans and their opponents on the subject of anger. It has been suggested that the next definition is close to the Epicurean conception of natural anger.[67] This does not seem to me right. It is a definition of anger as a retaliation in kind: harm is visited on those who have harmed or wanted to harm. Epicurean natural anger is not a desire to inflict harm in return for harm, but aims to prevent future harm by the reluctant use of punishment. Last is another definition of anger as a type of retaliation. Taken from Aristotle, it defines anger as a desire to return distress for distress.[68]

Although Philodemus identifies excess anger as a type of desire (specifically, as an excess desire), he refrains from calling natural anger a type of desire.[69] The reason, I suggest, is that Epicurean natural anger has nothing in common with the Aristotelian or Stoic conceptions of anger as kinds of desire. The naturally angry Epicurean does not desire revenge, nor does she desire punishment as something pleasant or good; instead she resorts to punishment as a painful means to the ultimate goal of freedom from pain. Although she is motivated by an underlying desire to secure the good, the immediate goal, punishment, is not an object of desire in itself. As Philodemus points out, punishment is not 'choiceworthy in itself' (δι' αὑτὸ αἱρετόν).[70] Epicurean natural anger is closer to Stoic distress than desire, although it does not fit this category either. Though distressed, the naturally angry person is not very troubled and has a rational plan for attaining the good. None of these considerations, however, prevents Philodemus from classifying anger (both excess and natural) as a form of

[66] Lact. *De ira dei* 17.13 (1.2.3b and 1.3.3 of Sen. *De ira*, ed. Reynolds).
[67] Procopé 1993: 369, suggests that it 'looks very much like an Epicurean definition'.
[68] Cf. Arist. *De an.* 403a30–1; see Fillion-Lahille 1970: 75.
[69] Philodemus uses the term 'desire' (ἐπιθυμία, ἐπιθυμεῖν) to describe excess anger at cols. 8,25; 23,27; 27,28; 41,38; 42,21; and 44,28.
[70] Col. 42,28; cf. 44,30.

desire in an Epicurean sense. In fact, as we shall see, it fits the Epicurean category of desire very well.

How much influence, then, did the Stoic conception of the passions have on the way the Epicureans formulated their views? Cicero provides some evidence concerning the emotion of distress (*aegritudo*). He attributes the following definition to Epicurus:

> Epicurus holds that distress is by nature the opinion of an evil, so that whoever looks upon a relatively great (*aliquid maius*) evil, if he holds the opinion that it has happened to him, he is immediately distressed.[71]

This definition appears modelled on Stoic definitions of the passions. In general agreement with Chrysippus, distress is said to be an opinion of a great evil, such that the passion comes about as soon as one forms the opinion. We have no corresponding definition attributed to Epicurus for any of the other passions. Philodemus' *On Anger*, however, suggests that, in the case of anger too, Epicurus was construed as offering a definition that identifies the passion with an opinion or, at any rate, that has the passion follow immediately upon an opinion. The formulation 'assumption of harm' (ὑπόληψις βλάβης) looks like an attempt to sum up the Epicurean conception of anger as another counterpart to the definitions of the Stoics. Just as Stoic passions consist of, or follow on, the assumption of an apparent good or evil (present or expected), so Epicurean anger is construed by Philodemus' opponent as following immediately, without fail, upon the assumption of a present or expected evil.

Against this assimilation of Epicurean to Stoic views, Philodemus objects that the assumption of harm is merely a necessary condition of anger. He may, in turn, be accused of misconstruing his opponent's position. For the opponent might well respond that a wealth of assumptions is included under the general heading of 'assumption of harm'. In the first place, as the opponent makes clear, the wise person's assumption of harm includes the recognition that the harm is inflicted voluntarily. Further, as shown by the opponent's conclusion, the assumption includes an assessment of the harm at its true extent; for the wise person recognizes that anything from outside does not count for much, with the consequence that he responds with only brief anger. The opponent might, therefore, point out that 'assumption of harm' includes an insight into the nature of the harm and the appropriate response. Like any assumption, that of harm not only

[71] *Tusc.* 3.28. At 3.32, Cicero states more generally that, according to Epicurus, 'it is necessary for all who think they are in the midst of evils to be distressed, whether the evils are anticipated or long-standing'.

follows on a presentation but is also shaped by the disposition of the person. Finally, just as the Stoics (with a debt to Aristotle) held that the assumption includes the judgement that one must respond to the situation with the relevant passion, so the assumption of harm might reasonably be thought to entail the judgement that one must respond with anger. This would account for the opponent's claim that the wise individual is inevitably angry.

Philodemus, however, understands the opponent as claiming that the mere assumption of harm triggers anger in every case. As Philodemus argues, much more is required to produce anger in the wise than the assumption of harm. For the assumption does not carry with it any of the insights that characterize the wise person. To make anger follow inevitably, these insights must include the judgement that anger is necessary. We have seen what sort of insights make anger natural. It remains to determine what there is specifically about these insights that makes anger inevitable.

4 NATURAL ANGER: NECESSARY AND UNNECESSARY

Let us now return to Epicurus' distinction between three kinds of desire: necessary and natural; unnecessary and natural; and unnecessary and unnatural, or 'empty'. The first kind, necessary and natural desires, is divided in turn into three subordinate types: some are necessary for happiness; some for the health (or 'lack of disturbance', ἀοχλησία) of the body; and some for life itself.[72] An example of the last is the desire for food and drink.[73] Desires that do not bring pain if they are not satisfied are unnecessary; they are also easily dispelled when it appears that they are hard to satisfy or productive of harm.[74] Unnecessary natural desires comprise desires that merely aim for a variation of the feeling of pleasure, without alleviating any pain. They are exemplified by the desire for sex.[75] Empty desires are unbounded, producing more pain than pleasure. An example is the desire for unbounded wealth.[76]

Although Philodemus avoids describing natural anger as a kind of desire in *On Anger*, his overall analysis places anger as a whole within the Epicurean

[72] *Ep. Men.* 127; cf. [Phld.] [*Elect.*] col. 6,1–21.

[73] Fr. 456 Us. As Annas (1993: 190–4) has argued, this is desire for food and drink in general, not a desire for a particular food or drink; the latter kind may be unnecessary (and either natural or unnatural).

[74] *KD* 26 and 30, and *Ep. Men.* 130. See also the discussions by Cicero at *Tusc.* 5.93–5 (= frr. 439, 440 and 456 Us.) and Porphyry in *Abst.* 1.49–51 (= frr. 461–6 Us.).

[75] Fr. 456 Us.; cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 5.94 (= fr. 440 Us.).

[76] *KD* 15 and Porph. *Abst.* 1.54 (= fr. 458 Us.).

category of desire. Both excess anger and natural anger fit this category, for both aim to avert harm as a means to the final goal of personal well-being. As a desire to avert harm, then, is anger divisible into the same three divisions as apply to desire in general? Although there is no explicit evidence, there is good reason to suppose so.[77] For the harm that an angry person aims to avert includes harm that takes away life, bodily health, or happiness. In these cases, the desire to avert harm is necessary; consequently, we may suppose, anger is necessary. Philodemus points to the first two, and possibly all three, subdivisions (life, bodily health, and happiness), when he notes that what makes humans susceptible to anger is their susceptibility to death and pain.[78] There are other cases in which the harm does not threaten to take away life, bodily health, or happiness. In these cases, we may infer, anger is unnecessary and may be either natural or unnatural.

Here are some examples. Suppose a person has voluntarily given me poison that will kill me, not to mention any accompanying physical agony. Anger is necessary; for I have a necessary desire to stay alive. Or take someone who has voluntarily maimed me, thus depriving me of physical well-being; anger is again necessary. Or suppose that someone has voluntarily indoctrinated me so thoroughly with superstitious fear as to deprive me of happiness; when I recognize the harm he has done to me, I am necessarily angry. All of these kinds of harm may be summed up roughly as cases of great harm.

On the other hand, there are many cases of harm that do not take away life, bodily health, or happiness. In these cases, the harm is relatively small, and anger is not necessary. Suppose a slave steals his master's wine

[77] Annas (1993: 194–5) previously suggested a correlation between anger and the desire for food: just as the desire for food (in general) is necessary, so anger in general is necessary; but just as there is a right and a wrong way to desire food, 'there is a right and a wrong way to express anger'. The right way of getting angry, Annas proposes, is natural; the wrong way is to take pleasure in retaliation. My analysis builds on Annas' insight by adding a distinction between necessary and unnecessary natural anger, corresponding to the division of natural desires into necessary and unnecessary. Like others, Annas appears to equate natural anger with inescapable anger. This view relies in part on the conditional clause at col. 39,29–31: 'if it is unavoidable and is called natural for that reason'. The hypothetical proposition has often been taken as stating Epicurean doctrine. The context shows, however, that Philodemus rejects the hypothesis. He asks (col. 39,26–38): 'How can [anger] that produces such great obstacles and is responsible for such great evils be natural? If it is inescapable and called natural for this reason, how is it not the case that a great evil must be endured also by wise persons?' The hypothetical proposition 'if it is inescapable and called natural for this reason' is embedded in an objection in which Philodemus raises the possibility (which he rejects) that excessive anger (that is, anger that overshadows reasoning) is inescapable and called natural for this reason. As Philodemus explains just a little later (col. 40,18–22), the Epicureans themselves proved that anger is inescapable on the ground that the well-reasoning person inevitably experiences natural anger.

[78] See above, note 32 of this chapter, p. 161.

and cheese, leaving him just water and bread. What he leaves is entirely sufficient to stave off hunger and thirst. The slave voluntarily does harm, but does not deprive his master of life, bodily health, or happiness. He deprives him only of unnecessary pleasures. Does the master get angry? It is natural for him to get angry, but it is not necessary. The master may or may not get angry at the slave, depending on how he assesses the harm and the need for punishment. He might just laugh off the episode as the act of a roguish slave, or he might respond with anger in an attempt to stop further thefts. So long as he judges the situation correctly, his anger (if indeed he becomes angry) will be natural. His anger will be unnatural, as well as unnecessary, if it is intense or persists for a long time.

Further, suppose a student utters an insult at a teacher, thus diminishing the teacher's professional status. Again, it may be entirely natural for the teacher to get angry in this situation, but anger is not a necessary response; for the insult does not lead to the loss of life or the loss of physical or mental well-being. Whether the teacher gets angry will depend on how he judges the situation. If his anger is intense or persists, it is unnatural.

Now let us take some especially negligible examples of harm. Suppose a slave has not cooled the water to just the right temperature, thus depriving his fastidious master of an unnecessary pleasure.[79] It would be foolish to get angry, or, at any rate, it would be foolish to get angry every time this happens. Or suppose a person jumps the queue at the vegetable stall. One might feel angry on occasion. But it would be unnatural to get angry every time this sort of thing happens. As Aristotle and others note, this type of anger is one kind of excess; even if not intense or long-lasting, anger is excessive if a person becomes angry at anything at all, no matter how slight.[80] On the Epicurean view, such irascibility would fill one's life with unnecessary distress. To get angry, even briefly, on every occasion of harm, no matter how slight, is both unnatural and unnecessary.

If this division is right, anger is indeed inescapable for any human being. For it is a necessary response to situations in which another voluntarily inflicts a harm that is great enough to deprive oneself (or one's friends) of life, bodily health, or happiness. It is natural to be angry in other circumstances as well, though in these cases anger is not necessary. People will vary in their response to such situations. Some will be angry, others won't; and if they are angry, that is perfectly natural – there is no reason to censure them. Accordingly, some people, even among the wise, will be angry more often than others in the same circumstances. Some will be more

[79] Cf. Sen. *De ira* 2.25.1. [80] See Arist. *EN* 1126a18–19 and Stob. *Anth.* 2.7.20.

inclined to anger because of their physical constitution; by nature, they have more fiery atoms in the soul, as Lucretius explains.[81] If they get angry, however, reason has the power to keep them firmly in control. Or some persons may judge that the loss of pleasure that consists in getting angry is not worth the gain that may be derived from imposing punishment. Such persons will abstain from anger in the same kind of situation in which another will get angry. This range of responses is natural, as befits human nature. There is no reason to try to reduce anger to just those situations where it is necessary, just as it would be futile to try to reduce all pleasures to necessary pleasures. This would be a serious deprivation of human life, one that would do violence to the sort of beings we naturally are. What humans must avoid strenuously, by contrast, is anger that is not only unnecessary but also unnatural.

There is, then, a range of anger: necessary, optional and prohibited. The first two kinds are natural, the third is not. In Epicurean terminology, anger is divided into three kinds: natural and necessary, natural and unnecessary, and unnatural and unnecessary. Whether necessary or optional, natural anger is a full-bodied anger, as David Armstrong has argued, not the prickings that the Stoics admitted as a momentary, involuntary response.[82] At the same time, natural anger is not very troublesome; for it is a rationally controlled emotion, arising from a disposition that recognizes the nature of human affairs.

What I have put forward is a hypothesis. This hypothesis relies, first, on Philodemus' demand at the end of *On Anger* for a set of conditions that makes anger necessary, and, second, on Epicurus' division of the desires into three kinds. Although none of our texts explicitly divides anger into the same three kinds as desire, the proposed division of anger (to invoke an Epicurean criterion of truth) is in agreement with a wide range of evidence. In general, the hypothesis provides an answer to a question of broad philosophical concern: what conditions make anger, or any other passion, necessary? Stoic definitions of the passions include, as we saw, the judgement that the passion is necessary. Some Stoics, at least, specified that the apparent good or evil must be great. Philodemus and his fellow Epicureans, I suggest, responded to these competing views by specifying, in turn, what makes anger necessary. This is, in brief, a correct judgement that the harm done voluntarily by another is so great as to threaten life, bodily health, or happiness. This judgement requires an insight into what is necessary for life, bodily health, and happiness, what is merely natural,

[81] Lucr. *DRN* 3.288–322. [82] Armstrong 2008, esp. 87.

and what is both unnecessary and unnatural. This is the full extent of the insight that must be added to the assumption of harm; and it is a very weighty requirement.

In conclusion, let us return to Philodemus' response to his opponent at the end of *On Anger*. The response fits into a larger context of argument in which Philodemus faults certain opponents for failing to distinguish between two senses of the term *thumos*. As discussed earlier, Philodemus takes pains to distinguish between a wide sense, one in which *thumos* includes both natural and unnatural anger, and a narrow sense in which *thumos* denotes unnatural or excessive anger.[83] His opponents, Philodemus tells us, used a two-pronged approach. In the first place, they examined books by Epicurus, Metrodorus and Hermarchus to find evidence that the Epicurean leaders approved of excessive anger. Philodemus responds that the leaders intended the term *thumos* in its wide sense; for they made clear that the anger they endorsed is short or moderate.[84] Second, the opponents constructed proofs (πίστεις) in order to show that the Epicureans are committed to accepting excessive anger. Philodemus responds that these proofs, in failing to distinguish between natural and excessive anger, fail to target excessive anger. In his words, the opponents erred 'by not calculating (ἐπ̣ι̣λελογισμένοι) well when *orgê* and *thumos* apply to the same thing and when they do not'.[85]

Philodemus describes the opponents as 'willing to be bookish' (βυβλιακοί), that is, willing to resort to the authority of books.[86] The description has been taken as evidence that his opponents are Epicureans, treating the books of the leaders as a definitive authority, like the Bible.[87] The regard for books, however, is entirely consistent with the well-attested practice of non-Epicurean philosophers invoking the writings of the Epicurean leaders as the basis for their objections.[88] Further, the verb ἐπιλογίζεσθαι, a term brought into prominence by Epicurus to designate an empirical kind of reasoning, has been thought to point to Epicurean opponents.[89] Again, however, the Epicureans have no exclusive claim to the use of the term or

[83] See note 26 of this chapter, p. 159. [84] Col. 45,5–23.

[85] Col. 45,37–40: οἱ δὲ μὴ καλῶς πό|τ' ἐπὶ ταὐτὸ καὶ πότ'οὐκ ἐπὶ | ταὐτὸ φέρετ'ὀργὴ καὶ θυ|μὸς ἐπ̣ι̣λελογισμένοι.

[86] Col. 45,16–17.

[87] So Procopé 1993: 377–8 and 384; Armstrong 2008: 113; and Tsouna, ch. 9 of this volume. Just as for Nicasicrates (see note 50 of this chapter, p. 166), the view now prevails among scholars that the opponents addressed by Philodemus from this point to the end of the book are dissident Epicureans.

[88] See, for example, Cic. *ND* 1.113 and 123.

[89] On the meaning of the term, see further Asmis 1984: 177–8, 204–6; and Schofield 1996.

the type of reasoning. It makes sense for opponents to attempt to employ the same type of argument in order to subvert the Epicureans and in the process, as Philodemus says, to get it wrong. In general, the opponents' contention that the Epicurean leaders endorsed excessive anger makes it very implausible, in my view, that they are Epicureans of any sort, dissident or not. On the other hand, the close attention paid by the opponents to Epicurean books and arguments raises the possibility that they may have been Academics, like Nicasicrates.

What, then, did these opponents argue? There are three arguments, called ἐπιλογισμοί (col. 46.18), ending in the argument discussed at the beginning of this chapter.[90] The first consists of an analogy between feeling gratitude and feeling anger. This is based on the Epicurean pairing of these emotions in the first Key Doctrine. Using Epicurean premises, the opponents appear to argue that just as gratitude is not only natural but also intense in cases of great voluntary benefit, so anger is both natural and intense in cases of great voluntary harm.[91] Despite a crucial gap in the text, it is clear that Philodemus must resist the analogy that in cases of great harm, anger will be intense; for this would be an excess. As discussed above (pp. 169–70), he had already rejected this claim, made without the supporting analogy, in a previous argument. Just as before, the opponent seeks to subvert the Epicurean position by using the Stoic claim that, the greater the apparent good or evil, the greater the passion.[92]

The second argument is very badly preserved. It rests on an analogy between getting drunk and becoming angry. Again, what seems clear is that Philodemus must resist the conclusion that, even if a comparable excess (in this case, getting very drunk) is natural, excessive anger is not. In both of these arguments, the opponents use analogy to knock down the Epicurean boundary between moderate and excessive anger.

We come now to the final argument. Here, the opponent accuses the Epicureans of holding that anger follows without fail (πάντως) on every assumption of harm, provided that the harm is voluntary. The opponent concedes that the anger will be brief. What, then, is the point of his objection? I suggest that, just as in the previous two arguments, the opponent

[90] For a detailed analysis of all three arguments, see Sanders and Tsouna, cited in note 6 of this chapter, p. 153.

[91] Col. 46,18–40 and 48,3–33. The claim that the wise person feels both gratitude for benefits and anger at harm is in sharp contrast with the Stoic position that the wise person is receptive of neither benefits nor harm.

[92] See Sen. *De ira* 2.6.3–4 and *Ep.* 85.11–12.

again imputes an excess of anger to the wise. For someone is carried away by excessive anger not only if he succumbs to intense or enduring anger, but also if he gets angry at every case of voluntarily inflicted harm, no matter how slight. Such a person is irascible, ὀργίλος, even if his anger is brief. Philodemus counters that something else is needed to make the wise person inevitably angry; and this, I have suggested, is the judgement that the harm is so great as to deprive oneself of life, physical well-being, or happiness.

CHAPTER 9

Philodemus, Seneca and Plutarch on anger

Voula Tsouna

Philosophers of Hellenistic and Roman times, even those belonging to different schools, found themselves in increasingly close association with one another. This was especially the case with those who lived and worked in Italy during the late Republic or the imperial period, but the same could also be said to some extent for those intellectuals living in the provinces who remained in close contact with the philosophical centres. The philosophical production of these centuries is characterized by eclecticism (i.e., a willingness to draw selectively from various traditions whatever elements seem best suited to one's purposes)[1] and by syncretism (i.e., a tendency towards the fusion of diverse elements into new, distinct philosophical systems). Both syncretism and eclecticism are arguably to be found in Philodemus' Epicureanism, Seneca's Stoicism and Plutarch's various endeavours, Platonic and otherwise. Both features can also be traced to different extents in the writings of these authors on the emotion of anger.

It is a matter of some controversy whether Seneca and Plutarch had access to, or took account of, Philodemus' *On Anger* (*De ira*).[2] Certainly neither Seneca's *De ira*[3] nor Plutarch's *On the Control of Anger* contains any explicit reference to the earlier treatise by Philodemus. Nevertheless, there is some reason to believe that both Seneca and Plutarch would have had access either to Philodemus' treatises, or at least to material from the Epicurean scholarch Zeno of Sidon that Philodemus incorporated into his

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[1] Cf. Donini 1988.

[2] Sedley 1989: 104, notes that 'no doctrinal treatise by Philodemus is ever cited in any ancient source' and questions whether these works were ever even properly published or disseminated beyond the local Epicurean school community of which Philodemus was a part.

[3] Both Philodemus' and Seneca's works are frequently referred to by the title *De ira*, but apart from citation references in the notes, I shall henceforth refer to Philodemus' treatise exclusively by its English title, *On Anger*.

own writing. Seneca had the imperial and other libraries at his disposal, a keen interest in Epicureanism, and knowledge of both earlier and later Epicurean positions. There is some support for the suggestion that parts of the second book of his own *De ira* target the Epicureans, and in particular Philodemus, though there remains disagreement on this point. As for Plutarch, he lectured in Rome and, regularly, in Athens. Both geographical location and his extensive knowledge of Epicureanism make it likely that he had access to Zeno's and/or Philodemus' works. He certainly gives the appearance of familiarity with the version of Epicureanism promoted as orthodoxy by Zeno's followers. Whatever Seneca's or Plutarch's familiarity with Philodemus' work, however, each of these three authors draws primarily on a different philosophical theory; and, as I shall argue, each one's treatment of the emotion is shaped by a distinct agenda. In Sections 1 to 3, I comment on the philosophical background, rhetorical strategies, and goals of each treatise individually, focusing on important points of comparison between them. In Section 4, I suggest some social and psychological factors that may have played a role in determining each author's perspective.

1 PHILODEMUS' *ON ANGER*

Philodemus' work *On Anger*, which belongs to the ensemble *On the Passions*, is the earliest surviving monograph on that subject.[4] It was probably composed during the first phase of Philodemus' activity at Herculaneum, between 75 and 50 BC. Although the work originally ran to approximately 120 columns, roughly the first half of the text has perished. The second half consists of 50 well-preserved columns, as well as several fragments and roughly 15 additional, almost entirely illegible columns. Culturally, *On Anger* reflects a widespread Greek and Roman preoccupation with the nature, use and control of anger.[5] Philosophically, it constitutes a major contribution to the literature on the emotions and occupies an important place in ongoing controversies between the Epicureans and other schools as well as between competing factions within the Epicurean tradition itself. Much of the remains of the work (cols. 8,16–31,23) is taken up with a diatribe that vividly depicts the intrinsic hatefulness of anger and its terrible

[4] I have looked at both Gomperz 1864 and Wilke 1914 but rely mainly on the most recent edition of *On Anger*, Indelli 1988a. David Armstrong also made available to me, with characteristic generosity, his own as yet unpublished translation of the treatise. For cols. 47,18–50,8. I have also consulted unpublished work by Kirk Sanders, whom I wish to thank. For discussion of parts of the treatise, see Annas 1992; Erler 1992c; Fillion-Lahille 1984; Fish 2004; Harris 2001; Nussbaum 1994; Procopé 1993; and Sorabji 2000.

[5] See, e.g., Harris 2001.

consequences.[6] The remainder is a defence of Philodemus' own view that engages dialectically with the positions of various opponents both outside and inside the Epicurean school.[7] Philodemus speaks in his own voice, not only as the author of the treatise but also as a lively participant in the debates that *On Anger* purports to settle.

His sources cover a broad philosophical spectrum. For his diatribe, he borrows freely from Chrysippus,[8] Bion of Borysthenes (cf. col. 1,16–19) and other non-Epicurean sources, in addition to the authorities of his own school (cf. col. 12,26–9).[9] The latter constitute his main source for the refutation of rival Epicurean positions in the second part of the treatise's surviving columns.[10]

Philodemus argues against various opponents throughout the work, and it is not always easy to establish either their identity or their precise views. One target is clearly those Peripatetics who, interpreting (rightly or wrongly) what Aristotle says about anger in *Rhetoric* 2,[11] express strong approval of the emotion, claiming that it neither can nor ought to be eradicated but is in fact beneficial when measured by reason.[12] Indeed, they claim that anger and the desire for retaliation are the natural and

[6] Although it has been argued (see, e.g., Moles 1996) that 'diatribe' was not a recognized literary genre, Philodemus appears to use the word in precisely this manner at col. 35,28.

[7] The same views appear to have been held also by Zeno of Sidon and his associates; see Armstrong 2004.

[8] See Tieleman 2003 for an attempted reconstruction of Chrysippus' *On the Passions* based on the surviving fragments and ancient *testimonia*. On Chrysippus' treatise, especially that portion known independently as the *Therapeutikos*, as a source for Philodemus' *On Anger*, see now Armstrong 2008: 102–4.

[9] Indelli 1988a: 26–7.

[10] Cf. Fillion-Lahille 1984: 223–36; Indelli 1988a: 26–8; and Ringeltaube 1913: 38–50.

[11] Aristotle provides the necessary philosophical background for Hellenistic and Roman analyses of anger, including Philodemus' own. In the treatise *On the Soul*, Aristotle gives two definitions of ὀργή, the one physical and pertaining to the domain of the natural philosopher, the other intentional and appropriate for the dialectician. While for the natural philosopher ὀργή is 'a surging of the blood [or heat] around the heart' (cf. Renehan 1963), the dialectician will call it 'a desire for revenge (ὄρεξιν ἀντιλυπήσεως) or something like that' (*De an*. 403a16–32). Perhaps not inconsistently (cf. Nehamas 1992), Aristotle elaborates on this second approach in his *Rhetoric*.

[12] Aristotle seems to make the assumption spelled out by both earlier and later writers that, barring exceptional cases, anger cannot be suppressed but must find an outlet in behaviour. It would be a mistake, however, to think that Aristotle approves of anger without qualification. He can be seen, on the one hand, as reinterpreting the Platonic legacy according to which anger belongs to the spirited part of the soul, secures victories on behalf of reason (cf. *Rep*. 440a–e) and provides necessary protection against wrongdoing (cf. *Leg*. 731b); but he also elaborates Plato's intuition that anger ought to be restrained and controlled (cf. *Rep*. 572a, 606d). He names both irascibility and the habitual or complete absence of anger as vices (*EN* 1108a4–9). The virtue that stands in between these two extremes (let us call it 'even temper') implies that the person who possesses it will be angry only with the right people, for the right reasons, in the right way etc. While the virtuous person can get very angry and desire maximal retaliation when circumstances warrant it, his natural inclination is towards deficiency of the emotion, and he is not vengeful (*EN* 1125b28–1126a3).

honourable reaction to intentional offence. On this view, revenge is the best cure for rightful anger: once the aggrieved party has avenged himself in a manner proportional to the offence, he regains peace of mind.

Another of Philodemus' targets is the Stoics. While Philodemus approves of Stoic diatribes against harmful emotions and makes use of Stoic sources in order to depict the nature and consequences of anger, he objects to the central position of Stoic moral psychology: that ordinary emotional responses are in fact false judgements about value and should be eliminated. Anger in particular, according to the Stoics, is an urge far beyond the limits of normative reasoning, with a momentum of its own, and for which there is no room in the Stoic ideal life.

Philodemus' principal rivals, however, turn out not to be members of other schools but fellow Epicureans.[13] The founders of the Epicurean school appear to have held that some sort of anger is unavoidable and even that some sages are more prone to it than others, but both the nature of this ineradicable anger and the wise man's susceptibility to other forms of the emotion apparently remained unclarified. Later Epicureans were divided on these issues, with each group offering a different interpretation of the canonical texts and citing relevant passages in support. The position that Philodemus advocates in *On Anger* (which probably reflects the line of Zeno of Sidon and his school) is one such view: the sage never experiences unnatural anger, though he is liable to feel a natural form of anger compatible with moral perfection. He therefore experiences mostly the pain associated with anger, which is self-limiting, rather than the dangerously attractive pleasure found in revenge and irresponsible assertions of power. Thus, Philodemus stakes out a middle ground between the Peripatetics and the Stoics, as well as between competing Epicurean factions (cf. col. 37,17–32).[14]

[13] For a competing view and further discussion of the possible identity of Philodemus' opponents in *On Anger*, see Asmis' ch. 8 of this volume, pp. 166 and 180–1.

[14] One such faction, headed by Nicasicrates (fr. 7.15) is minimalist: the sage ought to try to feel as little anger as possible and, ideally, no anger at all. Another faction, represented by Timasagoras (col. 7,7), has been thought to be maximalist: the sage may feel even intense and prolonged anger. There are two main arguments in support of this last suggestion. First, Timasagoras denies the usefulness of Chrysippus' and Zeno's diatribes, because he believes that to quote from such writings promotes the Stoic goal of eradicating almost all familiar emotions including anger (cf. Ringeltaube 1913). Second, Philodemus may imply that Timasagoras is a proponent of anger when he makes the following gibe at his expense: 'He himself [*sc.* Timasagoras] was not clear about the misfortunes that were to follow from his anger against Basilides and Thespis, although he had set limits, as he thought, upon its sharpness' (col. 5,18–25). Indeed, if Timasagoras is associated with 'those who want to be faithful to the books' (βυβλιακοῖς; col. 45,16–17) and who attribute to the founders of the Epicurean school the belief that any kind of anger is compatible with sagehood, he would be no less maximalist than

Philodemus' discussion of anger relies on and develops basic tenets of Epicurus' moral psychology, and in particular of his approach to the emotions or passions. Epicurus' extant remains contain neither a general theory of emotions nor a detailed examination of any particular emotion.[15] He does, however, state views concerning the desires involved in emotions; the relations between desire, belief and emotion; and the reasons why certain emotions ought to be eliminated.[16] Here I shall only outline certain features of the Epicurean analysis of harmful emotions, which may have been first systematized by Philodemus' teacher, Zeno of Sidon.[17] When Philodemus refers to an emotion (πάθος),[18] he may mean either the disposition (διάθεσις) to react in a particular manner in response to one's perception of a given situation, or an individual occurrence of the emotion, which itself derives from the relevant disposition and can be understood in terms of it. In either case, emotions are complex conditions or events associated primarily with the rational part of the soul. They are cognitive in the sense that they involve beliefs and judgements. On the assumption that all emotions entail desires, and given that Epicurus classifies desires into natural and empty according to the nature of the beliefs on which they depend (*KD* 29), the classification of emotions in a similar manner is a natural extension of his views. Indeed, Philodemus suggests that emotions such as anger and the fear of death are in many cases empty emotions precisely because they often involve empty (i.e., both false and harmful) beliefs about their objects. So, a crucial part of emotional therapy consists in identifying and attempting to remove the beliefs in question as well as, if possible, replacing them with true ones.[19]

But emotions also have extra-cognitive elements. They involve different kinds of mental pictures, imaginings and even sensations and raw feelings. All these factors need to be taken into account in the relevant therapy. Philodemus' approach mirrors familiar Stoic practices while remaining true to the authorities of his own school. He relies on rhetorical and literary techniques as well as arguments in order to remove harmful emotions and thus facilitate the rational pursuit of pleasure. For instance, in addition to surveying and appraising relevant evidence, Philodemus employs historical

they. However, we should bear in mind that there is no decisive evidence associating Timasagoras with the anonymous authors of the ἐπιλογισμοί at the end of the treatise (cols. 46,13–48,3).

[15] Cf. Annas 1989.

[16] Among the extensive modern literature on these subjects, see most recently Konstan 2008b.

[17] I discuss these features in detail in Tsouna 2007b.

[18] On the meaning of πάθος, see the different views advanced in Asmis 1999 and Konstan 2008b: 1–25.

[19] On Epicurean therapeutic strategies see, most recently, Tsouna 2009.

exempla or vividly depicts the symptoms and consequences of a passion in order to convince us of its badness. Unlike the Stoics, however, Epicureans do not aspire to eradicate *all* emotions, only those they regard as excessive and harmful.

It seems, however, that the earliest authorities of the school did not always draw clear distinctions between healthy and unhealthy emotions. The special category of emotions referred to by Philodemus as 'bites' or 'pangs' (designated by δηγμός or νυγμός and their cognates) are introduced to address precisely this problem.[20] In certain respects they are comparable to what many Stoics also refer to as 'bites', i.e., natural and unavoidable sensations experienced by everyone – including the wise – that result from one's passive confrontation with the world and are independent of judgement.[21] But, as a comparison of the relevant views of Philodemus and Seneca on the subject makes clear, Epicurean 'bites' are genuine emotions, whereas their Stoic counterparts are not. Philodemus regularly associates his 'bites' with natural anger (ὀργή), a healthy reaction even the wise man is bound to experience in response to intentional offense. Severe and long-lasting pain is associated with the unnatural or empty anger (θυμός) that affects only fools. Philodemus makes it clear, however, that natural anger is no less a genuine species of the emotion than empty anger (34,18–20; 40,36–40; 41,8–9). By contrast, Seneca identifies 'bites' with agitations that are preliminary to a passion. He seeks to dissociate these preliminary 'bites' from passions proper on the grounds that the former, unlike the latter, do not involve judgement. The issue of 'bites' is significant, then, both because Philodemus is our earliest Epicurean source for the concept, and because their innovative use in Seneca's *De ira* may represent a response to the Epicurean contention that the sage is affected by a natural kind of anger.

Before turning to those specific characteristics of Philodemus' analysis in *On Anger* that invite comparison with corresponding features in Seneca and Plutarch, a preliminary comment is in order.[22] Although the extant remains of *On Anger* can be divided into two stylistically different parts, Philodemus' philosophical concerns pervade the entire treatise. Philodemus' diatribe against anger is not a mere rhetorical exercise. It contains conceptual elements pertaining to the analysis of the passion that are no less important than what is found in the dialectical part of the treatise. In fact, it is in the course of the diatribe that Philodemus describes and defines

[20] See Tsouna 2007a: 368–78; Armstrong 2004 and 2006. [21] Cf. Sorabji 2000: 202.
[22] An extensive defence of my claims below is found in Tsouna 2007a and Tsouna 2007b.

anger in both psychological and physiological terms.[23] Anger, he suggests, is primarily a matter of a disposition (διάθεσις), in this case irascibility. This is 'a merciless, savage, and harsh disposition . . . to which the emotion is conjoined' (27,19–23). Individual outbursts of anger derive from this disposition and are causally related to it. An irascible person is not always angry, nor does anger always derive from irascibility. Philodemus makes clear that it is also possible for someone to give the appearance of irascibility without really being irascible,[24] and that non-irascible persons (ἀοργήτους; 34,16), including even the wise man, can share characteristics of irascible men (ὀργίλοι; cf. 34,30–6). When someone truly irascible considers himself intentionally harmed by another person, he becomes enraged and seeks revenge. Philodemus calls the desire for revenge 'unspeakable' (ἄρρητον; 23,27) and 'a desire that buys at any price whatever it lusts for' (27,28–9). Moreover, contrary to the popular opinion allegedly endorsed by the Peripatetics, Philodemus maintains that it is pure savagery to feel pleasure at the prospect or the fulfilment of revenge (cf. 42,2–9; 43,31–2; 44,31–2).[25] This focus on the dispositional dimension of anger and the denunciation of the desire for revenge and any associated pleasures is also found in Seneca and in Plutarch. All three authors have as their ultimate concern to address the disposition of their 'patients', and all three share the assumption that moral improvement is cardinally a matter of character, not merely behaviour.

Philodemus presents anger, like other emotions, as both a cognitive and an affective event. Beliefs play an important role in the generation of anger and appear to have both causal and temporal priority over its other elements. Contrary to the wise man's anger, which involves only true beliefs, the anger of an irascible person is consequent upon empty, or false and harmful, opinions (ψευδοδοξία; 6,14–15). Philodemus suggests that the opinions in question are evaluative and can concern either the magnitude of the offense or the appropriateness of one's reaction to it. Hence they are similar to the kinds of judgements of which anger is said to consist by the Stoics, Seneca included. On account of such false judgements,'not only are some people continually enraged, but sometimes they are caught by bursts of rage which last for several years and are hard to dispel; and

[23] Throughout the diatribe portion of *On Anger*, Philodemus refers to the passion using the term ὀργή in a non-technical sense.

[24] The section treating this question runs roughly from col. 34,16 to col. 37,9. It is not clear precisely where it ends, because several lines after 37,9 are almost illegible.

[25] Aristotle counts the prospect of vengeance among the pleasures of anticipation (*Rh.* 1370b9–16, 1378b1–10) and Philodemus attributes to some Peripatetics the claim that revenge is something fine, just, profitable and pleasant (*De ira* col. 32,23–9).

even if they are checked, they swell up mightily again and some of them stay with people until death and often are handed down to their children's children' (30,13–24). Affectively, anger based on empty beliefs has a distinct experiential quality (cf. 43,41–44,35; 45,34–7). It is experienced as a particularly violent and intense emotion (44,5–10), persistent and long-lasting, involving an obsessive desire for retaliation, and lying outside one's control. It is worth noting here that these are the very features Seneca attributes to all anger, a fact that helps explain his recommendation to completely eradicate the emotion.

Confronting the patient with the consequences of anger plays an important role in the Epicurean treatment of the emotion, and, hence, in Philodemus' diatribe against it.[26] The relevant therapeutic technique in this regard is often described as 'setting-before-the-eyes' (πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν τιθέναι), i.e., vividly depicting the associated sufferings and dangers.[27] Among Philodemus' predecessors, Chrysippus and Bion both employ this technique. Philodemus proves far more restrained in its use than will Seneca, but even this restrained usage has its critics. Philodemus' Epicurean rival Timasagoras maintains that the imagistic depiction of anger's evils found in Chrysippus and Bion is unnecessary, since rational argument suffices for treating anger. Philodemus counters with a defence of the need for vivid depictions in addition to rational considerations: '[While some] of the doctors [reason or talk about] the magnitude of the disease and the passionate feelings that occur because of it and its other inconveniences, and sometimes also the dangers, (these things) escape the patients' notice, some entirely ([κα]θόλου), others as they are appraised (ἐπιλογιστικῶς), whence they become more careless about avoiding them as if moderate (evils) were happening to them; but when they are put before the eyes, they make patients eager to be treated' (4,4–19). Philodemus never specifies just how setting things before the eyes prompts one to seek therapy, but it seems reasonable to infer that the method works by creating pictures or images in the patient's mind and engaging some form of imagination. An enraged person sees the evils deriving from anger, feels aversion towards the passion, and forms the desire to remove it.[28] What are the contents of such images? Philodemus describes them as 'things that the patient is totally ignorant of, others that he has come to forget, others that he

[26] See, most recently, Tsouna 2009.

[27] On the nature and uses of this technique, see Tsouna 2003.

[28] If the purpose of visualization is indeed to depict the evils of anger as present rather than future, the question might arise why their depiction as present would trigger greater aversion than their depiction as future. One answer could be that we simply have different attitudes towards present as opposed to future suffering; see, e.g., Parfit 1984: 149–86.

has not calculated at least in respect of their magnitude if not in respect of anything else, yet others that he has never contemplated all together as a whole' (3,7–13). Philosophers should depict all these evils, albeit with restraint, emphasize that it is within the patient's power to avoid them, 'and sketch (ὑπογράφουσιν) the ways in which we might least experience angry feelings' (3,21–5).

Following Chrysippus, Bion, and perhaps earlier Epicurean authors as well, Philodemus accordingly places before our eyes physical and psychological features of anger that are, in terms of the medical analogy, symptoms of the disease: 'Anger is a state which consists, as it were, of fever, high swelling, irritation, and indignation, as well as an intense desire for revenge and anxiety as to whether one will be able to obtain it' (8,20–7). It causes various random bodily movements; rapid, shallow breathing; leaps of the heart; trembling and shaking in the limbs; and even paralysis like that of epileptics. Its victims 'are always so liable to black bile that often even their hearts [turn] black' (9,37–41). Their eyes resemble those of a madman (fr. 6.3–12), their faces become red and flushed, their necks tense, their veins swollen, their saliva bitter and salty (fr. 6.12–20).

Despite this litany of physical symptoms, Philodemus places relatively less importance on the physiognomy of anger than do Seneca and Plutarch. Like these two, however, Philodemus also offers vivid depictions of anger's external consequences. He associates anger with insanity and the behaviour of enraged people with that of a madman.[29] They are, for example, said to 'leap up, quite often naked . . . chase people down and grab them as a result of their susceptibility to these intense symptoms' (10,19–26). Their irrationality is equally evident in their choice of targets. They attack not only other people, but also animals, inanimate objects, and even shadows (26,4–7).

Philodemus also touches on anger's relation to politics, a subject that features prominently in Seneca, though not at all in Plutarch. Politics is particularly dangerous terrain for the irascible. They cannot be relied upon to keep secrets on which even their own lives depend: 'In their rage they often reveal conspiracies that they have been part of, as well as other secret actions, with the result that for this very reason they fall into great misfortunes' (25,15–21). The irascible person's contemplation of his many enemies, his frustration when he fails to take revenge, his fear of punishment when he succeeds, and even his feelings of remorse when it is

[29] Cf. his description of anger as a fundamentally irrational condition occurring in '[slavish] souls' (21,5–6) and blunting the operations of reason (10,19–26; 12,20–2; 16,34–40).

too late to repair any damage done, are all sources of great pain (14,29–33; 26,14–25).[30]

Philodemus' treatise is one of the first surviving works to criticize the effects of rage on social relations among friends and within households.[31] In general, irascible people become hateful to parents, brothers, children and friends (24,1–4). Married men accuse their wives of outrageous behaviour, while those who remain bachelors are suspicious of their heirs (22,29–23,2). Fathers take out their anger on their children (17,8–9). Philodemus also gives a realistic appraisal of the risks run by irascible slave-owners in a way that elicits the reader's understanding of, if not sympathy for, the rebellious slaves (24,17–36).[32] He elsewhere criticizes the person who tends 'to beat and kick a slave who has said something or got in the way' (fr. 13.23–6).[33]

Changing his tone to address his school audience directly, and occasionally using quasi-medical terminology,[34] Philodemus depicts the bad consequences of anger for education, and specifically for pupils in Epicurean schools such as his own. Anger, he suggests, obstructs students' growth in philosophy for a number of reasons (18,35–20,2). Irascible students feel too keenly the pain of reproof, fail to control their anger, watch for every opportunity to get even, and end up as consumed by remorse as they had been previously with the desire for revenge. As a result, they are unable to concentrate on their studies or improve their character. They cannot endure being rebuked and corrected by their teachers or their fellow students; and 'even if (the teachers) reprove other students, they most unreasonably suspect that everything said is always directed at them' (19,21–5). Such students accordingly fail to participate in the common intellectual and moral life of the school. Conversely, irascibility also makes it impossible for a teacher to admonish and reprove his students or peers properly (20,18–27).[35] Rather than using παρρησία ('frank criticism') only as needed, the irascible instructor abuses and slanders those around him.[36] He violates trusts

[30] The remorse at issue is the result not of a rational assessment of one's own error but rather a reaction as irrational as anger itself; see col. 15,12–30. Such mental tortures can become literally unendurable (16,25–34; cf. also 26,25–34).

[31] See Harris 2001: 306–7.

[32] Harris 2001: 322 takes the passage to emphasize only the prudential reasons why showing anger towards slaves should be avoided; see also p. 321 for Harris' discussion of violence towards slaves as the cause of actual slave rebellions.

[33] Unfortunately, the immediate context is missing; but cf. 23,36–40.

[34] Armstrong (see above, note 4 of this chapter, p. 184) explains how Philodemus in this passage sets aside the sarcasm evident in the remainder of his diatribe to address the school in earnest, taking seriously the medical metaphor also found in his *On Frank Criticism*.

[35] *On Frank Criticism* discusses how rage motivates a kind of criticism that is the exact opposite of proper παρρησία.

[36] Cf. *De libert. dic.* cols. 1b,1–2a,7.

by disclosing confidential words and deeds.[37] He also 'frowns over trifles' (20,18–19).[38] In addition to correcting genuine errors, he invents others or magnifies insignificant faults in an attempt to vindicate his anger (20,24–5). His reproof, as Philodemus remarks in the treatise *On Frank Criticism* (*De libertate dicendi*), is a hateful thing (ἄφιλον) rather than constructive.[39] It disrupts the ambiance of an Epicurean school, undermines the relations among its members and frustrates its educational objectives.[40]

Immediately after his extended diatribe, Philodemus begins the dialectical section of the treatise, in which the focus shifts to theoretical issues. Questions regarding whether anger is a good or bad thing and whether the sage ever experiences it in any form apparently gave rise to disputes between competing Epicurean factions and were of lively interest to Philodemus. The scholarly manner in which he treats these subjects is nowhere more apparent than towards the end of the treatise, where he responds to three empirically based arguments (ἐπιλογισμοί)[41] advanced by his opponents. Rhetoric gives way to sober reasoning. Nevertheless, while Philodemus defends his method along general lines, he leaves his audience to work out specific applications. For example, he makes it clear that the appropriate therapy consists of exclusively cognitive techniques, but unlike the authors of other extant treatises on the subject – including, as we shall see, Seneca and Plutarch – he does not specify just what these techniques are. In sum, Philodemus' *On Anger* seems more bent on theoretical analysis and argument than on persuasion and practice.

The dialectical section of *On Anger* begins with an attack on the Peripatetics for encouraging anger (31,24–34,6).[42] In response to the claim that anger of all kinds can be acceptable and useful, Philodemus counters that it is neither. As far as military matters are concerned, one fights better without anger, and angry soldiers frequently do more harm than good. With regard to private affairs, anger makes it difficult to ensure that the wrongdoer actually gets punished.[43] So, maintains Philodemus, anger is not useful for any of the reasons advanced by Aristotelian philosophers. The distinction

[37] Students need to trust their teachers and peers in order to frankly confess their own errors; cf. *De libert. dic*. col. 40,5–14. That said, they should also be careful of just what they confess and to whom; cf. *De libert. dic*. col. 53,3–12.

[38] Cf. *De libert. dic*. fr. 79.4–12. [39] *De libert. dic*. fr. 78.2. [40] Cf. *De ira* col. 20,28–21,4.

[41] On the meaning of ἐπιλογισμός, see Asmis 1984: 177–8, 204–6; and Schofield 1996; cf. also Asmis, ch. 8 of this volume, p. 180.

[42] One of Philodemus' reasons may be to forestall the objection that his own position, that natural anger is unavoidable and even good (cf. 37,20–39), is essentially the same as the Peripatetic view.

[43] Philodemus draws support for these claims from Antipater of Tarsus; see Fillion-Lahille 1984: 211–20.

he develops between natural and unnatural anger also entails a rejection of the pleasure the Peripatetics associate with revenge.[44]

This distinction between two kinds or species of anger is the central focus throughout the dialectical part of *On Anger*, and therefore something one would expect any subsequent philosophers engaging with the work to display an awareness of. Perhaps its clearest statement is found in the following passage (37,20–38,9):

> Since there is false reasoning of some sort induced by the word [*sc.* ὀργή], we do not make any simple pronouncement [*sc.* as to anger's goodness or badness], but we claim that the emotion itself taken in isolation is an evil because it is painful or close to painful, whereas taken in conjunction with one's disposition it can even be called a good, as we think. For it results from our understanding of the nature of things and from our holding no false beliefs in the matter of measuring the offences and of punishing the offenders. As a result, in the same way in which we called empty anger (κ[ενὴν ὀρ]γήν) an evil because it arises from a thoroughly corrupt disposition and brings on countless troubles, we must call natural anger (φυσικὴν ὀργήν) not an evil – but, in so far as it is something biting [*sc.* it concerns very few things].

Philodemus' distinction between these two types of anger is clearly modelled on Epicurus' own distinction between natural and empty desires.[45] Drawing attention to an ambiguity in standard Greek usage, Philodemus distinguishes between anger per se and the emotion in connection with the disposition from which it derives.[46] In the former sense, anger is painful and therefore an evil.[47] In the latter sense, whether anger is a good or an evil depends on whether the person's disposition is itself good or bad. It would be not only futile but also fundamentally misguided for someone with a good disposition to attempt to avoid anger entirely (38,18–22).

Setting aside ordinary usage, Philodemus employs the Greek terms ὀργή and θυμός to designate natural and empty anger respectively. There are four senses in which ὀργή, as opposed to θυμός, qualifies as natural: ὀργή is

[44] See note 54 of this chapter, p. 196; cf. also Asmis' ch. 8 of this volume, pp. 171–2.

[45] Procopé 1993 seems to have been the first to make this connection clearly; see esp. p. 173.

[46] Philodemus does not clarify here the precise relation between a person's disposition and beliefs, but he probably assumes that one's disposition is, among other things, the inclination to hold certain beliefs and react to relevant circumstances in particular ways on the basis of these beliefs. When people have a corrupt (i.e., irascible) disposition, they tend to hold empty beliefs about the magnitude of the perceived offence and the severity of an appropriate punishment (cf. κολάσεσι; 37,38–9) for the offender. Philodemus consequently classifies their anger as empty and calls it an evil. By contrast, persons who have a good disposition hold true beliefs about how things are and so correctly appraise the nature of the offence and the punishment due.

[47] Cf. Asmis' discussion in ch. 8 of this volume, pp. 161–2.

advantageous (39,26–9; cf. also 39,29–38); it accords with a correct understanding of the nature of things (37,20–38,9); it is a sound, unperverted reaction to intentional offence serving the purpose of self-defence (ibid.);[48] and it is unavoidable (40,17–22).[49] Accordingly, ὀργή differs from θυμός in both its cognitive and affective aspects.[50] Cognitively, natural anger is based on exclusively true beliefs, whereas empty anger is consequent upon false opinions (6,14–15).[51] Affectively, ὀργή and θυμός each have a distinct feel (43,41–44,35; cf. 45,34–7). There are other, related differences as well. Natural anger is self-contained, whereas unnatural rage has the tendency to escalate, precisely because of the empty beliefs associated with it (40,6–12). The pain of ὀργή is brief (42,38–9), whereas that of empty anger sharpens over time (40,7–10).[52] Moreover, even on occasions when the sage is at his angriest, his tranquillity remains virtually unaffected (41,39–42,20).[53] Philodemus' general strategy is to insist that the sage's anger, however great, remains within natural bounds and differs in kind from the fool's anger. The anger a sage experiences is a natural and automatic response to outside hostility (cf. 40,32–41,9). While he cannot avoid experiencing *some* response, he does avoid assenting to the belief that truly great harm was

[48] Cf. *KD* 7.

[49] In fact, as Philodemus reminds us (43,14–41), it is because anger is a natural drive to which all human beings (in contrast to the gods) are subject that Epicurus labels it a weakness in *KD* 1. The naturalness of ὀργή bears on the issue whether ὀργή involves desires that are in Epicurean terms both natural and necessary or ones that are merely natural. The inescapability of natural anger would seem to entail that the desire to get even with one's offender is both natural and necessary (cf. Annas 1989). But while we feel pain if our natural and necessary desires are unsatisfied, we normally do not suffer if our desire to punish those who have deliberately harmed us remains unfulfilled (cf. Procopé 1993: 178). Indeed, being pained in this way is itself a sign that our anger is not natural but empty. Moreover, although the desire for security is natural, and although natural anger does promote a kind of security through self-protection and deterrence, a display of ὀργή is not always the easiest or most expedient way to achieve this good, as it would perhaps have to be if ὀργή involved desires that were necessary as well as natural. For a much more detailed attempt to link the sage's anger to Epicurus' class of natural but non-necessary desires, see now Asmis' ch. 8 of this volume.

[50] Regarding the way in which different aspects of a given emotion are related to each other, see Tsouna 2007a: 42–3.

[51] These beliefs may concern the intentions of the supposed offender, the extent of the harm suffered, or the punishment merited. A person who becomes enraged is also unwilling to accept explanations or apologies, partly because of his false beliefs about the situation (23,20–4).

[52] The text of these lines is partly restored; however, it is certain that Philodemus draws a contrast between the time when anger is first aroused and a later time when the emotion has escalated, and that he contrasts the small pain of anger in its early stages with the pain of violent anger.

[53] Compare the sage's attitude towards intense physical suffering. As Epicurus showed on his deathbed (see DL 10.22), the sage can cope with such pain without losing his serenity and happiness. Surely, it is much easier to safeguard one's peace of mind against the assault of natural anger, no matter how intense it may be.

done to him, since the sage does not attribute much value to the external goods associated with most anger-provoking harm. Finally, ὀργή and θυμός differ in the attitudes that they dictate towards punishment. While empty rage causes one to regard retaliation as enjoyable (42,21–39), natural anger entails the pursuit of punishment as something necessary but unpleasant (44,5–8, 15–22, 32–5).[54]

Whether or not original to Philodemus, this distinction between natural and empty anger is provocative both in itself and in its main implication, namely, that the sage will occasionally experience some form of anger. Philodemus is willing to concede that there are circumstances in which *any* decent person would feel the 'bites' associated with natural and healthy anger. To the extent that they arise from human nature, they must be acknowledged as natural and appropriate reactions to aggression.[55] Though there may be something bad in experiencing such bites, not feeling them would be far worse, since it would imply that one is not a properly functioning moral agent. Philodemus does not, however, concede to his opponents that any good person, let alone the sage, ever experiences θυμός – the harmful kind of anger that plagues most men. He maintains that ὀργή can and does stop short of θυμός and that, consequently, the sage can become angry without risking his sanity. The debate in the second half of *On Anger* turns on precisely this point. Again, it seems reasonable to expect an awareness of, and a reaction to, these crucial distinctions in the related work of anyone familiar with Philodemus' treatise.

2 SENECA'S *DE IRA*

Seneca's *De ira* was probably composed in AD 41,[56] roughly 100 years after Philodemus' *On Anger* and about 60 years before Plutarch's essay *On the Control of Anger*. It is addressed to the author's brother, Novatus, an accomplished orator who held the offices of consul and governor and, therefore, had virtually unlimited power over non-citizens (*De ira* 2.22–4).[57] Like Philodemus, Seneca writes in his own name and in his capacity as

[54] Contrast Aristotle, who counts the prospect of vengeance among the pleasures of anticipation (*Rh.* 1370b9–16, 1378b1–10).

[55] In his *On Death*, Philodemus repeatedly contrasts 'bites' of distress with deep grief (λύπη) and treats these as distinct but conceptually related kinds of πάθη. For a detailed discussion of affinities between Philodemus' *On Anger* and *On Death*, see Sanders' ch. 10 of this volume.

[56] Cf. Fillion-Lahille 1984: 273–8.

[57] Novatus committed suicide in AD 66, a year after Seneca took his own life.

a philosophical and moral expert.[58] His *De ira* addresses a general, educated public, but the first four chapters of Book 2, which explain the psychological process of the generation of anger and constitute 'the bones and sinews' of the work as a whole,[59] suggest that Seneca's intended audience included trained philosophers.[60]

In terms of both content and structure, *De ira*'s articulation is loose, and the rationale of its exposition is controversial. Many critics have commented on the 'extraordinary disorder' of the work, the casual arrangement of the material, and the use of rhetoric at the expense of philosophical rigour.[61] For all its alleged shortcomings, the work is clearly divided into two sections: one theoretical, the other therapeutic. Book 1 and the first half of Book 2 (= 2.1–17) address a series of theoretical questions similar to those encountered in Philodemus (e.g., What is anger? Is it natural? Can it be moderate? Is it in any way connected with virtue? Does it have any utility? Is it capable of being eradicated?). The remainder of Book 2 and Book 3 offer a long list of remedies.

Both Seneca's sources and his principal opponents are subjects of widespread disagreement. Although he seems essentially to endorse and develop Chrysippus' doctrine of the passions, it seems safe to assume that Seneca draws on both earlier and later Stoics. In addition to Chrysippus' writings *On the Soul* and *On Passions* (especially that portion known as the *Therapeutikos*, which also served as one of Philodemus' sources), he must also have consulted Posidonius' works *On Passions* and *On Anger*.[62] Other identifiable influences include Sextius and Sotion, a thinker with Pythagorean inclinations and author of a diatribe *On Anger*.[63] As intended adversaries, Seneca explicitly acknowledges the Peripatetics, and in particular Aristotle and Theophrastus.[64] However, it has been suggested that Seneca's target in Book 2 of the treatise is not the Peripatetics but the Epicureans, and even Philodemus specifically.[65] The following considerations may lend qualified support to that suggestion.

[58] On Seneca's frequent self-presentation as someone who seeks to attain, and help others attain, the Stoic way of life, see Cooper 2004: 311.

[59] Graver 2007: 94.

[60] So Inwood 2005: 18.

[61] See Fillion-Lahille 1984, esp. p. 283. Cooper 2004: 309–34, argues forcefully for the claim that Seneca often dismisses the value of knowledge and argument in favour of rhetorical appeals.

[62] On the latter of which, see Edelstein and Kidd 1972–99: vol. II, pp. 178–80.

[63] According to Fillion-Lahille 1984, Sotion's influence looms large in the entire *De ira*, though especially in Book 3. Democritus, Socrates, Plato, Speusippus, Zeno, Cicero and Sextius are also cited as inspiration and exemplars.

[64] Hieronymus is also mentioned. According to Fillion-Lahille 1984: 211–20, Seneca borrows some of his criticisms in Book 1 from Chrysippus and others from Antipater of Tarsus.

[65] Cf. Fillion-Lahille 1984: 221–43.

Seneca's treatment of anger is, of course, grounded in Stoic theorizing about the emotions. Scholars have disagreed as to whether Seneca, like Chrysippus, is a psychological monist committed to the view that emotions are manifestations of the reasoning faculty,[66] or a dualist of the kind many take Posidonius to be, i.e., one who endorses the view that emotions spring from a part of the soul that is itself irrational though nevertheless subject to reason.[67] Seneca's moral psychology certainly encapsulates the core of orthodox ideas, even if he does develop Chrysippus' theory of the passions in innovative ways. Although Seneca's wording at times suggests that the soul is divided into distinct parts and that the passions, especially anger, belong to a part opposed to reason (e.g., 1.7.2–3, 2.1.1–4), I take such expressions to be matters of literary form that do not in fact commit Seneca to any form of dualism.[68] Accordingly, anger and the other passions are for Seneca, as for Chrysippus, rational in at least the following senses: they are products or conditions of the reasoning capacity itself; they are essentially expressible and involve assent; and they represent views to which the agent was committed at the time and for which he is fully responsible. Anger is thus a corrupted form of reason, representing a misguided and excessive reaction to external circumstances. To the extent that anger is more overwhelming and violent than other such reactions, it is understandably the primary object of Stoic therapy aimed at their total eradication.

At the outset, Seneca pronounces anger the 'the most hideous and rabid' of all the passions (1.1.1). The motivation for this characterization lies in the violence and cruelty of vengeful acts, and these features constitute the focus of Seneca's exposition throughout the treatise. He begins similarly to Philodemus, first defining anger, explaining its nature, symptoms and consequences, and then setting these before the reader's eyes. While he provides multiple definitions of anger,[69] his considered opinion seems to be that anger is the desire to exact vengeance for injury (cf. 1.3.2–3) or, as Aristotle puts it, 'the desire to pay back grief'.[70] Like Philodemus, he distinguishes the manifestations of anger from irascibility (1.4.1), the disposition from which anger arises and which can in turn be explained by reference to the emotion. Seneca departs from Philodemus, however, in the attention he lavishes on excessive outbursts of the passion.

Seneca's description of the symptoms and characteristics of anger resembles Philodemus' in many respects, notably the association of anger with

[66] So, e.g. Cooper and Procopé 1995; Cooper 2004, esp. 309–14; and Inwood 2005: 23–64.
[67] So, e.g. Holler 1934; Fillion-Lahille 1984. [68] Cf. Inwood 2005: 31–41.
[69] These definitions are in a part of the text preserved only in Lactantius' *De ira dei* 17.
[70] Arist. *De an.* 403a30–2.

insanity and the physiognominal and physio-psychological features of the angry man. Both authors agree that such a person – with his blazing eyes, flushed face, random movements, and unintelligible speech – resembles a madman, projecting an image that is, in Seneca's words, 'foul and horrid to see' (1.1.4). But when it comes to the consequences of anger, their respective treatises show an entirely different focus. Seneca's attention is absorbed by the catastrophic impact of anger in the public sphere. Anger is the reason that battles are lost, cities and entire nations perish, and heroic figures suffer or inflict hardships, torture and violent death. Most of all Seneca focuses on the anger of the *principes* – absolute rulers whose rage causes suffering either for themselves or for others.[71] *De ira* is replete with examples of hair-raising cruelty, such as the gruesome tales involving King Cambyses and his friend Prexaspes, Phalaris, Hannibal and Romans like Volesus, Lucius Sulla and Gaius Caesar (Caligula). Seneca sets before our eyes creatures that seem barely human: slaves of their perverse desires, bloodthirsty, sadistic, unable to control their rage or, even worse, inflicting injury without provocation. Whatever factors contribute to Seneca's emphasis on these negative extremes, however, therapeutic and philosophical functions are certainly key among them.

At the beginning of Book 2, Seneca addresses the issue of 'whether anger originates from choice or impulse, i.e., whether it is aroused of its own accord or, like much else that occurs within us, it does not arise without our knowledge' (2.1.1). If anger can be stopped or altered by conscious, rational control, it should be something voluntary; however, it is also clear that we occasionally experience feelings beyond our control, which occur without any assent. In light of these apparent facts, Seneca suggests that the generation of anger is a complex process involving both lower and higher level responses. The first step consists in an impression of injury, upon which an impulse arises spontaneously, without the mind's assent. Seneca classifies this as a simple mental process (2.1.5) and maintains that the ensuing disturbance is preliminary to, but distinct from, anger itself (2.2.5–6). Preliminary sensations of this sort are what many Stoics call 'bites', contending, as does Seneca, that they are part of the human condition to which even the sage is susceptible (2.2.2). This concession had probably already been made by Chrysippus' himself,[72] but Seneca develops and explains it, carefully distinguishing such feelings from the

[71] Although this topic is particularly prominent in Seneca, it is not entirely absent from Philodemus' *On Anger*; see, e.g., col. 29,20–9.

[72] See Graver 2007: 88–93.

emotion proper.[73] The next step in the process occurs if one both endorses the impression of injury and judges it right to avenge oneself. This is a complex and voluntary response, an active impulse that presses on towards revenge as the appropriate course of action. The result at this point plausibly meets all the conditions of anger proper.[74] The active impulse is itself nothing more than the assent to the impression of intentional offence; and that assent *is* anger.[75] Seneca thus follows Stoic orthodoxy in maintaining that anger is a voluntary judgement and, hence, a condition of the rational mind. But he also seizes upon and develops Chrysippus' insight that a genuinely angry person runs the risk of becoming cruel and perverse to the point of brutishness. Seneca accordingly posits a third step in the emotion's development, wherein the impulse runs riot and the injured party seeks revenge at all costs (2.4.1). There is no reliable way to prevent the emotion proper once initiated from advancing to this stage, and so there can be no such thing as 'safe' anger. From the moment that one assents to the impression of injury and gives way to the passion, the possibility exists of being carried away to the greatest extremes of somone like Sulla or Caligula. Hence, the goal should be the complete eradication of anger.

Who are Seneca's opponents here? It is possible that his three-step theory is aimed at the Peripatetics. But Seneca's contention that the initial mental shock (*ictus animi*; 2.2.2) resulting from the impression of injury is a pre-emotional state rather than a genuine emotion suggests Philodemus' doctrine of 'bites' as another potential target. While Seneca and Philodemus agree that such feelings are natural and unavoidable, Seneca insists that they are also entirely non-culpable. The fact that even the wise man is subject to them in virtue of his humanity does not entail, according to Seneca, that he is ever genuinely angry. In support of his view, he offers additional arguments that may also be seen as responses to Philodemus' claim that the wise experience a natural form of anger. First, argues Seneca, nothing can resist the power of the human mind (*humana mens*), not even anger (2.12.3–6). The sage is aware of mankind's weaknesses and vulnerabilities and is therefore forgiving of individual offences (2.10.1–4). Like doctors, who do not get angry at their patients, the sage only wants to help others (2.10.6–8). Moreover, were he to react equally to all of the crime and vice

[73] Seneca's examples of these 'pre-passions' vary regarding how much conceptualization each requires. Some are mere reflexes (e.g., goose bumps when sprinkled with cold water), while others presuppose the application of concepts (e.g., blushing at bad language); see Graver 2007: 97. Sorabji 2000: 66–75, suggests that Seneca's distinction between a passion's first, second, and third movements was intended as much to defend Chrysippus from some of the objections raised by Posidonius as it was for therapeutic purposes.

[74] So Graver 2007: 94–9; for a different view, see Sorabji 2000: 61–75.

[75] Cf. Graver 2007: 130.

actually contained in the world, he would 'not merely be angry but become insane' with mad rage (2.9.4).

This last argument in particular seems to echo the maximalism of the three ἐπιλογισμοί offered at the end of Philodemus' *On Anger* in support of the view that the sage will feel anger of the same kind and degree as the common man.[76] Other passages of Book 2 appear to make clearer reference to the Epicureans. So, for example, 2.13.3: 'Anger must be removed – even those who say that it ought to be diminished admit this in part; let us get rid of it completely, it cannot do us any good.' Seneca's intended target here is unlikely to be the Peripatetics, who do not recommend anger's reduction. Philodemus, however, by positing a natural anger that has less magnitude and intensity than its empty counterpart, could reasonably be seen as endorsing a reduced form of the emotion. Elsewhere (*Ep.* 85.18) Seneca credits Epicurus with similarly condemning immoderate anger while still allowing room for moderate anger in the sage's life.

Further commonalities between Seneca and Philodemus are evident in Seneca's specific criticism of the Peripatetics. Seneca, like Philodemus, focuses his attack on the issues of whether anger is natural (cf. 1.5.1) or useful (cf. 1.7.1). The Peripatetics hold that it is both, and that it is particularly useful in military contexts – a weighty consideration for a Roman audience, as Seneca and Philodemus would certainly have been aware. While both men deny the usefulness of anger, their grounds are not entirely identical. They agree that anger in war is redundant or counterproductive (1.9.1, 1.11.1).[77] Seneca, however, also maintains that anger is more easily removed than controlled (1.7.2–4); that it is in any case utterly useless (1.8.4); and that genuine anger cannot listen to reason, as Aristotle would have it (1.9.2). Once anger has gained a foothold, there can be no guarantee against its possible escalation into something cruel, hostile and destructive. These features clash with the Stoic concept of οἰκείωσις ('appropriation'),[78] which is rooted in human nature and involves affectionate attitudes towards oneself and others. Philodemus' distinction between natural and empty anger, which implies that there is a kind of anger that always remains within suitable limits, is therefore unacceptable to Seneca. He emphatically denies that a good person ever reacts to wrongdoing with anger. While this denial might itself look like an indirect criticism of Philodemus' notion of natural

[76] Detailed discussion of the three ἐπιλογισμοί and of Philodemus' replies to them are found, most recently, in Tsouna 2007a: 230–8; cf. also Asmis' ch. 8 of this volume.

[77] Cf. Phld. *De ira* cols. 32,35–33,7.

[78] On the meaning of this Stoic term of art as well as the notorious difficulty in translating it, see, e.g., Inwood 1985: 184–94.

anger, Seneca in fact repeatedly identifies the opposing thesis explicitly with Theophrastus (1.12.3, 1.14.1) and refutes it on Stoic/Platonic grounds: we should punish the wrongdoers in a soberly rational way and out of a sense of duty (*officium*); we should forgive their offences as products of human fallibility and errors in judgement (1.14.1–3); and we should not repay injury with injury, since it is never right to do wrong (1.16.1).

Seneca's long list of remedies for anger shows only a few similarities with those of Philodemus. Among Seneca's proposed remedies, some are, like Philodemus', corrective, while others are preventive (cf. 3.5.2).[79] The former aim to shape one's character so as to prevent irascibility, whereas the latter train one to react correctly under provocation.[80] Both authors embrace the medical analogy. Both believe that anger should be treated ad hoc, according to the character and personality of the individual patient (cf. 3.1.2). And both employ the rhetorical technique of setting-before-the-eyes (*ante oculos ponere*; 3.3.2). Nevertheless, Seneca's overarching goal is determined by Stoic theory: he wishes to replace the false judgements that constitute anger – namely, that one has been genuinely and unfairly harmed, and that it is appropriate to seek revenge in retaliation – with firmly rooted, true ones that will improve the agent's reasoning capacity.[81] While Philodemus makes the assumption that real harm has been done a condition of even natural anger, Seneca denies that this condition is in fact ever met. So-called external goods, with which anger is always concerned, have no real value, and so deprivations associated with them can never constitute genuine harm. While both philosophers condemn the pleasure of revenge, when Seneca contrasts the 'inhuman ferocity' of such pleasure with the virtuous concern for the correction and healing of the offender, the authority he invokes in this connection is Plato (1.6.4–5).

A brief survey of some key points from both the second half of Book 2 and Book 3 helps to give a sense of Seneca's therapeutic techniques. Adults must scrutinize carefully their impressions of injury, which are the primary causes of their anger (2.22.1–2). They must submit willingly to frank criticism (3.13, 24), evaluate correctly their priorities and thoroughly and regularly examine their own conscience (3.36.1–4). In addition, they must adopt habits and mental exercises aimed at preventing anger from

[79] Cf. the arguments against Timasagoras in Phld. *De ira* cols. 1,5–8,8. On my interpretation (Tsouna 2007a: 204–9), Timasagoras asserts that therapy can be preventive (col. 7,5–6, 13–20), whereas Philodemus denies it.

[80] See Inwood 2005: 145 (and *passim*), for the suggestion that Seneca's reflections on self-control, self-awareness and self-shaping have made important contributions to our own thinking about the will.

[81] Cf. Cooper and Procopé 1995: 10–13.

taking root in the soul and, should it do so, at concealing and alleviating its symptoms. One key strategy is to pause and assess one's reaction in the detached manner of a judge (cf. 1.14.2–3, 1.16.6–7, 2.2.28, 3.3.36).[82] This detachment involves the abilities to hold oneself to the same standards as others, to make an unbiased evaluation of the situation and to keep in mind, when passing judgement, that no one is entirely free from faults. While education plays a central role in all of these techniques, an appropriate diet, physical exercise and recreation can complement the effects of teaching and assuage the excessive fire found in irascible temperaments (2.19–21, 3.9.1–5). Involvement in too many disparate enterprises should be avoided as a potential source of vexation (3.6.3–7.2). One should also seek frequent relaxation with the help of reading and the arts, since exhaustion produces irritability (3.9.1–5).

Seneca concludes by invoking themes of human mortality. Anger and the associated quest for vengeance are wastes of time; life is short, and there are much better things to do with it (3.28.1–6). Besides, he adds, 'that hour which you determine for the death of another is perhaps near your own' (3.42.4). The treatise's final words continue this theme: 'So long as we breathe, so long as we are among men, let us worship humanity. Let us cause no fear or danger to any man; let us scorn losses, injuries, abuse and insults; and let us endure with magnanimity our brief vexations. While we are looking back, as they say, and turn around, immediately death will be upon us' (3.43.5). This final sentence is represented as either a verbatim citation or a paraphrase (*quod aiunt*). The sentiment expressed certainly finds a close parallel in Philodemus' *On Death* (*De morte*): 'To be caught unprepared when death falls upon us as if something unexpected and paradoxical were meeting us, this does [not] happen [to us], but it does happen to most people because they do not recognize that every human being, even if he were stronger than the Giants, is ephemeral concerning life and death, and that it is not just tomorrow that [is uncertain] but this very moment' (col. 37,18–27).[83] It is tempting to think that here too Seneca may be drawing inspiration from Epicurean sources.

3 PLUTARCH'S *ON THE CONTROL OF ANGER*

Plutarch's *On the Control of Anger* was written several decades after Seneca's *De ira* and roughly a century and a half after Philodemus' treatise. The

[82] On the importance of the judge as a model in Seneca's *De ira*, see Inwood 2005: 208–11.
[83] Cf. also col. 38,14–25 and col. 39,15–25.

work is cast as a dialogue between two friends and members of the social and intellectual elite: Sulla, a Carthaginian, and Fundanus, a Roman. Their conversation, the setting for which has a Platonic complexion, appears to take place in Rome (cf. 453A). Fundanus, who is the principal speaker, relates the story of how he came to control his own anger. Plutarch thus presents his readers with a modest and trustworthy aristocrat who offers personal testimony on the subject of mastering this emotion.[84] Although the task is admittedly difficult, the overall message is optimistic. Fundanus, after all, is an example of someone who has successfully achieved self-cure.

Any discussion of Plutarch's sources for this treatise must bear in mind both his general erudition and his broad familiarity with Latin as well as Greek philosophical literature. Though a committed Platonist,[85] Plutarch regularly appeals to the writings of Aristotle, whom he treats as part of the broader Academic tradition, to confirm Platonic doctrine.[86] Despite occasional criticisms, he also makes extensive use of later Peripatetic sources. While he is more critical of Stoicism than fellow Platonists such as Antiochus, many passages of the *Moralia* attest to his thorough knowledge of Stoic doctrine. Finally, the *Moralia* also includes a voluminous, direct engagement with Epicureanism of different periods. In *On the Control of Anger* specifically, Plutarch references the Peripatetic authors such as Hieronymus of Rhodes (454F) and makes use of Stoic works on the passions both early and late, notably Chrysippus' *Therapeutikos* and Posidonius' *On Passions*.[87] Zeno, Panaetius and Seneca all receive explicit mention as well. The numerous parallels to Seneca's *De ira* in particular strongly suggest a personal familiarity with that work.[88] Only a very few passages of *On the Control of Anger*, however, suggest that Plutarch may have in mind either the Epicureans generally or Philodemus' *On Anger* specifically.[89]

Despite the recognized differences between Stoicism and Epicureanism, Plutarch routinely equates the error of both schools in contradicting Plato. He considers Plato and Aristotle essentially in agreement with respect to the soul's partition into rational and irrational parts, and with respect to their accounts of the highest good and virtue. Against the Stoics in particular, he argues that the emotions are integral to virtue, which itself reflects

[84] On Plutarch's descriptive moralism and the difference between this and protreptic, see Pelling 1988: 15–16.
[85] On Plutarch's Platonism, see Russell 1973; Dillon 1977; Opsomer 1998 and 2005.
[86] Cf. Karamanolis 2006: 85–126.
[87] On the influence of Stoicism on Plutarch, cf. Babut 1969.
[88] For a list of relevant parallels, see the introduction in Kidd and Waterfield 1992.
[89] For further discussion of Plutarch's influences for this work, see, e.g., Babut 1969; Becchi 2003; Indelli 1988b; Indelli and Laurenti 1988; Pelling 1988; Roskam 2003; van Hoof 2005 and 2007.

a correct match between the emotions and reason (cf. *De virt. mor.* 443C–444C). Plutarch's repeated references to virtue as a mean (μεσότης),[90] in which the emotions are balanced by reason (cf. 443D–E, 444D–445B), confirm that control or moderation of the emotions (μετριοπάθεια), not their eradication (ἀπάθεια), is his general aim.[91] What he considers appropriate therapy in this regard also reflects his broadly Platonic outlook. For Plutarch, control of an emotion such as anger requires training as well as rational persuasion. Good habits are as important as good reasons.

Like our two earlier authors, Plutarch describes anger (for which he usually employs the term ὀργή, but also occasionally θυμός) in terms of a disposition: 'When anger persists and attacks us many times, it instils in the soul an evil trait (ἕξις), which is called irascibility (ὀργιλότης) and usually results in violent outbursts, bitterness and peevishness' (454B–C). Given his placement of anger within the 'spirited' part of the soul (θυμοειδές; 453B), Plutarch understandably defines its therapy in terms of a submission to reason. He has the character of Sulla express pleasure at seeing that Fundanus' tendency towards anger has given way to smoothness and mildness of spirit, a transformation for which he assumes rational precepts (λόγων χρηστῶν; 453B) responsible. Sulla accordingly begs Fundanus to explain 'as though [he] were recounting some medical treatment, what medicine [he] used to make his spirit so manageable and gentle, so mild and obedient to reason (τῷ λόγῳ)' (453C).

Here too the discussion of anger is inscribed within the framework of the medical analogy: anger, particularly violent anger, is a disease, and the techniques by which it is treated stand in lieu of medicines. Like Seneca, Plutarch labels anger 'the most hated and the most despised of the passions' (455E). Plutarch defends this claim in part by appealing to the concept of blending and blends found also in certain Peripatetics, as well as in Philodemus. Towards the end of *On Arrogance* (*De superbia*) (16,28–24,27), for example, Philodemus cites Aristo of Ceos' account of arrogance blending with other vicious traits to produce a mixture (σύμμιγμα) or blend (κέρασμα) of different features that jointly constitute a vice.[92] According to Plutarch, anger is likewise a kind of blend containing seeds drawn from all the passions: pain and pleasure (especially the pleasure associated with vengeance), insolence and envy and, most of all, the savage desire to harm others (462F–463B).

[90] Plutarch also describes virtue as an ἀκρότης ('extreme'; 444D) in order to convey the idea that the excellence in question is absolute.

[91] Cf. Karamanolis 2006: 119–23.

[92] See Tsouna 2006.

Plutarch does not engage in theoretical debates as to whether the wise man ever experiences anger or, if so, what kind. While there are certain cases in which he recommends the eradication of anger, at other points he expressly allows for 'righteous indignation' (μισοπονηρία) kept within certain bounds. He distinguishes both this μισοπονηρία from unjustified anger and moderate outbursts of the emotion from excessive and violent forms (463B). In each of these pairings, the first member recalls features of Philodemus' technical concept of ὀργή; the second, his notion of θυμός. Like Philodemus, Plutarch regards anger that is unnatural, ungrounded and intense as the primary object of therapy. This position suits Plutarch's Platonic and Aristotelian outlook,[93] but its affinities with *On Anger* may indicate that he also has Philodemus in mind. As to Plutarch's attitude towards revenge, it bears familiar hallmarks of both the Epicurean and the Stoic approaches, in addition to that of Plato. For example, he maintains that the punishment of the offender should be a matter of justice rather than revenge. In a sentiment that accords remarkably well with Philodemus, Plutarch claims that taking pleasure in punishment is bestial (θηριῶδες), though neglecting to chastise a deserving offender simply because we do not feel angry any more is also a bad thing (460A–C).

In this respect, Plutarch criticizes Aristotle's followers for much the same reasons invoked by Philodemus and Seneca, and perhaps under the influence of one or both of these earlier authors. For instance, he maintains that θυμός – by which he means violent and uncontrolled anger, as the context clearly indicates – is neither noble nor manly (456F). It is a mark not of energy, confidence, courage, high ideals or any other virtue, but rather of smallness, weakness and often cruelty (456F, 457C). The Peripatetics are wrong to think that anger helps in the battlefield. Genuine courage is sustained by reason, not passion, and, in general, virtue does not need the help of vice to guide actions (458E).[94] Violent outbursts of anger are pathological states, strainings and convulsions suffered by the soul in conjunction with its impulse to self-defence (457C).

Plutarch's account of the consequences of anger is shorter and less systematic than those of our other two authors. Unlike either Philodemus or Seneca, he consistently associates the control of anger with the ideal of a 'gentleman' (καλὸς κἀγαθός; cf. 453C), and the outbursts of rage with ungentlemanly conduct.[95] Accordingly, the self-harm resulting from anger and revenge has as much to do on Plutarch's account with a failing of virtue

[93] Cf. 453A, where Sulla commends the submission of Fundanus' anger to reason.
[94] Cf. Phld. *De ira* cols. 32,33–33,7. [95] Cf. van Hoof 2007.

as with positively bad behaviour. By contrast, Philodemus' focus is mainly on the pain and even self-destruction that rage inflicts upon a person, while Seneca's is on the deterioration of reason caused by anger.

While Plutarch offers up commonplace examples of the *hybris* and cruelty of angry nobles and kings both to illustrate and to deride anger's irrationality,[96] his primary concern is with anger's effects in the private rather than public sphere, especially in relation to one's own household, family and acquaintances. In this respect, he more resembles Philodemus than Seneca.[97] The enraged person offers a frightening and unfamiliar sight to his wife, children and most intimate friends, towards whom he is cruel and unjust (455F). He unleashes his anger most of all on his slaves. Plutarch even recommends that we should begin our therapy by practising restraint with our servants (459B–460C). As in Philodemus' *On Anger*, it remains unclear whether Plutarch offers that advice for utilitarian or humanitarian reasons. The reference to panicked servants who occasionally manage to run away (459A) hints at the former, but Plutarch's obvious disgust at the use of blows, branding irons (459D), whippings (459F) and fetters (463B) suggests that compassion and pity also play an important role.[98] In this respect too, there is resonance with Philodemus' treatise.

Fundanus emphasizes that rational control of anger can be achieved only through continual philosophical therapy (453D). In this sense, 'philosophy' approximates Greek *paideia*, which, according to Plutarch, constitutes the only truly effective means of controlling body and soul and, hence, of progressing towards virtue. Plutarch's recommendations include corrective as well as preventive measures, but he stresses the importance of the latter no less than do Seneca and Philodemus' opponent Timasagoras.[99] The reason for this emphasis is clear: 'Other passions, even when they are at their height, do somehow obey and accept reason, when it comes from the outside into the soul to help; but anger does not . . . on the contrary it shuts out and excludes reason completely' (453E). Awareness of the passion is also essential to its treatment. Against Hieronymus, Plutarch contends that it is easy to become cognizant of one's anger from the very outset, provided that one pays close attention to one's own reactions (454D–455B).[100] This fact is important, because the earlier one tries to

[96] See esp. 455D–E and 457A.
[97] The diatribe section of Philodemus' *On Anger* also contains historical and literary examples, which are treated with equal brevity; cf., e.g., col. 18,15–40.
[98] van Hoof 2007: 75, defends a different view.
[99] Cf. Phld. *De ira* col. 7,5–9.
[100] According to Plutarch (454F), Hieronymus held that we do not have a perception of our anger when it first comes into being.

exercise restraint, the better the chance of success. Some of the techniques Plutarch urges are accordingly intended for use in anger's initial stages, while others are directed at its later manifestations. Some involve reasoning, others exercise and habit, and still others a combination of all of these. His general conception of therapy shares Seneca's strong practical bent. He provides no elaborate theoretical background for his strategies, appealing only to broad and often vague psychological assumptions, mostly borrowed from Platonism and the Middle Stoa.

Of Plutarch's specific therapeutic methods, few are paralleled in Philodemus' treatise. Despite the fact that he appears familiar with the importance of imagination and pictorial thinking for therapy, Plutarch makes relatively little use of the technique of setting-before-the-eyes compared with Philodemus and Seneca. However, he does offer one especially interesting and inventive expansion of the method. In the midst of drawing on common *topoi* to record the changes in countenance and comportment that make an angry person appear 'so terrible and deranged', Plutarch suggests that one should try to picture what one's own physical appearance must be when afflicted by anger. Closely observing such changes in others can be of assistance in this regard. It may be even better to have a friend hold up a mirror when one is enraged oneself (455F–456B). In either case, one will be repelled by the passion and seek its removal.

In sharp contrast to Seneca, Plutarch concentrates on cases of successful mastery of anger instead of savageries committed in its name, as if assuming that positive ideals are more therapeutically effective than negative ones.[101] Reflecting on the words and deeds of other philosophers and rulers can offer valuable assistance (457D and *passim*). He specifically suggests following the example of Socrates, who used his body to pacify his mind. By lowering his voice and softening his expression, Socrates counteracted any anger he felt with a forced display to the contrary (455A). Patience, as Plutarch repeatedly stresses, is equally beneficial. Keeping in mind humanity's fallibility and vulnerability can make one less prone to anger. And if one is ever roused to anger against a servant or some other person, the passage of time helps cool the passion and make room for sober judgement (459E).

Finally, Plutarch joins both Philodemus and Seneca in recommending a form of cognitive therapy. Common to virtually all cases of anger, claims Plutarch, is the belief that one has been despised or neglected: 'Therefore we must help even those who are in the process of giving up their anger by detaching as far as possible the anger-provoking action

[101] Cf. the incident involving Nero and Seneca himself cited in 461F–462A.

from [*sc*. beliefs concerning] contempt or insolence, and by attributing it to ignorance, necessity, passion, or mischance' (460D). There is, however, an important difference in the three authors' respective approaches. Philodemus claims that the sage will experience natural anger if he correctly believes that he has been harmed.[102] For Seneca, the sage will never experience anger, precisely because he will never believe that real harm has been inflicted or that anger is an appropriate reaction to any occurrence. Plutarch, on the other hand, seems to encourage the reduction or elimination of anger by changing the agent's beliefs to ones that are not anger-provoking without regard to the truth of the matter.

4 CONCLUSION

The demonstrable impact of Philodemus' *On Anger* on Seneca's work seems small and localized, and it does not appear to have left a mark on Seneca's general approach. Neither Philodemus nor Seneca appears to have exerted much, if any, influence on Plutarch. The fact that the three authors have different philosophical affiliations and rhetorical approaches goes a long way to explaining the differences in their respective treatment of the same subject matter. However, certain psychological and social factors may also have played important roles.

Philodemus lived in the first century BC, studied philosophy in Athens and, in all probability, spent his entire life as a professional philosopher. Whatever sense of urgency emerges from Philodemus' treatise has to do more with his philosophical standpoint than his personal history or the socio-political conditions of his time. Certainly, one of his major motivating concerns is the threat anger poses to the smooth functioning of Epicurean schools like his own. His desire to preserve peace between members of such schools requires him to address the issue. Philodemus is also motivated by the fact that anger, and especially the question of whether the wise man will experience it, is a matter of lively scholarly debate among Epicureans, and he feels obliged to contribute to that debate. Indeed, the extant remains of *On Anger* indicate that the work was primarily intended for specialists within his own school.[103] In addition to systematic argument, Philodemus also deploys rhetorical and literary devices. But the rhetoric that *On Anger*

[102] In my view, Philodemus regards true beliefs about an anger-provoking situation as necessary but not sufficient conditions of the sage's natural anger; see Tsouna 2007a: 237–8.

[103] Stylistic features, such as cluttered and unclear references and infelicities of syntax, suggest that *On Anger* was written quickly and quite carelessly, and that its intended audience was a circle of scholars rather than the entire school; cf. Procopé 1993: 174–5.

contains in the surviving first half of the treatise does not overwhelm us with the sense of horror and fear of uncontrolled and unlimited cruelty. In any event, the relevant sections of Philodemus' treatise would seem unlikely to produce a strong impression on someone whose focus was precisely on the most horrible consequences of unbridled anger – someone like Seneca.

Seneca's rhetoric presents anger first and foremost as a political and civic threat of gigantic proportions. In large part this must be due to Seneca's thorough training in rhetoric and to the rhetorical conventions of his time. But personal factors may well have played an important role too. Born in Spain, Seneca was brought to Rome while still a child and lived in court under Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero. Caligula's displeasure almost cost Seneca his life, and Messalina's enmity resulted in a dismal exile of eight years. Any person in Seneca's position must have felt the chill of fear more than once. His *De ira* is a rhetorical and philosophical work, but it is also the writing of a haunted man. With every means in his power, Seneca tries to create, especially in the *princeps*, a violent aversion to the passion of anger and to give concrete instructions for its cure.

Plutarch's project is similarly distant from Philodemus' *On Anger*, though for different reasons. Born in the height of the Pax Romana, Plutarch lived in the provinces rather than the heart of the empire. The impression he gives is that of a country gentleman of independent means, with keen intellectual interests and a great capacity for affection and compassion. His essay makes it clear that he has read a good deal of the philosophical literature on anger, but his concern is with neither the theoretical analysis of the emotion nor its consequences in public life. What disturbs him most deeply is the pain and ugliness that anger brings to private life – reviled wives, abused children, tortured slaves and offended friends. His therapies target these ills above all others, so much so that even the angry person's own well-being often seems of secondary importance. In the attempt to achieve his goal, Plutarch bypasses both Philodemus' philosophical dialectic and Seneca's moralizing rhetoric, and follows a path that is very much his own.

CHAPTER 10

Philodemus and the fear of premature death

Kirk R. Sanders

1 INTRODUCTION

Attempts to dispel fear of death by claiming that life continues on in some fashion *post mortem* are commonplace. Such was not, however, the approach adopted by the ancient Epicureans. On the contrary, Epicurus is frequently credited with originating the argument that death is not to be feared, precisely because it *is* the end of existence. That no person survives his own death is a proposition to which the Epicureans are unquestionably committed.[1] It is also true that Epicurus and his followers consistently represent fear of death as one of the greatest impediments to human flourishing.[2] Nevertheless, Epicurean attitudes toward death and its associated fears turn out to be considerably more nuanced than generally recognized.

To speak of *the* fear of death already risks obscuring the protean nature of the phenomenon in question.[3] People in fact fear a diversity of things related to death for equally diverse reasons.[4] The Epicureans are sometimes accused of failing to appreciate, or at least to have addressed, this actual

[1] See esp. Epicur. *Ep*. *Men*. 125 and Lucr. 3.417–829.

[2] In both *Ep*. *Men*., Epicurus' own general summary of his ethical system, and the collection of maxims attributed to Epicurus known as the *Key Doctrines* (*KD*), pride of place is given to debunking false beliefs and instilling correct ones with regard to the divine and to death respectively; cf. also *KD* 11. Phld. *Adv*. [*soph*.] (= *PHerc*. 1005) col. 5,9–14, presents a pithy summary of *KD* 1–4 known as the 'fourfold remedy' (ὁ τετραφαρμακός): 'nothing to fear in god; nothing expected in death; the good is easily got; the bad easily borne' (ἄφοβον ὁ θεός, ἀν[ύ]ποπτον ὁ θάνατος καὶ τἀγαθὸν μὲν εὔκτητον, τὸ δὲ δεινὸν εὐεκκα[ρ]τέρητον).

[3] Cf. Rosenbaum 1986: 217–18.

[4] These fears have been variously divided and classified. Among the most accepted attempts to classify death-related fears on empirical grounds are the Multidimensional Fear of Death Scale developed by J. Hoelter (Hoelter 1979) and the Fear of Personal Death Scale developed by V. Florian and S. Kravetz (1983). Hoelter lists eight factors: fear of the dying process, fear of the dead, fear of being destroyed, fear for significant others, fear of the unknown, fear of conscious death, fear for body after death, and fear of premature death. Florian and Kravetz give six: loss of self-fulfilment, loss of social identity, consequences to family and friends, transcendental consequences, self-annihilation, and punishment in the hereafter.

multiplicity of death-related fears. Such accusations are unwarranted, as several recent commentators have convincingly demonstrated.[5] Epicurean sources in fact contain arguments directed at many distinct fears of death. What has yet to be fully appreciated is the degree to which Epicureanism is able to countenance at least certain of these fears.

In this chapter, I focus on only one such fear, though arguably the most fundamental: fear of premature death. I shall argue that Epicureans not only recognized and addressed this fear but also accepted as perfectly rational a restricted form thereof. In making my case, I draw primarily upon the writings of the first-century BC Epicurean Philodemus of Gadara, and especially the surviving fragments of his *On Death* (*De morte*).[6] I shall also take pains, however, to show how the resulting picture accords with what we know of Epicurean thanatology, and of Epicurean ethics generally, from other sources, including Epicurus' own writings.

2 RATIONAL FEARS

Before turning to the questions of whether, or how, the Epicureans can accept any fear of death as rational, an ambiguity must first be addressed. A fear may be considered rational (or not) in a variety of senses. Epicurus and his followers would concede, for example, that every fear of death is rational in the sense of being based on, or derived from, reason or reasoning.[7] The Epicureans regard fear – and, indeed, every emotion – as essentially cognitive; that is, as inseparable from value judgements and the desires associated with these. The Epicurean commitment to such a view is most clearly expressed in Philodemus' *On Anger* (*De ira*), the only substantially extant treatise by an Epicurean philosopher devoted specifically to an emotion.[8] But Philodemus' treatment of anger, while richer in details, perfectly accords with the way in which other Epicurean sources treat both this

[5] See, e.g., Reinhardt 2002, Warren 2004, and Tsouna 2007a.

[6] What remains of this treatise, a portion of the fourth and final book, is contained in *PHerc.* 1050. At the time of the initial writing of this chapter, Kuiper 1925 remained the only complete, modern edition of the entire treatise. More recent editions of the first nine and final three columns (i.e., cols. 37–39), based on an autopsy of the papyrus fragments, could also be found in Gigante 1983c. A new edition of the entire treatise edited by W. B. Henry (= Henry 2009), complete with translation and notes, has just appeared. Unless otherwise indicated, the readings for all citations from *On Death* are from this new edition. I wish to thank Dr Henry for allowing me to consult a pre-publication version of his text in the final preparation of this article.

[7] Cf. *OED* s.v. 'rational' (adj.) 3.a.

[8] *PHerc.* 182 preserves roughly the final fifty columns of this work, for which the most recent edition is Indelli 1988a.

and other emotions.[9] Nor are the Epicureans alone in their 'cognitivism'.[10] Their principal Hellenistic rivals, the Stoics, likewise make belief an essential component of emotion,[11] as, on at least some readings, does Aristotle.[12] Cognitive theories of emotion also boast a number of prominent supporters among contemporary philosophers and psychologists.[13]

Of course, to deny that fear or other emotions are ever *a*rational does not preclude the possibility of labelling particular fears, angers, etc., *ir*rational. According to a cognitivist account of fear, for example, the belief that some φ constitutes an impending evil or harm is itself a necessary condition for fearing φ.[14] One way in which a given fear may be irrational, then, is for the belief either that φ is a harm or that φ is imminent to lack sufficient justification.[15] For such cases, the Epicureans, like the Stoics, advocate a form of cognitive therapy. That is, they attempt to eliminate the fear in question by showing one or more of the judgements underlying it to be false, or at least unwarranted. If a person can be convinced that the object

[9] Cf. Sanders 2008a. Any full-blown Epicurean theory of the emotions almost certainly postdates Epicurus himself, though it is equally clear that the particular theory Philodemus advocates represents an attempt to apply considerations and distinctions from the writings of Epicurus and others to a new, but related, area of inquiry; see also note 20 of this chapter, p. 214.

[10] The term 'cognitivism' with regard to the emotions has assumed a range of meanings; see, e.g., Solomon and Calhoun 1984: 16–22; and Strongman 1987: 34–42. My own use of the term is meant to encompass any account that recognizes value judgements as at least partly constitutive of emotions.

[11] Numerous references are collected in LS vol. I, pp. 410–19 (the original Greek and Latin texts of which are found in LS vol. II, pp. 404–18).

[12] See, e.g., Fortenbaugh 2002.

[13] Among philosophers, the recently deceased R. Solomon was perhaps the most prolific exponent of such a view. 'An emotion', according to Solomon, 'is a *judgment* (or set of judgments)' (Solomon 1993: 125; emphasis in original). Regarding anger in particular, he adds: 'I cannot be angry if I do not believe that someone has wronged or offended me. Accordingly, we might say that anger involves a *moral* judgment as well, an appeal to moral standards and not merely personal evaluations. My anger *is* that set of judgments' (126; emphasis in original). Nussbaum 2001 is an extended defence of what the author herself designates a 'neo-Stoic' position, at the core of which stands the claim that 'emotions are appraisals or value judgments' (4).

M. Arnold, whose *Emotion and Personality* (= Arnold 1960) helped to revive debate among psychologists regarding the role beliefs play in emotions, acknowledges a debt to Aristotle. And A. Ellis, founder of 'rational therapy' (which came to be known subsequently as 'rational emotive therapy' and then 'rational emotive behavior therapy'), explicitly credits the Stoics with providing the historical and philosophical antecedents of his own theories; see Ellis 1962: 3–34.

[14] See, e.g., the definitions in Arist. *Rh.* 1382a21–32; Cic. *Tusc.* 4.15 (reporting the Stoic position); and Solomon 1993: 253–4. I shall use the terms 'evil' and 'harm' interchangeably throughout this chapter; whatever distinctions may be made between the two concepts are of no practical consequence for my discussion here.

[15] One might be tempted to say 'if the associated belief is false and lacks sufficient justification', but it seems plausible to regard as irrational the fear of something that is in fact both harmful and imminent, but for which one has no good basis for believing this to be the case. Analogously, a fear of something that turns out to be harmless but about which one had good reasons to believe otherwise would seem entirely rational.

of his fear is either harmless or not imminent, he will, according to a cognitivist theory, *ipso facto* cease to fear it.[16]

Even in cases where a belief of impending harm is justified, one's fear may nevertheless be judged irrational on other, related grounds. A comparison with anger helps to clarify this point. In *On Anger*, Philodemus offers a relatively standard account of anger generically as a desire for punishment arising from the belief that someone has intentionally and unjustly harmed, or attempted to harm, either oneself or one's friend.[17] He proceeds, however, to distinguish between a 'natural' (φυσική) and 'empty' (κενή) species of the emotion.[18] The latter, which Philodemus at times calls simply 'rage' (θυμός),[19] is an intense and prolonged variety of anger that results from an agent's false value judgements concerning either the harm suffered or the punishment sought.[20]

Other emotions may similarly vary in intensity, and this intensity, manifested in the agent's subjective experience of the relevant affective consequences as well as in his comportment, will itself likewise depend upon value judgements regarding the emotions' relevant objects. In the case of fear specifically, one typically judges not merely that some object constitutes a harm *simpliciter*, but rather that it constitutes a harm of a certain degree or kind. A conventional hedonist would reasonably consider both a pinprick and prolonged torture as harms per se, but he would not regard them as equivalent evils. Neither, then, should he fear equally the prospect of each. Thus a fear may also be said to be irrational if its intensity is disproportionate to the prospective harm in question. It would be irrational in this sense to fear greatly a minor threat, just as it would be irrational to be greatly angered at a small slight.[21] Cognitive therapy can be effective

[16] I shall also set aside the difficulty of whether (and, if so, how) an emotion might be said to 'outlive' for some period or in some fashion the relevant beliefs that give rise to it.

[17] The extant columns of this treatise lack any formal definition of anger, but the general outline of one can be seen from, among others, col. 37,29–39; col. 40,33–5; col. 44,21–30; col. 46,30–5 (which stresses intentional nature of the harm) and 41,17–9 (which addresses harm to friends). Cf. the definitions offered by Aristotle at *Rh*. 1378a30–2; *Top*. 127b30–1, 151a15–6 and 156a32–3; and *De an*. 403a29–403b1. See now also Asmis' ch. 8 of this volume, pp. 158–71.

[18] See esp. cols. 37,40–38,6.

[19] θυμός is for Philodemus a technical term, which he is careful to distinguish from the word's frequent usage in Hellenistic discourse as a straightforward synonym for ὀργή; see, e.g., cols. 43,41–46,6.

[20] For the relative intensity and prolonged duration of empty anger, see, e.g., col. 45,34–7; the dependence on false value judgements is addressed in col. 42,4–14; col. 42,21–30 and cols. 43,41–44,35. Philodemus' use of the terms 'natural' and 'empty' reflects the attempt to adapt Epicurus' classification of desires (for which, see *Ep*. *Men*. 127–8 and *KD* 29) to this related area of inquiry. On this point, see now especially Asmis' ch. 8 of this volume.

[21] Though my focus in this paragraph is on fears that are irrational in virtue of being excessively intense, I do not wish to exclude the possibility of fearing an object less than one should as the

in such cases too, though only to mitigate, not eliminate, the emotion in question.[22]

3 'NOTHING TO US'

The second of Epicurus' so-called *Key Doctrines* (*KD*) contains his most oft-quoted statement on the subject of death:

Ὁ θάνατος οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς· τὸ γὰρ διαλυθὲν ἀναισθητεῖ· τὸ δ' ἀναισθητοῦν οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς.

Death is nothing to us, since what is dissolved lacks perception, and what lacks perception is nothing to us.[23]

The arguments of this maxim and of the section of Epicurus' *Letter to Menoeceus* that expands upon it (= *Ep. Men.* 124–7) have received a good deal of attention, both favourable and critical, in recent philosophical literature. I shall hazard only a few, mostly summary, comments here. Still, insofar as the phrase 'Death is nothing to us'[24] is frequently regarded as encapsulating Epicurean thanatology generally, it seems desirable to clarify some salient points regarding these particular arguments, including their structure and scope, before turning to a way in which death arguably does prove to be something for even an Epicurean.

Though admittedly compressed, *KD* 2 offers at least the clear outline of an argument that may be fleshed out along the following lines:[25]

1 When a person is dead,[26] his soul, which is necessary for perception, is dissolved.
2 What is dissolved (τὸ διαλυθέν) has no perception (ἀναισθητεῖ).

result of underestimating the associated harm. Similarly, a positive emotional response that resulted from over- or under-estimating the value of some good would also qualify as irrational.

[22] It is perhaps worth noting in this context that, while Ellis (see note 13 of this chapter, p. 213) credits the Stoics with foreshadowing and even inspiring his version of modern cognitive therapy, he does not set as his goal the extirpation of emotions such as anger and fear, something he regards as neither possible nor even desirable. In this respect, Ellis in fact resembles more closely the Epicureans than the Stoics.

[23] Lucretius echoes the maxim at 3.830–1: 'Therefore death is nothing to us, nor does it matter at all, since the nature of the soul is mortal' (*Nil igitur mors est ad nos neque pertinet hilum*, / *quandoquidem natura animi mortalis habetur*).

[24] On the translation 'nothing to us' for οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς / *nil . . . ad nos* in this and similar Epicurean contexts, see Furley 1986: 75–6.

[25] That some relatively minor and obvious supplements to *KD* 2 are required in order to produce a formally valid argument should come as no surprise, given the nature and purpose of the *Key Doctrines* generally; cf. Warren 2004: 23.

[26] I take this locution to be readily intelligible, even if potentially misleading; but see the discussion of *Ep. Men.* 124–5 that follows.

3 Therefore, being dead involves no perception.
4 What involves no perception (τὸ ἀναισθητοῦν) is nothing to us.
5 Therefore, being dead is nothing to us.

As noted previously, attempts to counter the argument of *KD* 2 by denying its first premise, i.e., that death entails annihilation, are commonplace. Recently, however, a growing number of critics content to grant the argument's first premise have questioned instead the fourth.[27]

Among the issues central to this debate is the question of whether something must be experienced as painful in order to constitute a harm. Proponents of the view that being dead can qualify as a harm obviously reply in the negative. A passage from Epicurus' *Letter to Menoeceus* (= *Ep. Men.* 129–30) sheds light on Epicurus' own position:

> Καὶ ἐπεὶ πρῶτον ἀγαθὸν τοῦτο καὶ σύμφυτον, διὰ τοῦτο καὶ οὐ πᾶσαν ἡδονὴν αἱρούμεθα, ἀλλ᾽ ἔστιν ὅτε πολλὰς ἡδονὰς ὑπερβαίνομεν, ὅταν πλεῖον ἡμῖν τὸ δυσχερὲς ἐκ τούτων ἔπηται· καὶ πολλὰς ἀλγηδόνας ἡδονῶν κρείττους νομίζομεν, ἐπειδὰν μείζων ἡμῖν ἡδονὴ παρακολουθῇ πολὺν χρόνον ὑπομείνασι τὰς ἀλγηδόνας. πᾶσα οὖν ἡδονὴ διὰ τὸ φύσιν ἔχειν οἰκείαν ἀγαθόν, οὐ πᾶσα μέντοι αἱρετή· καθάπερ καὶ ἀλγηδὼν πᾶσα κακόν, οὐ πᾶσα δὲ ἀεὶ φευκτὴ πεφυκυῖα. τῇ μέντοι συμμετρήσει καὶ συμφερόντων καὶ ἀσυμφόρων βλέψει ταῦτα πάντα κρίνειν καθήκει. χρώμεθα γὰρ τῷ μὲν ἀγαθῷ κατά τινας χρόνους ὡς κακῷ, τῷ δὲ κακῷ τοὔμπαλιν ὡς ἀγαθῷ.
>
> And since this [i.e., pleasure] is the first, connate good, we do not also for this reason choose every pleasure, but we sometimes pass over many pleasures whenever something more disagreeable for us ensues from these. And we consider many pains to be greater than pleasures, whenever a greater pleasure results from our having endured the pains for a long time. So every pleasure is a good on account of its natural kinship, yet not every pleasure is to be chosen; just as every pain is also an evil, but not every pain is such as always to be avoided. But all these things are properly judged by comparison and an eye to the advantages and disadvantages. We sometimes treat the good as an evil, and conversely the evil as a good.

According to a standard hedonic calculus, someone debating, for example, whether to have one more cocktail rightly regards as a harm, when making his calculations, the hangover that could result. Indeed, it is precisely because he does so regard the potential hangover that he may decide to forego the additional drink, with the result that he never actually

[27] Nagel 1970 helped to initiate this trend. The literature that has followed in the wake of Nagel's article is vast. A judicious sampling is collected in Fischer 1993. Of still more recent work, Feldman 1994, McMahan 2002, and Luper 2009 are among those meriting particular mention.

experiences the harm in question.[28] The final sentences of the excerpt from the *Letter to Menoeceus* above suggest that Epicurus goes even further in allowing not only the resultant hangover but also the additional drink to be properly regarded as an evil. Unlike a hangover, however, the act of drinking itself would presumably be a pleasurable experience; only its consequences are painful. Epicurus' apparent willingness to treat what is per se good (i.e., pleasant) as an evil all things considered (i.e., in light of its consequences) seems sufficient evidence that he too does not insist on something's being positively painful as a necessary condition for its being properly regarded a harm.

Of course, it is a further question whether a hedonist can properly regard as a harm anything that is itself *neither* positively painful *nor* the cause of some subsequent pain. Philosophers sometimes distinguish in this regard between 'intrinsic harms', which are themselves painful experiences, and 'extrinsic harms', which are not.[29] In these terms, the relevant question could be rephrased as follows: Are there any *purely extrinsic* harms, i.e., ones that do not derive their status as evils from an association with intrinsic harms? It has been asserted that Epicurean ethics ultimately requires a reduction of all harms to their painful effects, whether present or future.[30] Why this should be so, however, is unclear. In sections 129–30 of the *Letter to Menoeceus*, Epicurus explicitly allows for pleasures to be considered evils if a 'more disagreeable' consequence follows from them. While a preponderance of pain over pleasure (as in the hangover example) is the most obvious possible consequence of this kind, it is hardly the only one a hedonist, even one as idiosyncratic as Epicurus, can countenance. Imagine, for example, a baby that is rendered blind at birth as the result of a drug administered *in utero* that itself causes no pain and is without other discernible effects. The judgement that the child had been harmed in virtue of being deprived of her sight, and of the pleasures associated with this, is perfectly compatible with a commitment to hedonism. Nor would such a judgement depend on the child suffering any subsequent pains as a result of her blindness. As the child grows, she may well, for example, come to regret having been blinded at birth. But her regret cannot explain why being blinded constitutes a harm in the first place. Regret is itself a painful response to (what one judges) an antecedent harm. While any

[28] Something analogous occurs in cases of fear. When rational, this emotion always has as its object some future harm, but the desire integral to fear frequently inspires action that allows one to avoid ever suffering the evil in question.

[29] See, e.g., Feldman 1994: 133–5.

[30] For a recent, forceful defence of this view, see Warren 2004: 23–34.

mental or physical pains she does experience as a consequence of having been blinded would naturally serve to compound the harm done her, their absence would not negate it.

Nothing prevents Epicurus and his followers from similarly recognizing any experience that prevents the attainment of some genuine future goods as thereby constituting a harm. Such an admission might seem to play into the hands of Epicurean thanatology's more recent critics, most of whom share a belief in some version of what has come to be known as the 'deprivation thesis'. A comment by T. Nagel provides a useful summary of the basic approach: 'If we are to make sense of the view that to die is bad, it must be on the ground that life is a good and death is the corresponding deprivation or loss, bad not because of any positive features but because of the desirability of what it removes.'[31] On this view, the evil of death consists in preventing a person from experiencing some good, or goods, he otherwise would have enjoyed.[32] The Epicureans need not be concerned to deny the deprivation thesis indiscriminately, however. (Indeed, as I shall endeavour to show in the following section, they employ a version of it themselves to explain the harm of premature death.) The Epicureans themselves apparently understood the argument contained in *KD* 2 to be directed only against the particular death-related fear that may be more specifically labelled 'fear of *being dead*'.[33] The failure of most critics – and, for that matter, of many supporters – to appreciate this argument's limited scope has been a continual source of confusion in attempts to evaluate both the argument itself and its proper place in Epicurean thanatology generally.[34]

[31] Nagel 1970: 75.

[32] Note that this formulation does not require us to assert that death is invariably a (net) evil. We can at least imagine circumstances in which death would prove more desirable than any available alternative. A person for whom continued existence promised an unremitting and overwhelming preponderance of pain over pleasure would presumably have good reason to desire not to continue living. Annihilation seems obviously preferable to, for example, an eternity spent enduring the various tortures envisioned in Dante's *Inferno*. (For a contrary view, however, see Unamuno 1954: 43–4.)

[33] See Sanders 2008b; cf. Reinhardt 2002: 291; and Rosenbaum 1986: 218–19, which focuses on the argument of *Ep*. *Men*. 124–5.

[34] Most commentators take for granted that the arguments in *KD* 2 and *Ep*. *Men*. 124–7 represent the sum and substance of Epicurean thanatology. This almost exclusive focus by commentators on arguments directed at the fear of being dead has no doubt contributed to the mistaken belief that Epicurus and his followers failed to recognize or address a wider variety of death-related fears. Rosenbaum himself (ibid.) is among the defenders of Epicurus' arguments who commit the errors of restricting the fear of death *simpliciter* to the fear of being dead and regarding this as the sole concern of Epicurean thanatology.

A central premise in the argument of *KD* 2 is the claim that what involves no sensation whatsoever is nothing to us. Elsewhere Epicurus puts the point positively: 'all good and evil lie in sensation' (πᾶν ἀγαθὸν καὶ κακὸν ἐν αἰσθήσει).[35] Even if not every harm must itself be either a positively painful experience or productive of future, painful experiences, Epicurus does require that all harms and benefits be experienced in some fashion. That is, in order for some φ to constitute a harm for a person, he must at least experience either φ or some relevant consequences thereof.[36] This minimal constraint would still allow us to assert, for example, that a mother whose recreational drug use during pregnancy resulted in her child's being born blind had harmed the child by her actions, quite independently of what we might wish to say about the personhood of the fetus at the time of the mother's drug use, etc. It suffices for this purpose that the child experience the relevant consequence of the behaviour in question, namely the deprivation of pleasures associated with sight. By contrast, had my own parents decided never to have any children and taken appropriate measures to ensure that they did not, Epicurus' criterion would preclude regarding their actions as somehow constituting a harm to me. It is true that, as a result of their actions, *I* would never have existed. But my existence as a sentient being is itself the most minimal, necessary condition for considering *me* to have been harmed.

In part of the *Letter to Menoeceus* that expands upon the argument of *KD* 2 (= *Ep. Men.* 125), Epicurus writes:

> τὸ φρικωδέστατον οὖν τῶν κακῶν ὁ θάνατος οὐθὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ἐπειδήπερ ὅταν μὲν ἡμεῖς ὦμεν, ὁ θάνατος οὐ πάρεστιν, ὅταν δὲ ὁ θάνατος παρῇ, τόθ' ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐσμέν. οὔτε οὖν πρὸς τοὺς ζῶντάς ἐστιν οὔτε πρὸς τοὺς τετελευτηκότας, ἐπειδήπερ περὶ οὓς μὲν οὐκ ἔστιν, οἳ δ' οὐκέτι εἰσίν.
>
> So death, the most frightening of evils, is nothing to us, since whenever we are [i.e., exist], death is not present, and whenever death is present, then we are not [do not exist]. It is therefore nothing to either the living or the dead, since for the former it [i.e., death] is not, and the latter no longer are [exist].

When 'death is present', the person 'is not'; that is, he no longer exists. To speak of someone's 'being dead', as we occasionally do, is another potentially misleading locution. While the sentences 'Paul is cute' and 'Paul is dead' share the same basic grammatical form, they are not, on the Epicurean view, to be construed similarly. The former sentence predicates a property, cuteness, of an individual, Paul. The latter sentence is best

[35] *Ep. Men.* 124. [36] Cf. Rosenbaum 1986: 218–20.

characterized as a kind of shorthand for a complex, negative existential claim along the lines of 'Paul, who used to exist, no longer does.' If death entails annihilation, then no one ever experiences either being dead or any consequences thereof. But, as Lucretius stresses in a related passage of *De rerum natura*, 'If by chance anyone is to have misery or pain at some future time, that person must himself also exist at that future time' (*Debet enim, misere si forte aegreque futurumst, / ipse quoque esse in eo tum tempore, cui male possit / accidere*).[37] So, unlike being blinded, being dead is incapable of constituting a harm in *any* sense that an Epicurean would be willing to countenance. Those who disagree are left with the considerable burden of explaining a harm that is itself neither positively painful nor productive of future pains – nor ever experienced in any fashion whatsoever.

4 FEAR OF PREMATURE DEATH

While empirical evidence demonstrates the pervasiveness of a variety of death-related fears, including those associated with being dead,[38] the belief that premature death is the object of the most serious or fundamental of these fears has occasioned the frequent complaint that Epicurean thanatology is somehow beside the point.[39] Perhaps the most concise and influential example of such criticism has been offered by G. Striker.[40] Striker accuses the Epicureans of failing to make the obvious and necessary distinction between what she terms 'premature' and 'eventual' deaths. An eventual death is, in Striker's formulation, the inevitable result of one's mortality; a premature death, by contrast, occurs when an individual dies 'as yet far from having lived the lifespan of a normal human being'.[41] While it is not the duration of our lives per se that should concern us, according to Striker, neither is this a matter of utter indifference, since the completeness or incompleteness of a human life depends in no small part on its length.

She illustrates her point with the following analogy:

> The eighteen year old who wants to continue living is like someone who has watched the first act of an opera and is justifiably annoyed if the performance breaks off at this point. He is angry, not because he had thought he was going to spend three hours instead of only one, but because he wanted to see the entire opera, not just a part of it.[42]

[37] Lucr. 3.862–4. [38] See Hoelter 1979 and Florian and Kravetz 1983.
[39] See, e.g., Luper-Foy 1987: 234–5.
[40] Striker 1988. For a related discussion of Striker's critique of Epicurean thanatology, see Warren 2004: 116–18.
[41] Striker 1988: 325. [42] Ibid.

Like a finished opera or drama, suggests Striker, a complete human life contains 'certain stages that we expect to live through'.[43] Death at age eighteen prevents a person from raising children, enjoying a successful career etc. Death at age eighty presumably does not. By implication, any life that fails to contain the requisite stages, as any very short life must, is incomplete.

The notions of both prematurity and completeness at work in Striker's argument require further clarification, however. Any attempt to define premature death in terms of a 'normal human lifespan' must first face the difficulty of specifying just what is meant by the latter phrase. It is an obvious, though non-trivial, fact that life-expectancy varies considerably across cultures, genders, generations etc. Nor does an observation such as Nagel's to the effect that 'human beings obviously have a natural lifespan and cannot live much longer than a hundred years'[44] resolve the problem. One hundred years may represent the approximate upper limit of a natural human lifespan, but what importance should we assign to this fact, if, for example, future technological advances were to allow the average human body to last – and to continue in relative vigour – 50 years longer than it would do so naturally? Or 100 years? Or 500 years? For her part, Striker asserts that 'a life that lasted 300 years would hardly continue to be a *human* life'.[45] This is an intuition I do not share. Human beings are necessarily mortal. But always being susceptible to death in no way precludes living for even an extremely long period of time.[46] The choice of any particular number of years as maximal for a human life, as well as any attempt to define premature death in relation to this upper limit, seems hopelessly arbitrary.

One attractive alternative would be to define a death as premature if and only if it precedes the living of a complete life, while cashing out the notion of a complete life in terms of the attainment or satisfaction of some objective criterion, or set of criteria, other than simple duration.[47] The various life stages to which Striker refers seem intended to play some such role. Unfortunately, exactly what she herself takes these stages to be remains conspicuously indefinite throughout her analysis. The opera analogy, ostensibly introduced in order to flesh out the notion of completeness, proves ultimately unavailing. 'There is of course no definite point at which we could say that a human life is complete', concedes Striker, since 'our lives

[43] Ibid.: 326. [44] Nagel 1970: 80. [45] Striker 1988: 326 (emphasis in original); cf. Williams 1973.
[46] The book of *Genesis*, for example, contains many examples of lives reputed to have lasted far longer than 300 years, but there is no indication that the author considered these to be in any way inhuman.
[47] Cf. Rosenbaum 1990: 32–8.

are, after all, not operas with a well-defined finale at the end.'[48] The only thing perfectly clear about Striker's concept of a complete life is the need for a relatively long time to achieve it. Nor is this vagueness surprising, since creating and justifying any objective and comprehensive list of events or goals that would account for life's completeness within the kind of model assumed by Striker's examples promises to be a hopelessly impracticable undertaking.[49] Absent such definite criteria for completeness, however, we are also left without a particularly useful notion of prematurity.

While the subject of premature death receives no explicit treatment in Epicurus' extant writings, it does occupy a large portion of the surviving columns of Philodemus' *On Death*. Philodemus' own analysis of prematurity also turns on a notion of completeness, albeit one markedly different from that envisioned by Striker and other critics of Epicureanism. The Epicurean concept depends upon the school's idiosyncratic brand of hedonism and its corresponding formulation of the *summum bonum*. According to Epicurus, the goal of human life is mental tranquillity (*ataraxia*), the achievement of which alone serves to make a human life complete.[50] Other commentators have previously recognized this connection between tranquillity and completeness, but the more sympathetic among them have erred in the direction opposite Striker by asserting that Epicurus regards a complete life as *entirely* time-independent.[51] Their confusion stems from an apparent failure to distinguish between the time it takes (initially) to achieve or attain *ataraxia* and the time it takes to enjoy this particular good. That the latter is instantaneous is surely the meaning of Epicurus' dictum that 'the greatest good is both produced and enjoyed at one and the same time' (Ὁ αὐτὸς χρόνος καὶ γενέσεως τοῦ μεγίστου ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ἀπολαύσεως).[52] Like health or sight, tranquillity is complete at each and every moment one experiences it.

It does not follow, however, that it takes no time at all to produce or attain this good. One text invoked in support of the claim that duration is

[48] Striker 1988: 326. [49] Cf. Rosenbaum 1990: 34–5.

[50] At *Ep. Men.* 131, Epicurus defines 'happiness' (εὐδαιμονία) as 'the absence of physical pain and mental disturbance' (τὸ μήτε ἀλγεῖν κατὰ σῶμα μήτε ταράττεσθαι κατὰ ψυχήν); cf. *KD* 3. This formulation of the *summum bonum* notwithstanding, Epicurus and his followers elsewhere repeatedly seek to minimize the importance of physical pains (and, for that matter, pleasures) in contrast to mental ones; see esp. *KD* 4, Cic. *Fin.* 1.55 (cf. *VS* 1 and Cic. *Fin.* 2.93–4) and Epicurus' deathbed epistle to Idomeneus as preserved in DL 10.22. Epicurus, like the Stoics, is also reported to have said that the wise man is always happy, even on the rack or roasting in Phalaris' brazen bull. (Fr. 601 Us. collects some of the evidence, including DL 10.118, Cic. *Tusc.* 2.17 (cf. 5.31), and *Fin.* 2.88–9.) Such a claim provides further evidence of the ultimate identification of happiness with mental tranquillity alone.

[51] See esp. Mitsis 1988b: 308 and 320–2; and Rosenbaum 1990: 32–8.

[52] *VS* 42. The Greek text is that of Usener 1887. Arrighetti 1973, following Bignone 1920, prints ἀπολύσεως <τοῦ κακοῦ> for ἀπολαύσεως.

irrelevant to Epicurean conceptions of the good life is *KD* 19, which states: 'Unlimited time and finite time contain equal pleasure if one measures pleasure's limits by reason' (Ὁ ἄπειρος χρόνος ἴσην ἔχει τὴν ἡδόνην καὶ ὁ πεπερασμένος, ἐάν τις αὐτῆς τὰ πέρατα καταμετρήσῃ τῷ λογισμῷ). But the contrast here is between infinite and finite time, not some time and no time whatsoever. Conventional hedonism places no upper limit on the amount of pleasure an agent may experience. Every addition of a new pleasure or prolongation of a present one adds to the sum total. In principle, therefore, a greater amount of time always permits a greater amount of pleasure. The Epicurean conception of pleasure, by contrast, has an intrinsic maximum, namely, the complete absence of mental disturbance.[53] Once this limit has been attained, no additional amount of time can make for a more pleasant life.

KD 20 reinforces this point:

Ἡ μὲν σὰρξ ἀπέλαβε τὰ πέρατα τῆς ἡδονῆς ἄπειρα καὶ ἄπειρος αὐτὴν χρόνος παρασκεύασεν· ἡ δὲ διάνοια τοῦ τῆς σαρκὸς τέλους καὶ πέρατος λαβοῦσα τὸν ἐπιλογισμὸν καὶ τοὺς ὑπὲρ τοῦ αἰῶνος φόβους ἐκλύσασα τὸν παντελῆ βίον παρεσκεύασε, καὶ οὐθὲν ἔτι τοῦ ἀπείρου χρόνου προσεδεήθη· ἀλλ' οὔτε ἔφυγε τὴν ἡδονὴν οὐδ' ἡνίκα τὴν ἐξαγωγὴν ἐκ τοῦ ζῆν τὰ πράγματα παρασκεύαζεν, ὡς ἐλλείπουσά τι τοῦ ἀρίστου βίου κατέστρεψεν.

The flesh perceives the limits of pleasure as unlimited and unlimited time [*sc.* alone] provides it. But the mind, having performed the rational calculation of the flesh's goal and limit and dispelled the fears of eternity, [*sc.* itself] provides the complete life, and we no longer have need of unlimited time; but neither is it [i.e., the mind] in the habit of fleeing pleasure, nor, whenever circumstances provide for our exit from life, does it come to its end as if having fallen short of the best life in any respect.

Here too Epicurus claims only that a complete life, properly understood, does not require an infinite or unlimited amount of time. There is once again no indication that duration is entirely irrelevant. While a life is complete for the Epicureans when one attains the limit of pleasure, i.e., *ataraxia*, Epicurus' statements elsewhere regarding the minimal requirements for attaining this – which include, for example, at least a rudimentary understanding of natural science[54] – give every indication that a certain, albeit relatively limited, amount of time is indeed necessary.

Philodemus' *On Death* helps to confirm that the position sketched above accurately represents Epicurean attitudes toward both duration and

[53] Cf. *KD* 3: 'The limit of quantity in pleasures is the removal of all that is painful' (Ὅρος τοῦ μεγέθους τῶν ἡδονῶν ἡ παντὸς τοῦ ἀλγοῦντος ὑπεξαίρεσις).

[54] See, e.g., *KD* 12.

completeness. In several passages worth quoting at length, Philodemus stresses that only finite time is necessary to achieve, and enjoy, the limit of pleasure. First, in some of the few legible lines remaining from column 3, we find the following:

ἐπιχεώμ[εθα . . . |. εἰ]ρημένοις Διὸς σωτῆρ[ος ὡς] τ̣ὴ̣[ν | αὐτὴν ἡ]δονὴν ὁ πόσος χρόνος τῶι ἀ|[πείρωι] παρασκευάζειν πέφυκεν ὅτ̣[αν | τις αὐ]τ̣ης καταλάβη<ι> τοὺς ὅρους τὸ | [θ̓ ἅμ]α[55] τὸ σάρκινον εὐθὺς ἀπολ̣α̣|[βεῖν τ]ὸ μέγεθος τῆς ἡδονῆς ὅπε[ρ | καὶ ὁ] ἄπειρος χρόνος περιεποίη[σεν | ἴσον . . .][56]

Let us pour libations to Zeus Soter, for the reasons mentioned,[57] since a certain amount of time is such as to provide pleasure to a person, whenever one understands its limits, and, at the same time, for the fact that the flesh at once attains the same magnitude of pleasure that unlimited time secures . . .

In column 13, he adds:

ἐ[ξὸν δὲ] | ἐν ποσῶι χρόνωι τὸ μέγιστον αὐ[τῶν] | καὶ περιποήσασθαι κα[ὶ] ἀπολαῦσαι κ[α]|θάπερ ὑπέδειξ[εν] . . . [58]

But since, as he demonstrated, it is possible in a certain, limited amount of time both to acquire and enjoy the greatest of these [*sc.* goods] . . .

Two more, related passages make the link between duration and completeness. Column 19 begins as follows:

νῦν̣ [δὲ σ]οφῶι γενομένωι καὶ ποσὸν | χρόνο[ν ἐ]πιζήσαντ[ι] τὸ μέγιστον ἀγα|θὸν ἀπε[ί]ληπται. τῆς δὲ κατὰ τὴν ἰσό|τητα αὐτ[ο]ῦ καὶ τὴν ὁμοείδειαν πορεί|ας γινομέ[νη]ς, ἕως [ε]ἰς ἄπειρον, εἰ δυνα|τὸν εἴη, χ[ρονί]ζειν οἰκεῖόν ἐστιν. ἂν | δὲ παραγ[ράφ]ηται[ι], τῆς μὲν εὐδαιμο|νίας ἀφαίρ[εσι]ς οὐ γίνεται τῆς γεγονυίας, | κώλυσι[ς] δὲ τ̣[ῆ̃]ς ἔτι μετουσίας αὐτῆς.[59]

And therefore the greatest good has been grasped by the person who has become wise and lived through a certain amount of time. Once his journey has achieved balance and consistency, it would be fitting to prolong it for an unlimited time, if such were possible; but should his life be limited,[60] this will not be the deprivation of what has already been, but [*sc.* merely] a prevention of its continued presence.

[55] Here and in the next line, I retain the readings of Gigante. Henry prints instead τὸ [δὲ| σύνκριμ]α and ἀπολ̣α̣[βεῖν ταὐτ]ὸ respectively. In any case, the overall sense is not affected.

[56] *De morte* col. 3,31–40.

[57] 'The reasons mentioned' are illegible in the surrounding text, but the sense is given clearly enough by Philodemus' summary here.

[58] *De morte* col. 13,3–6.

[59] *De morte* col. 19,1–9.

[60] On the metaphor employed here, that of a line placed underneath a finished paragraph, see Obbink 1996: 93–4 and Henry 2009: 43 n. 67.

And in column 38, near the end of the treatise, we find this passage:

ὁ δὲ νοῦν ἔχων ἀπει|ληφὼς ὃ δύναται πᾶν περιποιῆσαι | [τ]ὸ πρὸς εὐδαίμονα βίον αὔταρκες, εὐ|θὺς ἤδη τὸ λοιπὸν ἐντεταφιασμέ|νος περιπατεῖ κα[ὶ] τὴν μίαν ἡμέραν | ὡς αἰῶνα κερδα[ί]νει, παραιρουμένης | δὲ οὔτε ξενίζονθ᾽ <ἡγεῖται τὰ προσπίπτοντ᾽> οὔθ᾽ ὡς ἐλλείπων | τι τοῦ κ[ρ]ατίστου β[ί]ου συνακολουθεῖ, προ|βὰς δὲ δὴ καὶ τὴν ἐκ τοῦ χρ[ό]νου προσθή|[κ]ην ἀξιο[λόγ]ως ἀ[π]ολαβὼν ὡς παραδό|ξω<ι> συνκε[κ]υρηκὼς εὐτυχία[<ι> κ]αὶ κα[τ]ὰ | τ[ο]ῦτο το[ῖς] πράγμασιν εὐχα[ρ]ιστεῖ.[61]

But a sensible person, once he has learned that it is possible to acquire everything sufficient for a happy life, from that point on walks about as one already laid out for his burial and enjoys each single day as if it were an eternity. When it is taken from him, he neither <considers the things being taken from him> surprising nor goes along with them as if he were thereby missing out on some aspect of the best possible life. But if he extends his life, he accepts any added time, as he reasonably should, as though having happened on an unexpected piece of good fortune and gives thanks accordingly to the way things are.

The sentiments expressed in these citations find parallels in Epicurus' own extant writings, including *KD* 20, quoted earlier, and *Ep. Men.* 125–6, where he states, '<the wise man neither deprecates living> nor fears not living, since living does not offend him, nor does he consider not living an evil' (<ὁ δὲ σοφὸς οὔτε παραιτεῖται τὸ ζῆν>[62] οὔτε φοβεῖται τὸ μὴ ζῆν· οὔτε γὰρ αὐτῷ προσίσταται τὸ ζῆν οὔτε δοξάζεται κακὸν εἶναί τι τὸ μὴ ζῆν). A sensible person recognizes that he has achieved the best possible life at the moment he attains *ataraxia*. Beyond this point, nothing added to his life could improve it. Neither, then, is there anything of real significance of which death could in any way deprive such a person. This it not to say that, all things being equal, the sage does not rationally prefer to continue living. But he does not think that by increasing the quantity of his life he thereby somehow increases its quality. His desire to continue living is therefore best understood in Epicurean terms as 'natural but non-necessary'.[63] The sage's natural inclination to live a longer rather than shorter life can in this sense be compared to the kind of preference he might be expected to have for a gourmet meal over bread and water when both alternatives are readily available. Insofar as both alternatives suffice to sate his hunger, both provide for the maximal amount of the relevant pleasure, though the 'variation' afforded by the gourmet meal makes it

[61] *De morte* col. 38,14–25.

[62] The supplement originally proposed here by Usener is also accepted by Arrighetti.

[63] See, e.g., col. 19,6, where Philodemus indicates that it would be οἰκεῖον for such a person to continue living indefinitely.

natural to prefer this option, all else being equal.[64] Like a gourmet meal, a longer life presumably provides for only the variation of, but not an increase in, a sage's overall pleasure, since any sage has already achieved *ataraxia* and so by definition attained the height of pleasure. Consequently, the failure to live longer poses no threat to his happiness.

Philodemus accordingly criticizes the reasons commonly adduced for fearing what most people regard as a premature death, which they erroneously associate with death at a young age. As preserved, column 12 of *On Death* begins abruptly with a subordinate clause introduced by the particle διότι ('that'). The sense of what follows confirms that something along the lines of T. Kuiper's suggestion, 'It is a folly' (*Het is een dwaasheid*),[65] must have introduced the surviving text:

. . . διότι τὴν ἄωρον τελε[υτὴν ὡς κακόν] | τινες ἐκκλ[ίνου]σιν ἐλπ[ίζοντες πολ]|λῶν ἀγαθῶ[ν ἐ]ν τῶι πλείʼ[ονι χρόνωι | κ]τῆσιν ἕξειν, [ἃ χ]ωρὶς τῆς γνησ[ίας σο]|φίας οὐδ' ἐν ὕπ[νω]ι δύναται [κτήσασ]|θαι, δι' ἣν αἰτία[ν] αὐτὴν νεότ[ης ὑπὸ] | τ̣ῶ̣ν πλείστων ἀνθρώπων ἐ[ψέγε]|το, πλείστον χρόνον ἐπίθεσιν [ἀγαθῶν] | ποιουμένων . . .[66]

(It is a folly) that some fear an untimely death [as an evil], hoping in a longer period of time to acquire possession of many good things that without the possession of genuine wisdom are impossible to attain even in one's dreams. For this very reason, youth is reviled by most people, since they equate more time with more goods . . .

Most people share the erroneous assumption that a longer life affords the opportunity for more goods. In the first place, notes Philodemus sarcastically, the 'goods' they hope to obtain are generally beyond even the stuff of dreams for people who, like themselves, lack genuine wisdom. But the more fundamental mistake concerns the empty, or false, beliefs such people hold regarding the value possessed by the objects of their desires. Against the false belief that more, or better, goods come only with age, Philodemus invokes the example of Pythocles, the young man repeatedly praised by Epicurus himself, and to whom multiple epistles, including Epicurus' famous letter on cosmology and meteorology, are addressed.[67]

[64] See *KD* 18. [65] Kuiper 1925: 37.

[66] *De morte* col. 12,2–10. Henry 2009 declines to supplement many of the line endings here, so, with the exceptions of ἐ[ψέγε]|το in lines 8–9 and [ἀγαθῶν] in line 9, the text generally follows that of Kuiper 1925. The former conjecture I owe to Henry's prepublication text (the supplement is omitted from the published version). The latter originally appeared in Sanders 2002 and was subsequently offered independently by Warren 2004: 144.

[67] In addition to *Ep. Pyth.* itself, see DL 10.5–6 for fragments of two other letters from Epicurus to Pythocles.

ποῦ γὰρ ἐλεῆσαι νέον ἔστιν, [ὁρῶντι τ]οσοῦτο | ἀναλογιζόμενον [ἐξ] ὧν Πυθοκλ[ῆς, οἵ]α κελεύει | Μητρόδω[ρος], περιπε[ποί]ηται, γε[γο]νὼς οὐχ[ί π]ω | ὀκτὼ καὶ δέκα [ἐτῶν], ἀλλῷ οὐχὶ τὸ[ν τῶν ἀφρόνων] | βίον ζήσας . . . [68]

For how is it possible to feel pity for a young man, seeing the great sum of Pythocles' accomplishments under the direction of Metrodorus? Though not yet eighteen years of age, he had not lived a fool's life . . .

Pythocles' precocious accomplishments attest to the possibility of attaining wisdom and happiness even relatively early in life.[69] In the case of someone who has done so, an early death is not a cause for pity, since even death at a relatively young age in no way harms him. This is the sense, *pace* Nagel, Striker and others, in which Epicurus did indeed intend to persuade us that death at age eighteen or eighty is a matter of indifference. Dying young is not in and of itself an evil for the Epicureans. A complete life, if not altogether independent of duration, need not be a particularly long one. Those who regard the death of every young person as tragic fail to appreciate this crucial fact.[70]

There remains, however, a sense in which some deaths would seem to be genuinely premature even for the Epicureans, as passages from elsewhere in *On Death* confirm:

τὸ δὲ ζητεῖν π[αρὰ ταύ]την | [τὴν αἰ]τίαν ὡς [π]λεῖστον [χ]ρό[ν]ον ζῆν | [εὔλο]γον καὶ τὸ [τοὺ]ς νέους τελευ|τῶντας διὰ τοῦτο δυστυ[χ]εῖς νομ[ί]|ζειν. τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἵνα συντελέσηταί τ[ε] | τὰς συνγ[ε]νικὰς καὶ φυσικὰ[ς] ἐπιθυμία[ς] | καὶ πᾶσαν ἀπολάβη<ι> τὴν οἰκειοτάτην | [ἣν] ἐνδέχεται διαγωγήν ὀρέγεσθαι προσ|[βι]ῶναί τινα χρόνον, ὥστε πληρωθῆ|[ναι] τῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐκβαλεῖν | [τὴ]ν κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας ὄ[χ]λησιν ἢ|[ρε]μίας μεταλαμ-βάνοντα, νοῦν ἔχον|[τός ἐ]στιν ἀνθρώπου.[71]

[68] *De morte* cols. 12,34–13,2. With the exception of Kuiper's τὸ[ν τῶν ἀφρόνων] βίον, the text here follows the reading of D. Sedley (1976a: 43). Sedley's text notes the brief lacuna between the letters το and βίον but does not supply any Greek word(s) to fill it. 'There is no shortage of suitable words', he writes, 'and to choose one would be arbitrary.' Nevertheless, in his accompanying translation he offers 'the life [of an idler]' as expressing at least the sense, if not the precise wording, of the original passage.

[69] This passage has stirred some debate regarding Pythocles' age at the time of his own death. In addition to Sedley 1976a, see Arrighetti 1975.

[70] *KD* 40 makes a similar point. The context makes clear that Epicurus intends by his use of the phrase τὴν τοῦ τελευτήσαντος προκαταστροφήν to indicate an early death (i.e., one at a relatively young age), though not one that is 'premature' in the technical sense of preceding the achievement of *ataraxia*. Inwood and Gerson (1994: 36) render the phrase in question as 'the early death of the departed'.

[71] *De morte* cols. 13,36–14,10. The text follows Henry 2009 with the exception of the supplement [εὔλο]γον in col. 13,38, which is Kuiper's. Henry again offers no supplement of his own, but his accompanying translation indicates a contrasting understanding of the desired sense: 'and it is [foolish (?)] to seek for this reason . . . '

But it is reasonable to seek to live as long a time as possible for this purpose, and to consider those dying young unfortunate because of this. For the desire to live a while longer in order to fulfil one's natural desires and to arrange a lifestyle as suited to oneself as possible so as to be filled full of goods and cast off every trouble owing to desires, exchanging them for peace of mind, befits a sensible person.

Philodemus recognizes as reasonable the desire to live at least long enough to attain the goal of *ataraxia*. Indeed, such a desire surely qualifies as both natural *and* necessary within the Epicurean classificatory schema, since the person who has not yet achieved this goal requires the added time to secure his own happiness.[72] Death at too early an age can prevent one from developing even the limited capacities necessary for achieving happiness and, hence, from even the possibility of living a complete life. It is therefore also perfectly rational, admits Philodemus, to regard at least some who die young as 'unfortunate' (δυστυχεῖς). In the only legible lines to survive from column 15 of *On Death*, Philodemus makes essentially the same point in more positive terms, acknowledging that it benefits (συμφέρειν) someone who has not yet developed these capacities to continue living.[73]

Philodemus' language in columns 17 and 18 is even more direct. Near the end of column 17, he writes:

λέγω[μεν το]ιγαρο[ῦν] ἡμεῖς | [ἰ]δίως περὶ το[ῦ δυν]άμενον π̣[ροκό]ψ[αι] | κ̣ατὰ φιλοσοφία[ν ἐ]ξ̣αρπάζεσθαι δ[ι]|ότι φυσικ[ὸν] μὲν τ̣[ὸ] ν̣ύττεσ[θ]α[ι τ]ὸν τοι|ο̣[ῦ]τον·[74]

Therefore we say in particular about the snatching away of one able to make progress in philosophy that it is natural that such a person feel a pricking . . .

And less than a dozen lines later, in column 18, we find the following:

πο[λὺ μ]ὲν οὖν κρεῖττο[ν] ἦν προ|βάντα σοφ[ίαι νέ]ον ἀξίως τῆς φύσ̣εως συν|αυξηθῆνα̣[ι κἄπειτ'] ἀ[π]ολαῦσαι τῆς δυνα|τωτάτω[ν ἀνδρῶν] εὐετηρ[ί]α̣ς, ἀλλὰ | καὶ τὸ γεγ̣[ονὸς εὐχ]α̣[ριστί]α[ς] ἄ̣ξιον πολ|λῆς . . .[75]

[72] See *Ep. Men.* 127: 'Of necessary desires, some are necessary for happiness, some for physical comfort, and some for life itself' (καὶ τῶν φυσικῶν [*sc.* ἐπιθυμιῶν] αἱ μὲν πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν εἰσὶν ἀναγκαῖαι, αἱ δὲ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀοχλησίαν, αἱ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ ζῆν).

[73] *De morte* col. 15,3–9. Philodemus stresses that the good one can hope to achieve thereby is the attainment in this life of the greatest possible pleasure and not some 'heavenly' reward. If correct, Kuiper's supplement [ἐ]κείνην τὴν μετακόσ[μιον χώραν] in col. 15,8–9 would refer to the place(s) where the Epicurean gods themselves are said to dwell; see fr. 359 Us. and Cic. *ND* 1.18.

[74] *De morte* col. 17,32–6. [75] *De morte* col. 18,9–14.

So by all means, it is much better that a young man who has progressed in wisdom mature in a way worthy of his nature and enjoy the most potent [form of human] prosperity,[76] [*sc*. though] even the next best thing is worthy of much gratitude . . .

For a young person who has made some progress in Epicurean philosophy, but who remains still shy of its ultimate goal, the prospect of death is characterized as something that naturally causes a 'pricking'. Paired with forms of φυσικός ('natural'), the noun δηγμός ('bite') and the verb νύττειν ('to prick') enjoy the status of quasi-technical terms in *On Death*.[77] In column 25, for example, Philodemus refers to the 'truly natural bite' (φυσικώτατον δηγμόν) caused by concerns for the affective consequences of one's death for others.[78] Only a few lines later, he acknowledges the 'natural bite' (φυσ[ικὸς ὁ] δ̣η[γμός]) caused by dying in a foreign land, separated from family and friends, before quickly adding that this bite amounts to 'a mere pricking' (ὥστε νύττειν μόν̣ο̣ν) and not a 'great pain' (λύπην . . . μεγάλην) for the sage.[79]

Philodemus' use of the word δηγμός is especially suggestive. References to 'bites' (δηγμοί or, alternatively, δήξεις; Latin, *morsus*) appear repeatedly in Stoic sources on the emotions, where they are associated with contractions in the soul that resemble emotional responses in their affective consequences (e.g., turning pale, sweating or trembling).[80] For at least the later Stoics, these bites admittedly enjoy a status less than that of a full-blown 'impulse' or desire.[81] As an Epicurean, however, Philodemus does not make the same distinction between so-called 'pre-passions' (προπάθειαι) and emotions proper.[82] His use of the adjective φυσικός to modify δηγμός throughout *On Death*[83] in fact suggests that he has in mind a species of 'natural fear' analogous to *On Anger* 's 'natural anger'.

Recognition of premature death as an object of even a limited, natural fear would nevertheless entail that a death of this kind constitutes a genuine harm, since only what is justifiably regarded as an evil could serve as the object of any rational fear. The ability of Epicureanism to countenance such a view of premature death has been consistently called into question.

[76] Kuiper (1925: 41) rightly glosses the phrase τῆς δυνα|τωτάτω[ν ἀνδρῶν] εὐετηρ[ί]ας as 'the greatest conceivable human happiness' (*het hoogst denkbare menschelijke geluk*).

[77] For a more extended discussion of the role 'bites' play in Philodemus' moral psychology generally, see Tsouna 2007a: 46–51; and Armstrong 2008.

[78] *De morte* col. 25,2–10. [79] *De morte* cols. 25,38–26,7.

[80] See Gal. *PHP* 2.8.4, 2.8.18 and 4.3.2; Cic. *Tusc*. 3.82–3 and 4.14–15.

[81] See Sorabji 2000: 37–8 and 68.

[82] Cf. Armstrong 2008, esp. 89. For the difficulties internal to Stoic moral psychology presented by the doctrine of προπάθειαι, see, e.g., Inwood 1985: 178–81.

[83] Yet another pairing of the adjective φυσικός with a form of δηγμός occurs at *De morte* col. 35,36.

I have already attempted to dispense with one potential obstacle by suggesting how Epicureanism can account for the recognition of evils whose harm consists solely in the deprivation of future goods. But other difficulties remain. As also noted previously, the Epicureans make it a necessary condition of suffering harm that one actually experience the harm in some fashion. Failure to satisfy this requirement is what prevents death in the sense of being dead from qualifying as a harm. Unlike being dead, however, death in the sense of a limit or end point to one's life is arguably something that one *does* experience. Thus an Epicurean could plausibly locate the harm of a premature death at a time in which its subject still exists, namely, at the precise moment of death, which we might alternatively call the last moment of one's life. This suggestion has received relatively little attention from commentators on Epicurean thanatology and, as far as I am aware, no support.[84] W. Grey, for example, explicitly rejects the proposal on the grounds that it makes the harm of death 'an ephemeral and momentary matter'.[85] Similar concerns have been voiced more recently by J. Warren. While conceding that '[i]t is not so easy to construct an account of why death cannot be a harm at the instant of ceasing to live', he immediately adds: 'it is possible that the Epicureans would question what sense can be given to something being an instantaneous harm, a harm of no duration'.[86] But if Epicurus can maintain, as he clearly does, that the experience of life's greatest possible good is itself instantaneous,[87] there would seem no good reason why he and his followers should deny that a harm as potentially great as that of premature death could similarly be suffered instantaneously. To claim otherwise is once again to confuse quantity with quality.

The idea that the Epicureans might sanction a 'natural fear' of premature death has given rise to one additional worry that I wish to address briefly in conclusion. I turn once again to Warren's formulation for a clear and concise summary of the objection:

> Premature death is not to be feared if and only if one has attained *ataraxia*. So at any point until *ataraxia* is reached it is reasonable to fear premature death. But if it is reasonable to fear premature death, this is sufficient to make it impossible for anyone not yet in *ataraxia* to attain *ataraxia*.[88]

The Epicurean acolyte for whom premature death is a possibility will, according to Warren, find himself in a perilous, catch-22 situation. Since

[84] For a contemporary defence of this view without reference to ancient Epicureanism, see Lamont 1998.
[85] Grey 1999: 360; cf. the earlier comments of Rosenbaum 1986: 218–19.
[86] Warren 2004: 47.
[87] Cf. note 52 of this chapter, p. 222.
[88] Warren 2004: 157.

premature death is an evil for anyone in his position, he will fear it; but so long as he harbours this fear, he cannot attain 'tranquillity' (*ataraxia*).

In response, it should first be noted that Warren's claim that premature death 'is not to be feared *if and only if* one has attained *ataraxia*' is too strong. While it is true that a premature death is only possible for one who has not yet attained *ataraxia*, not every possible evil is itself a reasonable object of fear. In order for a fear to be rational, it is required that one be justified in judging its object to be not only a genuine harm but also *imminent*. Most fears of flying, for example, should be considered irrational not because an airplane crash would fail to constitute a harm to anyone on board, but because such accidents are so infrequent that one would rarely, if ever, be justified in antecedently believing that one's own flight is likely to suffer such a fate. Analogously, the circumstances in which it is reasonable for the average young person to believe that his or her death is imminent are presumably few and far between. Nor is this true only of the young; something similar could presumably be said in the cases of almost all but the very aged or infirm. It would therefore be exceptional rather than ordinary for any person making progress toward *ataraxia* with the aid of Epicurean philosophy to have reason to fear a premature death.

I can only gesture here at a second difficulty associated with the worry Warren raises, and at what I take to be the Epicurean response. One unavoidable, though frequently overlooked, consequence of Epicurus' admission that 'every pain is an evil'[89] per se is the threat posed to the invulnerability or 'self-sufficiency' (αὐτάρκεια) of the Epicurean sage.[90] The infliction of physical pain, for example, would constitute a real, albeit comparatively minor, harm for him.[91] It is also true that fear and anger are themselves painful emotions.[92] Unlike the Stoics, the Epicureans did not regard the extirpation of even painful emotions as any more of a practical possibility than the avoidance of all physical pains.[93] In both the *Letter to Herodotus* 77 and Key Doctrine 1, Epicurus links his claim that the gods experience neither anger nor gratitude to the fact that these emotions are marks of 'weakness'. But there is a relative abundance of evidence, especially in the case of gratitude, to show that Epicurus himself did not claim

[89] *Ep. Men.* 129.

[90] On Epicurus' commitment to invulnerability, see esp. Mitsis 1988a and Fowler 1997.

[91] For Epicurus' own repeated attempts to minimize the importance of physical pains, see the references in note 50 of this chapter, p. 222.

[92] Aristotle defined anger as a painful πάθος at *Rh.* 1378a30–2, and Philodemus explicitly endorses such a characterization at *De ira* col. 37,24–9.

[93] Nor, if possible, would this in all cases be desirable; see, e.g., Plut. *Non posse* 1101A–B.

the same immunity for the sage.[94] His position in this regard apparently became a source of subsequent criticism, to which Philodemus explicitly replies in a passage from *On Anger*. In column 43 of that work, Philodemus claims that critics of the *Key Doctrines* fail to understand properly Epicurus' meaning in characterizing gratitude and anger as 'weaknesses': 'For it isn't weakness in a sense incompatible with athletes and kings, but rather [*sc*. in the sense of] a constitution or nature susceptible to death and pains' (οὐ γὰρ ἡ{ι} τῆι | τῶν ἀθλητῶν καὶ βασι|λέων ἀντίθετος ἀ[σ]θέ|νεια λαμβάνεται κατὰ | τὸν λόγον, ἀλλ' ἡ δεκτικὴ | κατασκευὴ καὶ φύσις θανά|του καὶ ἀλγηδόνων).[95] As a human being, the sage is no less susceptible to certain passions than he is to pain or death.[96] Propositions of the form 'I have been harmed' or 'I am about to suffer harm' will sometimes prove true even for him. In such cases, he will, of course, also believe them.[97] But, as Philodemus repeatedly indicates in *On Anger*, the belief that one has been intentionally and unjustly harmed is itself a sufficient condition of anger in the generic sense.[98] Consequently, one must acknowledge that even a wise man is capable of experiencing at least the natural species of anger.[99] Indeed, adds Philodemus, natural anger is so called precisely because it is 'inescapable' (ἀνέκφευκτος) for any human being.[100] Something analogous would seem to hold true in the case of fear. We fear many things besides death, and, as hedonists, the Epicureans will be forced to concede that many of these fears – those involving imminent physical pain, for example – are perfectly rational.

Later Epicureans recognized that to insist on characterizing happiness in terms of the *complete* absence of even mental pains risks putting happiness

[94] Indeed, both Diogenes Laertius and Seneca attribute to Epicurus the claim that *only* a wise man will be capable of gratitude; see DL 10.118 and Sen. *Ep*. 81.11. For other references to gratitude by Epicurus, see *VS* 17, 39 and 55.

[95] *De ira* col. 43,29–35. It is noteworthy that Philodemus treats the *Key Doctrines*, which he mentions by name (col. 43,20–1), as one of Epicurus' own works rather than a compendium assembled after his death; cf. Bailey 1926: 344–7.

[96] Cf. DL 10.117.

[97] It is on this simple point that much of the difference between the Epicurean and Stoic positions on anger, and related emotions such as fear, ultimately turns. If the Stoic claim that only virtue has value is correct, then a sage would be incapable of suffering harm at the hands of anyone else. Since their sage would never hold a (false) belief of the form 'I have been harmed', the Stoics can consistently maintain that he would also never experience anger.

[98] See esp. *De ira* cols. 41,39–42,4; cf. cols. 40,32–41,9. For a different perspective on the question of whether such beliefs are in every case sufficient to rouse anger, see Asmis' ch. 8 of this volume.

[99] In addition to the passage cited in note 92 of this chapter, p. 231, see also *De ira* col. 41,29–31; col. 43,1–7; col. 43,14–9; cols. 43,41–44,8; cols. 44,41–45,5 and col. 46,11–3.

[100] *De ira* col. 39,29–31. Natural anger is characterized as inescapable three more times in col. 40: ἀ[νέκφ]ευκτον [εἶναι τ]ὸ γέ]νος π]αντ[ί] (lines 4–6); ἀνέκφευκτον αὐτὴν ἐδείκνυμεν ἀνθρώπων {η} φύσει (lines 20–2); and οὐκ ἂν οἷός τ εἴη {ι} πᾶσαν ἐκφεύγειν (lines 23–5).

out of the control, and beyond the reach, of any human being. To preserve the sage's self-sufficiency, something to which not only the Epicureans but also the vast majority of Hellenistic philosophers were firmly committed, it became necessary to further refine the school's account of happiness. The result, I suggest, can be seen in the following passage from Diogenes Laertius' biography of Epicurus:

Τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν διχῇ νοεῖσθαι, τήν τε ἀκροτάτην, οἵα ἐστὶ περὶ τὸν θεόν, ἐπίτασιν οὐκ ἔχουσαν· καὶ τὴν <κατὰ τὴν> προσθήκην καὶ ἀφαίρεσιν ἡδονῶν.[101]

[The Epicureans] posit two ideas of happiness: a complete kind, which admits of no increase, such as the gods possess; and one compatible with the addition and subtraction of pleasures.

Human nature differs from, and falls short of, the divine. Not even Epicurean philosophy can immunize us against all potential harms, whether physical or mental. It does, however, promise the means to limit their effects. Human happiness is compromised neither by physical pains, whatever their magnitude,[102] nor by mental pains that arise due to circumstances beyond a person's control, including the pains associated with the natural species of emotions such as anger and fear. Anyone possessed of proper understanding will always recognize the relative unimportance of any 'external' harm that gives rise to these painful emotions.[103] Having only true beliefs regarding the object of one's anger or fear in turn guarantees that the experience of the relevant emotion is brief and moderate.[104] Insofar as these unavoidable 'bites' or 'prickings' do not rise to the level of 'great pains', they should not be considered 'disturbances' (ταραχαί) that count against the kind of tranquillity constitutive of human happiness. Such happiness is admittedly not the perfect happiness enjoyed by the gods, [105]

[101] DL 10.121a; the text is that of Usener 1887.

[102] Cf. again note 50 of this chapter, p. 222.

[103] See, e.g., *De ira* cols. 41,31–42,10.

[104] On the brevity of natural anger, see *De ira* col. 40,1–2 and col. 45,9–11; on its relative mildness, see col. 42,4–6; cols. 43,41–44,10; and col. 45,5–8.

[105] Several prominent commentators have resisted reading DL 10.121a as offering a distinction between divine and human happiness. Bailey (1926: 420), for example, while granting that such an interpretation of the passage is the most natural, nevertheless dismisses it as 'not good Epicureanism'; cf. Bignone 1920: 215 n. 1. There are a handful of statements by Epicurus, which, if taken at face value rather than regarded as rhetorical hyperbole, may suggest that the acknowledgment by certain, later Epicureans – Philodemus included – of a distinction between divine and human happiness does indeed represent a modification of Epicurus' own views on the subject (see, e.g., *Ep. Men.* 135, *VS* 33 and, most direct of all, an apparent excerpt from Epicurus' much-discussed *Letter to Mother* preserved in Diog. Oin. fr. 125 IV, 4–10 Smith; cf. also Lucr. 3.322). But such a modification, if it is a modification, would itself have been necessary for any good Epicurean hoping to preserve the school's commitments to both a form of hedonism and the self-sufficiency of the sage with respect to his own happiness.

who, unlike us, are susceptible to neither pains nor death. But attainment of this more restricted form of distinctly human happiness is also perfectly compatible with the recognition that, at least under certain circumstances, death could prove something to us after all.

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DEMETRIUS LACO

DIO CASSIUS

DIO CHRYSOSTOM

DIODORUS SICULUS

DIOGENES LAERTIUS

LUCRETIUS (*cont.*)

MENANDER

METRODORUS

NICASICRATES

NUMENIUS

PARMENIDES

PHILO

PHILODEMUS

PHILODEMUS, *De ira* (*cont.*)

PLATO

PLAUTUS

PLINY

PLOTINUS

PLUTARCH

PORPHYRY

SENECA

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS

STOBAEUS

STOICORUM VETERUM FRAGMENTA

TERENCE

ZENO