Among Friends: Cicero and the Epicureans

by

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In my dissertation I explain Cicero’s philosophical works through an analysis of his epistolary interactions and literary rivalries with Roman Epicureans. I argue that this historical and intellectual context reveals how Cicero’s overt and consistent anti-Epicurean polemics constitute a fundamental organizing principle of his philosophical works; Epicureanism is the philosophical Other against which the dialogues define themselves. The first two chapters of my thesis reconstruct Cicero’s social and friendship networks of Roman Epicureans and literary rivals; to that end I offer a series of prosopographical charts designed to replace the now dated Prosopography of Roman Epicureans by Catherine Castner. The second half of my thesis uses this background to explain the development and recurring polemical goals of Cicero’s philosophical works. More specifically, the third chapter begins to build my larger claim that his epistolary interactions with Epicureans over the course of twenty years offered him the opportunity to hone his argumentative technique and experiment with various translations into Latin of Greek philosophical ideas. In my final two chapters I offer the first comprehensive reading of Cicero’s exchange with Cassius in 46-45 BCE (Ad Fam. 15.16-19) and argue that these letters allow us to trace the development of individual arguments and polemical strategies in the dialogues of later that year, especially De Finibus I-II. My dissertation therefore stands at the intersection of literary, philosophical, and historical scholarship. I engage with and enrich recent work in Republican epistolary
practice, the cultural politics of Ciceronian prefaces, the influence of Epicurean ideas on Latin poetry, and the renewed interest in Philodemus, Hellenistic philosophy, Roman Epicureanism, and Cicero as a philosopher.
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Introduction: Cicero, Epicurus, and Roman Epicureans

Ante lucem cum scriberem contra Epicureos, de eodem oleo et opera exaravi nescio quid ad te et ante lucem dedi.

Before dawn while I was writing against the Epicureans, by the same oil and effort I scribbled a note and sent it to you before dawn.  (Ad Atticum 13.38 = SB 341, mid-August, 45 B.C.)

That Cicero was consistently unsympathetic or even openly hostile to Epicurean philosophy is not a particularly surprising claim, nor is such a claim new. Philosophical authors before and after Cicero’s time routinely included in their works scathing passages of polemic against Epicureanism, whose scandalous account of the gods and shocking egoistic hedonism made the school a common enemy of Peripatetics, Platonists, and Stoics. That Cicero, a committed Academic Skeptic, took part in this polemical tradition and devoted

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1 For the letters, I have followed the translations of Shackleton Bailey’s Cambridge editions, though with modifications, particularly on philosophical matters. I have also followed Smith and Rouse 1992 for Lucretius, and Brittain 2006 for the Academica, again sometimes with modifications. All other translations are my own unless otherwise noted. All dates are B.C. unless otherwise noted.

2 E.g. Reid 1885: 19; D’Anna 1965: 7-22; Gorman 2005: 97; Maso 2008; Brunt 2012: 181. A few scholars have seen a development in Cicero’s hostility (notably Howe 1951 and Maslowski 1985), but their views have failed to gain traction: see further Chapter I, section iii.B.

3 Early evidence is fragmentary; the best and most complete examples of this polemical tradition postdate Cicero. Arrian included two short anti-Epicurean lectures of the Stoic Epictetus in his Discourses (2.20, 3.7); Plutarch wrote three lengthier treatises with similar goals (It is impossible to live pleasantly according to Epicurus; Against Colotes; Is “live unknown” a wise precept?; cf. On Affection for Offspring); and while Seneca had nice things to say about Epicurus in the first thirty or so letters of the Epistulae Morales, the violence of his polemics in Book IV of De Beneficiis reveals a very different view (cf. Inwood 2005: 16). But this hostility was much older and predated Cicero. See e.g. SVF 1.553 and 3.709 (Cleanthes and Chrysippus, respectively); cf. all the lively Hellenistic slander documented in Epicurus’ vita in D.L. 10. Academic skeptics also took aim at Epicurus: e.g. Carneades’ thought experiment, reported by Cicero at Fin. 2.59, has an anti-Epicurean thrust; Arcesilaus pulled no punches when he compared Epicureans to eunuchs (D.L. 4.43).

4 This thesis works under the assumption that Cicero was a life-long and committed Academic skeptic. Some scholars (notably Glucker 1988 and Steinmetz 1989) have argued for a temporary lapse to the school of Antiochus of Ascalon. However, Göler 1995 has offered persuasive refutations of their arguments (the reservations of Dolganov 2008: 36 do not convince), and Schofield 2008 has shown how deeply Cicero’s Academic views structured and influenced almost all of his philosophical work (cf. Schofield 2013 and Fox 2007). See Brittain 2001 on Cicero’s teacher Philo and Academic skepticism more generally; and Brittain
energy to refuting Epicurus’ doctrines in his published\(^5\) philosophical works\(^6\) therefore seems only natural. This, of course, does not mean that Cicero’s disdain for the school is uninteresting, and as such scholars have been examining his arguments against various Epicurean positions in ethics and physics for some time now, both in order to better understand Cicero’s own ideas and to establish his value as a source for Epicurean doctrine,\(^7\) for which his treatises are especially important.\(^8\)

This study approaches his opposition to Epicureanism from a very different perspective. I seek to explain the development of Cicero’s *philosophica*, including his translations of Greek technical language, his general strategies of philosophical and literary polemics, and even individual arguments in his treatises through an analysis of his epistolary interactions with his Roman Epicurean contemporaries and through his literary rivalries with early authors of Epicurean treatises in Latin. My approach, then, is sociological and consequently relies heavily on the ability of his letters to document his social networks of Epicurean acquaintances as well as his philosophical debates with them. This approach is an

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\(^5\) By “publication” I mean to refer only to an author’s decision to have a work distributed, often informally, beyond a small circle of friends or a single addressee. For discussion of the dissemination of ancient literary works, see Starr 1987, Murphy 1998, Steel 2005: 10-13, and Johnson 2011: 52-6.

\(^6\) For simplicity I use the terms “philosophical works,” “*philosophica*,” and “dialogues” interchangeably; I intend these phrases to include all of Cicero’s published treatises with the exception of the rhetorical works (i.e. *Inv.*, *De Or.*, *Brutus*, *Orator*), speeches, poems, and translations. I readily admit that this is an artificial category (Cicero, for example, includes his rhetorical works in his philosophical catalogue in the preface to *Div*. 2, and several of these works are in fact dialogues). Nevertheless, it is useful to have a set of terms to specify the explicitly philosophical texts I will be working with; glossing each use of the word “dialogue” with the qualification “philosophical” would be cumbersome. Note also that I treat *De Officis* and the *Paradoxa* as honorary “dialogues”: making an exception for these works each time I refer to “the dialogues” seemed the greater evil.

\(^7\) A few examples: Mitsis 1988: 69-79, 108-117; Stokes 1995; Leonhardt 1999: 197-204; occasionally an important issue in Epicurean philosophy rests upon a reading of Cicero (e.g. Sedley 2011 and Konstan 2011 on Cicero’s account of Epicurean theology in *De Natura Deorum*). Maso 2008 is the most comprehensive recent account of Cicero’s anti-Epicurean arguments; I outline the significant differences between our approaches in n.16.

\(^8\) Outside of D.L. 10 and the often fragmentary works of Philodemus, he is one of our earliest and most comprehensive sources for Epicurean philosophy, especially ethics.
attempt to rise to the challenge posed by Miriam Griffin in the closing words of a seminal article assessing the education and sophistication of Cicero’s correspondents:

I hope that the letters [of Cicero] adduced here will whet the appetite of philosophers and intellectual historians for exploring them. Such letters can shed light on how doctrines and texts were interpreted in this period by Cicero’s contemporaries; on how these doctrines were refined, developed, and applied by them... For the letters tease us into imagining the delightful philosophical discussions they mention and presuppose. And, more seriously, Cicero’s correspondence should make us reflect on what help Cicero might have derived in writing his treatises from his long experience of talking philosophy with his familiars.9

Griffin points suggestively to the potential value of letters for understanding the philosophica, but her call to arms, however, has often been ignored by historians of Cicero and his philosophy. Two prominent scholars, for example, have gone so far as to reject outright any claim that Roman Epicureanism can help explain the development of the arguments and goals of his philosophical works;10 the significance of the very early presence of Epicurean teachers and authors in Italy and the threat they posed to Cicero’s philosophical and literary goals have not been properly appreciated;11 and, with a few noteworthy exceptions, the recent spate of otherwise excellent work on the letters continues to read Cicero’s epistolary anti-Epicurean polemics as idle banter or flourishes of cultural capital divorced from any real political, personal, or philosophical significance.12

In contrast, I argue that Cicero’s social relationships with a wide range of Greek and Roman Epicureans and his epistolary debates with them reveal how his overt and consistent...
hostility toward the Garden reflects far more than the standard practice of refuting a rival school (i.e. like certain anti-Epicurean discourses of Epictetus or polemical works of Plutarch). Cicero’s hostility, stretching from the preface of Book I of De Republica to the final paragraphs of De Officiis (3.116-20), amounts to nothing less than a consistent campaign to undermine and demolish the influence and popularity of Epicureanism in Italy and seeks simultaneously to establish his place in the history of Roman literature over his philosophical rivals, a group of early Latin authors of Epicurean treatises (including Lucretius). I therefore argue that these polemics constitute a fundamental organizing principle of Cicero’s philosophical works; Epicureanism is the philosophical Other against which the dialogues define themselves and against which he structured his arguments, literary persona, and political/cultural self-representations. I further claim that his anti-Epicurean epistolary polemics over a period of 20 years allowed him to hone his argumentative techniques, facilitated experimentation with his translations, and resulted in the development of a number of very sophisticated criticisms which engage with live debates in Hellenistic ethics, physics, and epistemology.

In order to accomplish these goals it will be necessary to discuss a range of Ciceronian writings spanning both the 50s and 40s, including his letters, rhetorical works, speeches, and the prefaces and arguments of dialogues themselves; I will also need to engage with a variety of evidence outside his corpus that contains reports about Roman Epicurean aristocrats and authors. In making use of these varied sources and periods of his life I hope to contribute to an ongoing effort to read Cicero holistically, for it is now something of a

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13 I only partially live up to this noble aspiration: while I make extensive use of the letters, prefaces and dialogues proper from all periods, my utilization of the rhetorical works and especially the speeches is more limited. I reference philosophically significant language in a number of these works, and I have tried to use them with due caution for various chronological, political, and social details. The speeches in particular pose a
commonplace that Ciceronian scholarship continues to be fragmented.\textsuperscript{14} It is often the case that one genre of Cicero’s wide-ranging and voluminous corpus of writings is treated to the exclusion of others: specialized studies treat him as an orator, a poet, a philosopher, or a writer of letters, but only occasionally is a more comprehensive perspective pursued. This sometimes limited focus can of course be beneficial and is certainly understandable—it is hard for any modern reader to cope with his incredible stylistic range and deep education, or the sheer size of the surviving corpus of his writings. Cicero’s philosophical works in particular have borne the brunt of this scholarly myopia. Recent work on the cultural politics of Cicero’s philosophical prefaces, for example, has yielded increasingly sophisticated insight into his efforts to establish himself as a leading figure in Latin literature, his attempts to domesticate Greek philosophical learning in a Roman context, and his desire to justify his number of thorny interpretive problems. While no Ciceronian text is non-rhetorical, the speeches are extreme in their overriding goal of making his case and/or political message persuasive. With respect to philosophy, this causes special difficulties, which have been emphasized by Griffin 1995: 325-6. A couple of examples: first, the mockery of Cato’s Stoicism (\textit{Mur.} 61-2) is excused for its tactical utility in a later dialogue (\textit{Fin.} 4.74: \textit{cum L. Murenum te accusante defenderem. apud imperios tum illa dicta sint, aliquid etiam coronae datum…}); second, Cicero’s occasional attempts to downplay his own philosophical learning (e.g. \textit{Pis.} 70) are particularly preposterous: we will see that he studied with two heads of the Athenian Garden and maintained relationships with other Greek philosophers—he was very well acquainted with philosophy by the mid-70s and did not need to qualify his claims in speeches with statements like “it is said that the Epicureans think…” In other words, without a great deal of ingenuity it is fiendishly difficult to use the speeches as evidence for anything other than Cicero’s manipulation of philosophical clichés for the specific rhetorical purposes of a particular speech. Second, earlier scholarship on Cicero’s stance towards Epicureanism tried to make much of the speeches’ references to \textit{otium}, which was often taken to allude to Epicurean tranquility (e.g. D’Anna 1965: 24ff; Maslowski 1985; Maso 2008: 279-99). But in the dialogues Cicero almost always prefers \textit{quies}, \textit{quiescere}, or\textit{ tranquillitas} to render \textit{ἀταραξία} (at \textit{Amic.} 86 the \textit{otiosi} are actually distinguished from the Epicureans: \textit{et ii qui suum negotium gerunt otiosi, postremo ii qui se totos tradiderunt voluptatibus [=Epicureans]}; furthermore, the nuances of the word \textit{otium} throughout the Ciceronian corpus are complex and multi-layered, with the result that identifying clear Epicurean references is no easy task (two plausible cases are \textit{De Or.} 3.64 and \textit{Sest.} 23, 138-39). For further discussion of philosophical ideas and language in the speeches, see Craig 1986; Dyck 1998; Griffin 2001; Gordon 2012: 162ff.

\textsuperscript{14} Notable exceptions to this statement are often the most eloquent voices in decrying a myopic focus on one portion of the Ciceronian corpus. Steel 2005: 7, 47-8, for example, underlines how Cicero used a wide range of genres to further his political goals and self-representation; Fox 2007: 13-5, 61 laments more generally that Cicero’s Academic allegiance has not made much of an impact beyond specialists in the history of philosophy. Fantham’s reading of \textit{De Oratore} (2004) is also notable for its holistic use of historical, rhetorical, and philosophical material.
conduct under Caesar’s dictatorship.\textsuperscript{15} Yet at the same time, such studies tend to downplay or pass by entirely the actual content and arguments of the philosophical works (as well as their anti-Epicurean motivations). In contrast, much of the renewed scholarly interest in Cicero as a philosopher has largely ignored his other writings, the historical context of Roman Epicureanism, and especially the philosophical arguments in his letters, which are typically used almost exclusively for dating the progress or publication of a particular dialogue.\textsuperscript{16}

My thesis brings historical, literary, and philosophical analysis together in order to explain one central and structurally foundational feature of Cicero’s \textit{philosophica}, his opposition to Epicureanism. It may be helpful at this point to say a few words on my debts to recent work in several different fields of scholarship and to gesture toward the ways in which I see my study extending these areas of research. First, I have taken advantage of a long-overdue interest in Cicero as an original philosopher. Gone are the days when he was seen as a mindless transcriber of lost Hellenistic works of real merit;\textsuperscript{17} his originality and skilled use of the dialogue form are now becoming more widely appreciated, and the centrality of his

\textsuperscript{15} See Gildenhard 2007 and Baraz 2012, who both build on a path-breaking article by Thomas Habinek (1994).
\textsuperscript{16} Cf. the complaint of Griffin 1995: 330-1, who also underlines the limitations of Shackleton Bailey’s notes on philosophical material; she is echoed by McConnell 2014: 2-3. My extensive use of the letters and other historical material is a major difference between my approach and the recent monograph of Stefano Maso (2008), who almost completely limits his use of the letters to dating and ignores the broader intellectual context of Roman Epicureanism in his philosophical analysis of Cicero’s anti-Epicurean arguments. There are of course some exceptions to the neglect of the letters. Lévy 1992 and Leonhardt 1999 make better if still sporadic use of them; Leonhardt 1995 and Baraz 2012: 46-66 discuss Cicero’s epistolary deployment of the Academic practice of arguing \textit{in utramque partem} to clarify his political decision-making. Finally, I do not wish to downplay the value of Cicero’s correspondence in establishing the progress, dating, and sources of his treatises. Griffin’s excellent analysis of the different versions of the \textit{Academica} (1997a) and Marinone’s very useful chronological reference work (2004) are good reminders of the utility of this approach when it is done well.
\textsuperscript{17} Douglas 1965: 136 is an early attempt to push back against older dismissive treatments (though he is still not willing to ascribe any real originality to Cicero); since Powell 1995a scholarship has as a rule taken Cicero’s originality and skill as a philosopher more seriously.
Academic viewpoint is becoming more mainstream. At the same time, the explosion of interest in Hellenistic philosophy over the past few decades has likewise clarified the philosophical battle-lines of the intellectual world in which Cicero was writing. I hope my readings of his epistolary debates with his Greek and Roman Epicurean contemporaries will contribute to these studies by inviting scholars to consider alternative sources for philosophical inspiration—beyond, that is, a limited range of written texts which he followed or reacted to fairly closely. At the same time, I argue that the informal argumentative practices seen in his letters informed his dialogues and led to the formulation of sophisticated and powerful critiques of Epicurean philosophy. Finally, I also hope that my analysis of Cicero’s anti-Epicurean polemics will offer clarification as to how he can be used responsibly in reconstructions of the school’s doctrines.

Second, a number of recent monographs and articles on Cicero’s letters have influenced my use of his correspondence. The letters are now rightly seen as sophisticated, rhetorically-charged political and social tools; no longer can we rely on them as transparent historical documents fit for the indiscriminate mining of facts. Still, if used carefully, they offer a unique resource unparalleled in the ancient world, and Sean McConnell’s new monograph, *Philosophical Life in Cicero’s Letters* (2014), has done much to explore how the letters can be read for their philosophical content. McConnell rightly insists on the philosophical sophistication of a number of letters and demonstrates how Cicero used various Stoic, Peripatetic, and above all Platonic arguments to justify his political conduct before and

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19 Important studies include Hutchinson 1998, Hall 2009, and White 2010.
20 This point is emphasized by Gunderson 2007 and Lintott 2008. See also Beard 2002 on the distorting effects of editorial selection of letters and their placement in MSS order (the latter point being especially important for the more elaborately grouped letters of the *Ad Familiares*).
after Caesar’s dictatorship. My own approach differs from McConnell’s in two important respects. First, he has consciously chosen to omit analysis of Cicero’s epistolary debates with Roman Epicurean correspondents in order to focus on his engagement with other schools. Second, his focus is firmly on reading the letters as self-standing works of philosophy and literature; as a result, there is little discussion of how the letters can explain the development of the ideas, arguments, and polemical strategies in Cicero’s dialogues. My readings of his anti-Epicurean epistolary polemics therefore extend McConnell’s survey of the ways in which Cicero used different philosophical schools in his letters. More importantly, I break new ground by arguing that his correspondence offered Cicero the opportunity to practice and hone his translations and argumentative strategies for his later published dialogues.

This thesis draws on a third, more explicitly historical, area of research, the study of Roman Epicureanism. For over a century Roman historians have struggled to sort through the difficult but abundant evidence for the Epicurean interests and convictions of Romans from a surprising range of social backgrounds, including consuls, praetors, apolitical equestrians, Epicurean teachers and authors (and even a Syrian freedman). As we will see in Chapter II, for many years this research was hampered by loose criteria for identification and a misunderstanding of Epicurean social and political theory, which led to a rather skewed view of the popularity and significance of the school in Republican Italy. Thankfully recent efforts by Griffin, Benferhat and others have yielded an increasingly reliable and nuanced tradition.

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21 McConnell 2014: 8 n.18, though note his sketch (pp. 19-26) of Fam. 15.16-9.
22 McConnell 2014: 221 and especially 4 (“some of [Cicero’s] letters are pieces of philosophical literature that stand alongside his recognized philosophical works as genuine components of his philosophical legacy and oeuvre.”).
prosopographical account of the Garden’s Italian adherents.\textsuperscript{23} The goal of this scholarship, however, has typically been to reconstruct the social phenomenon of Roman Epicureanism in its own right, with a slant towards important historical actors (and thus at the expense of Epicureans of less importance, such as teachers or fragmentary poets and authors). Consequently, the study of Cicero’s relationships with Epicurean correspondents and his literary rivalries with early Epicurean authors has not benefited from the fruits of our better understanding of the school in the first century.

My thesis, then, attempts to apply the results of these recent areas of research in a sociological analysis of Cicero’s literary and philosophical opposition to the Garden. The structure of this study is as follows. Chapter I takes as its point of departure the bombastic claim at \textit{Tusculan Disputations} 4.7 that the Epicureans “have taken over all of Italy,” citing the circulation and popularity of Epicurean treatises written in Latin by a certain Amafinius and his unnamed \textit{aemuli}. I argue that Cicero’s disparagement of these works in this and other prefaces reflects a consistent strategy in the works of 45-44 to undermine his Epicurean rivals’ place in the formation of philosophical discourse in Latin while simultaneously valorizing Cicero’s position within that same tradition. A preliminary step to understanding Cicero’s literary rivalries is to offer a reconstruction of these early Epicureans’ lives, activities, and the nature of their philosophical works. It emerges that the Late Republic saw no less than three Epicurean works entitled \textit{De Rerum Natura}, and two other Latin prose treatises of Epicurean philosophy. As additional evidence for the influence of the movement in Italy, I offer a discussion of the surprising early presence of Epicurean teachers in the second century and exploit recent work on Epicurean themes in Augustan poetry to show

\textsuperscript{23} The history of this scholarship is discussed in detail in Chapters I and II. The chief modern contributions include Momigliano 1941; Castner 1988; Erler 1994: 363-80; Griffin 1995; and Benferhat 2005.
how this interest in the ideas of the Garden continued after Cicero’s death. This background, I claim, brings into focus both the critical importance of his literary rivalry as well as the popularity of the school in the Late Republic.

The second chapter extends my historical analysis by offering a reconstruction of Cicero’s networks of Roman Epicurean friends, acquaintances, and his long-standing relationships with no less than three successive Epicurean chief philosophers (or scholarchs) of the Athenian Garden. I begin with a methodological discussion of responsible criteria for identifying Roman Epicureans and discuss how to best interpret their philosophical convictions and potentially surprising political activities. I then offer three case studies to show how deeply Epicureanism spilled over into Cicero’s social life—at one point we will even see him involved in a property dispute over Epicurus’ house in Athens with C. Memmius, the dedicatee of Lucretius. I conclude by attempting to map out graphically Cicero’s relationships with his Epicurean contemporaries and their social links with one another.

The following three chapters use this social and historical data to explain the development of polemical strategies and arguments of Cicero’s published philosophical works. Chapter III examines two letters written to two long-standing friends, Atticus and Trebatius Testa, in which he blasts his correspondents with a barrage of arguments aimed at exposing the incoherence of Epicurean ethics. I begin with a methodological discussion of how to read such letters for their philosophical content, and proceed to provide parallels in argument, style, and polemical strategy between these letters and his later dialogues. Through comparisons with the practices of other critics of the Garden, including Epictetus, Plutarch, and Seneca, I establish that Cicero’s epistolary polemics are sophisticated
philosophical arguments; I thereby begin to build a larger argument that decades of penning such letters informed and sharpened the refutations of the Garden in his later published works.

The final two chapters offer a comprehensive reading of a four-letter exchange with the Epicurean and future tyrannicide, C. Cassius Longinus (*Fam. 15.16-9*). Chapter IV offers close readings of two letters of this correspondence, 15.18 and 15.16. I argue first that Cicero’s use of clichés about Epicurean gastronomic excess in 15.18 and other letters of the period are no mere jokes or throw-away arguments (as has often been claimed), but ironic and somber reflections of his political marginalization after the defeat of Pompey and the Republican forces in Africa. Epicurean hedonism is more than an abstract theoretical position or the stuff of books; Cicero uses the school as a foil to define his political situation and his representation of that situation to his Epicurean correspondents. I then turn to examine an argument against Epicurean physics and the supposedly crude translations of the Latin Epicurean Catius. I argue that Cicero’s argument shows close parallels with Lucretius’ treatment of the same issue in *De Rerum Natura* Book IV; his arguments in 15.16 are an attempt to formulate an effective critique of the Epicurean position and to surpass the translations of both Catius and Lucretius. I further claim that we can see how the argumentative practice which his epistolary polemics afforded him shaped and influenced his treatment of Epicurean physics in *De Natura Deorum* of later that year.

The final chapter examines an issue close to Cicero’s heart: the role of virtue, as he understands it, in politics and ethics. I begin with an analysis of Cicero’s argument in 15.17 that the honorable political activities of Cassius and a mutual friend, the Epicurean C. Vibius Pansa, are incompatible with Epicurus’ strictly instrumentalist conception of virtue. Once
again I claim that Cicero’s argument is much better than most critics give him credit for; I then turn to Cassius’ remarkable response, the only surviving example in the extant corpus of letters where we can see one of Cicero’s beleaguered Epicurean correspondents defending the doctrines of his school. Cassius forcefully rebuts Cicero’s argument by quoting, in defense of a life of Epicurean virtue, Greek texts of Epicurus, and thereafter interprets his political deliberations about Caesar in terms of Epicurean philosophy. This sophisticated and powerful response shows close parallels to the debate over virtue in the first two books of *De Finibus*, written a few months after the exchange. Through a close reading of Books I and II, I argue that Cicero was attempting to respond to Cassius’ defense in *Fam.* 15.19; this correspondence clarified and sharpened Cicero’s sense of the key issues of this ethical debate and led to the creation of forceful and philosophically interesting criticisms in *De Finibus* II and beyond. I conclude with a number of observations on the value of Cicero’s correspondence for increasing our appreciation of the sources and practice behind his *philosophica*, which are still all too often seen as reflecting dusty discussions in old books, not vivid reflections of live philosophical debates with his educated and sophisticated contemporaries.
Chapter I: “The Epicureans have taken over all of Italy”
Cicero’s literary polemics and Epicurean rivals

[6] itaque illius verae elegantisque philosophiae, quae duxa Socrate in Peripateticis adhuc
permansit et idem alio modo dicentibus Stoicis, cum Academici eorum controversias
disciparent, nulla fere sunt aut paucu admodum Latina monumenta, sive propter
magntitudinem rerum occupationemque hominum, sive etiam quod imperitis ea probari posse
non arbitrabantur, cum interim illis silentibus C. Amafinius exitiit dicens, cuius libris editis
commota multitudo contulit se ad eam potissimum disciplinam, sive quod erat cognitum
perfacilis, sive quod invitabantur inlecebris blandis voluptatis, sive etiam, quia nihil erat
prolatum melius, illud quod erat tenebant. [7] post Amafinium autem multi eiusdem aemuli
rationis multa cum scripsissent, Italiam totam occupaverunt, quodque maximum
argumentum est non dici illa subtiliter, quod et tam facile ediscantur et ab indoctis
probentur, id illi firmamentum esse disciplinae putant. sed defendat, quod quisque sentit;
sunt enim judicia libera: nos institutum tenebimus nullisque unius disciplinae legibus
adstricti, quibus in philosophia necessario paremus, quid sit in quaque re maxime
probabile, semper requiremus.

[6] And so there are almost no or very few Latin works of that true and elegant philosophy,
which was derived from Socrates and endured among the Peripatetics and Stoics, who taught
the same thing but in a different way while the Academics arbitrated their disputes. This is
either because of the magnitude of the subject or because the occupations of [prominent
Roman] men, or even because they thought that this philosophy could not be understood by
the unlearned. Meanwhile, while they were silent, Gaius Amafinius stepped forth and spoke.
After his books had been circulated the masses moved to adopt his sect more than any other,
either because it was easy to learn, or because they were enticed by the coaxing charms of
pleasure, or even because nothing better had been offered to them, and they held to what was
available. [7] After Amafinius, however, came many rivals of the same sect; they wrote
much and have occupied all of Italy. Although the chief evidence that their teachings are not
stated with precision is the fact that their doctrines are easily mastered and accepted by the
unlearned, they take this as support for their sect. But let each person defend what he thinks,
for our judgments are free. I will hold to my usual custom and will not be tied to the laws of
any single school as things I must obey in my philosophy, but I will always seek what is the
most plausible answer to each question. Cicero, Tusculan Disputations 4.6-7
So ends the preface to the fourth book of the *Tusculan Disputations*. Cicero’s claim that the Epicureans “have taken over Italy” is the conclusion of a larger historical narrative of Roman interest in philosophy and an inquiry into the reasons for the lack of prominent and eloquent Roman philosophical authors. Cicero’s history, which begins with aporetic observations on possible Pythagorean influences from Magna Graecia and the famous embassy of Athenian philosophers to Rome in 155, ends with a profession of Cicero’s Academic philosophical stance. This stance, characterized by an undogmatic, open-minded approach to philosophical inquiry expressed in sophisticated Latin style, is contrasted with the crude, sectarian works of the Epicurean Amafinius and his later “rivals,” who, as we shall see, can be identified with some certainty as Catius Insuber, Lucretius, and a certain Rabirius—each the author of an early Epicurean treatise written in Latin. Cicero further contrasts his approach to philosophy with Epicureanism by providing a series of cynical reasons for their popularity in Republican Italy; he also tries to isolate Epicureanism from the mainstream “Socratic” philosophical tradition, with which he identifies himself here and elsewhere.¹

I argue in this chapter that the criticisms of these Epicurean writers in this and other passages reflect a consistent strategy throughout the philosophical works of 45-44 to

¹ I.e. in the claim that the Stoics, Peripatetics, and Academics are all a part of “that elegant and true” school which originated in Socrates. A similar history of philosophy is presented at *Acad. Post.* 1, where it is explicitly linked with Cicero’s decision to write and is followed by criticism of Amafinius and Rabirius. A parallel polemical history can be found as early as *De Or.* 3.62-3; there too the Epicureans are presented as deviations from the Socratic and Platonic tradition. This syncretic history was influenced by Cicero’s teachers Philo of Larissa and Antiochus of Ascalon (for their historical claims see Brittain 2001: 169-248 on Philo, Arcesilaus and to some extent Antiochus; Barnes 1989, Karamanolis 2006: ch. 1, and Sedley 2012b on Antiochus; also relevant is the discussion in Algra 1997 of the polemically-motivated presentation of the ethical *divisiones* of Carneades and Chrysippus). On the other hand, Cicero’s shaping of the history of philosophy reflects a broader and venerable polemical strategy employed by a variety of authors for diverse purposes. For example, Colotes (*ap.* Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 1114F-1115C), a friend and associate of Epicurus, appears to have lumped Aristotle, Xenocrates, and Theophrastus with the doctrines of Plato, apparently to their disadvantage (Colotes’ point seems to have been about the theory of Forms, but Plutarch’s own polemics make it difficult to know for certain. On this passage see Karamanolis 2006: 92-7). See also Chapter V, n.76.
undermine the popularity and the literary and philosophical credentials of Cicero’s Latin Epicurean rivals, whose works threatened his goals to “illuminate” Latin philosophical literature and thereby leave his mark on Latin literature in yet another genre. This literary rivalry is one important aspect of Cicero’s insistent hostility to Epicureanism more generally and can help explain the strategies and structure of his philosophical works. In order to understand Cicero’s criticisms and the need for him to confront rival Latin works and the Epicurean take-over of Italy, I will first offer a reconstruction of Amafinius, his nameless aemuli, and their Latin philosophical treatises; I also analyze our evidence for the sect’s popularity in the second and early first centuries B.C. The bulk of this chapter, then, will be devoted to reconstructing the threat which Epicureanism’s popularity posed to Cicero’s literary objectives.

This reconstruction is all the more necessary since Amafinius and the other shadowy Epicurean writers have largely been ignored or marginalized in the past several decades of Ciceronian scholarship. The Cambridge Companion to Cicero and a number of surveys of Latin Literature omit them entirely (with the exception of Lucretius). The recent resurgence of interest in Cicero as a philosopher has not treated these early Epicurean writers any better. Philosophical commentaries, articles and monographs provide bare glosses or merely descriptive historical information, usually in a passing paragraph, sentence, or footnote.

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2 E.g. TD 1.5 (“philosophia iacuit usque ad hanc aetatem nec ullum habuit lumen litterarum Latinarum; quae inlustranda et excitanda nobis est”). See section iv of this chapter for further examples and discussion.
3 I.e. just as he wished to establish himself as a preeminent orator, rhetorical and political theorist, and poet.
4 Steel 2013.
5 Omitted: e.g. Kenney 1982; Braund 2002; Batstone 2006 (so also Habinek 1998). Other general surveys offer only the briefest treatment: e.g. Conte 1994: 157 offers a paragraph which buys into Cicero’s charges of “popularizations” of Epicureanism for the “lower classes”; Powell 2005: 232 provides a sentence; von Albrecht 2007: ii.503 n.1 gives a footnote and elsewhere echoes Cicero’s disparaging characterization: “… penpushers like Amafinius who produced bad Latin with good intentions…” (p. 283).
6 E.g. Leeman 1963: 201-2; Schmidt 1978: 125; MacKendrick 1989: 157 (Amafinius only); Lévy 1992: 143 n.8 (Amafinius and Rabirius only, with only one reference to Philodemus at p. 380 n.11); Powell 1995a: 26-7 with n. 67; Sedley 1998a: 38-9; Morford 2002: 98-9; Brittain 2006: 88 n.4 (and 134, where he adds, incorrectly, that
a result there has been no substantial analysis of the centrality of Cicero’s rivalry with Epicurean writers or the significance of his efforts to refute their treatises. Several important discussions of Cicero’s philosophical works omit Amafinius and his *aemuli* completely, while two recent scholars have argued that Cicero’s engagement with Roman Epicureans more generally was irrelevant to both his philosophical works and his goals in writing them. It has even been suggested that Cicero “may have invented” Amafinius or that Cicero was the first to author a philosophical work in Latin. And while recent work in

“Rabirius and Amafinius are the only Epicurean writers Cicero mentions (other than Lucretius); one of his correspondents adds Catius.” But Cicero himself mentions Catius in *Fam. 15.16*; Fox 2007: 250; Maso 2008: 18, 63 (all the more surprising given his interest in Cicero’s anti-Epicurean arguments); Blyth 2010: 88 n.58; McConnell 2014: 25 n.59. A notable exception to this silence is Reid 1885: 21-22 who offers brief but incisive remarks on Cicero’s Epicurean literary rivals; he also significantly anticipates some of the recent work on Cicero’s prefaces (see n.12 and section iv). 7 Work on Epicurean philosophy has been kinder to these early Latin authors. See the short but rich account of Erler 1994: 363-8 (on Latin Epicurean writers) and 368-70 (on Cicero’s opposition to them). Erler’s discussion, however, buys heavily into Cicero’s stylistic criticisms—Amafinius’ appeal to “die Menge” (= *vulgus*) is contrasted with the higher-class audience of Lucretius—and is furthermore necessarily brief (omitting, for example, the Epicurean poet Egnatius) in light of his aim to offer a treatment of the entirety of the history of Epicureanism. Discussions of Lucretius offer only passing comments: e.g. Leonard and Smith 1942: 291, 674; Clay 1983: 85, omitting Amafinius; Minyard 1985: 18 n.11, 33 seems to allude to these writers without actually naming them; Kilpatrick 1996: 88; Canfora 2003: 43, 47; Lévy 2003: 51-3; Roskam 2007: 84-5; Sedley 2009: 39-40. For older work which does stress Cicero’s virulent anti-Epicurean goals, see n.12.

8 E.g. Douglas 1965; Boes 1990; Stokes 1995; Striker 1995 (who on p. 54 claims dubiously that “Cicero seems to have been the first educated Roman who developed a real flair for philosophy and a serious attachment to it…”); Leonhardt 1999; Schofield 2008 and 2013; Nigrogski 2012; Atkins 2013. I hope Schofield’s influential analysis of Cicero’s open-minded Academic stance will be enriched by my analysis of his corresponding rejection of the dogmatic sectarianism of Amafinius (and Epicureanism more generally). With respect to Stokes’ discussion of Cicero’s sources and polemical bias, I argue in Chapters IV and V that these Epicurean writers should be considered important sources for Cicero’s knowledge of Epicureanism (along with Philodemus, his teachers Phaedrus and Zeno, and his Roman Epicurean contemporaries).

9 Quoted in n.10 of the Introduction.

10 Gee 2013a: 14. This (unsupported) claim is problematized by the fact that C. Cassius Longinus refers to Amafinius in a letter to Cicero (*Fam. 15.19*). Since Cicero had only mentioned another Epicurean (Catius) in the earlier letters to which Cassius was responding, Cassius seems to have had independent knowledge of Amafinius. In any case Cicero rarely fabricates complete historical fictions, even if we should remain suspicious of his philosophical or stylistic judgments (on Cicero as a historical source see section ii).

11 Fantham 2004: 137 n. 7 does not exactly deny the existence of Amafinius, merely his influence (“…since [Cicero] is our only source for these texts [of Amafinius] we have no evidence of their positive influence”), but this leads her to the false conclusion that “at Rome in Cicero’s day technical writing… had no literary pretensions, nor were there any philosophical treatises and dialogues before those of Cicero himself.” Once again Cassius’ independent knowledge seems relevant; furthermore, the fact that Amafinius was later forgotten does not necessarily mean that he was not influential in his time; much less should we conclude on the basis of literary legacy that Cicero was the first writer of Latin philosophy. Fantham’s claim that he was the first Latin author of a philosophical *dialogue* is, however, entirely plausible.
cultural history has done much to explain Cicero’s attempts to overcome conservative resistance to a role for philosophy in Roman culture and has underlined his political and literary goals for writing philosophy in Latin, analysis of these Epicurean rivals has been limited to discussions of his stylistic criticisms, not their literary threat in light of the popularity of the school in Italy when Cicero was writing.\textsuperscript{12}

Amafinius and his Latin \textit{aemuli} have, however, found a place outside of Ciceronian studies in the ongoing efforts over the past hundred years to catalogue Roman Epicureans and to explain what their philosophical allegiance might have meant for their political and intellectual lives. As I will discuss in more detail in Chapter II, pioneering prosopographical work by Arnaldo Momigliano curbed a number of wildly speculative accounts of the early and mid-20th century and provided the foundation for Catherine Castner’ \textit{Prosopography of Roman Epicureans}. Castner’s work has in turn been extended and corrected by the important monograph of Yasmina Benferhat, which explores the political affiliations of Roman Epicureans in the Late Republic.\textsuperscript{13} At the same time, renewed interest in Philodemus and the Herculanum papyri has resulted in valuable explorations of his and Epicureanism’s

\textsuperscript{12} Baraz 2012: 108-10 (on \textit{TD} 1.5, but only Lucretius is mentioned by name, with no reference to Amafinius, Catius, etc., nor to the preface of \textit{TD} 4). Gildenhard 2007: 107, 146-8 does broach the topic of Cicero’s literary rivalry, but does not thematize its importance for Cicero’s larger literary goals. Amafinius and other early Epicureans are omitted in Connolly 2007; Murphy 1998: 494 offers a sentence; Dugan 2005 omits them; Steel 2005: 41 refers to them in passing. Rawson 1985: 49, 139, 284-5 moves beyond Cicero’s stylistic polemics and rightly stresses that these early Epicureans were the first philosophical writers in Latin, but she does not analyze the significance of this fact or its relevance for understanding the sources and development of Cicero’s dialogues.

influence on Augustan poets like Vergil or Horace. These various treatments have yielded an increasingly nuanced understanding of the social, intellectual, and literary influence of Epicureanism in the first century B.C. as well as the school’s implications for our understanding of the motives of political actors at the end of the Republic.

This valuable scholarship has not, however, been overly concerned with Cicero’s literary rivalry with these Latin authors. The few treatments which have engaged with Cicero’s literary polemics are brief, speculative, credulous of Cicero’s hostile judgments, or now out of date. Instead, the majority of work on Roman Epicureanism has been predominantly concerned with several narrow issues, most notably identification—i.e. who counts as an Epicurean and why?—and the political and personal significance of the philosophical affiliations of prominent Roman Epicureans like L. Calpurnius Piso or C.

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14 E.g. Armstrong 1993; Gigante 1995; Sider 1997; Armstrong 2011; Armstrong (forthcoming); and the valuable collection of articles in Vergil, Philodemus and the Augustans (Armstrong, Fish et al 2004). The dissertation of Tait 1941 on the influence of Philodemus on Latin poetry was far ahead of its time. See further section iii.G.

15 Such studies tend to vastly overplay the fragmentary evidence and base their arguments on speculative allusions to Lucretius or fairly arbitrary (re)datings of Amafinius or Lucretius. Three examples (Howe 1951; Minyard 1985; and Maslowski 1985) are discussed in section iii.B. As noted in the introduction, a number of studies have emphasized Cicero’s life-long anti-Epicurean position (e.g. De Witt 1954: 344-6; D’Anna 1965). But the ongoing scholarly dialectic on Roman Epicureanism—to say nothing of recent treatments of Cicero’s philosophical and rhetorical works, his letters, and his political self-fashioning—have rendered many of their conclusions unreliable. Few are likely to follow, for example, the analysis of De Witt 1954: 345 (“Cicero, the spokesman of the intelligentsia, though irked by the complaints of Lucretius about the poverty of the Latin language, confined himself for the time to grumbling. It was only when the death of his beloved daughter stung him from his complaisance in 45 B.C. that he really took up the challenge…. he poured forth a stream of anti-Epicurean propaganda, the true nature of which he endeavored to screen by a facade of philosophy…. His true intent was further cloaked by the avowal of a desire to create an indigenous literature of philosophy for the benefit of Roman youth, but this pretense is easily penetrated; he was an elderly man and no such project had been previously announced. Moreover, during the previous four years, from 49 to 45 B.C. his pen had been idle and much of his recent leisure had been spent in the company of merry Epicureans.”). Münzer 1914: 629 in the concluding sentences of an article arguing that Cicero’s friend L. Saufeius wrote an Epicurean treatise in Latin, rightly stressed the importance of Cicero’s Latin Epicurean rivals: “Zitiert hat er keinen von beiden [Saufeius or Lucretius’s works], aber unbeachtet lassen konnte er die epikureischen Werke in lateinischer Sprache wegen ihrer starken Wirkung nicht mehr, als er die Tusculanen schrieb. Die Polemik gegen Lucrez is mindestens an einer Stelle nicht zu verkennen; ebenso hat er sich gewiss in anderen Fällen nicht nur gegen griechische Schriften, sondern auch gegen lateinische, wie die des Saufeius, gewendet.” I argue in n.63 against the attribution of an Epicurean treatise to Saufeius, and Münzer would have done well to bring in Amafinius, Catus, etc. into his discussion. Nevertheless, he deserves credit for perceiving so long ago the importance of Cicero’s contemporaries as inspiration and debating partners for his later published treatises.
Cassius Longinus—i.e. what did Epicurean allegiance mean for a Roman aristocrat? One result of the emphasis on these issues is that Amafinius, Catius, and other early Epicurean writers often play a subsidiary role to Cicero’s more famous, better documented and more historically interesting Epicurean contemporaries.\footnote{While Castner discusses Epicurean writers and teachers (though her entry for Egnatius is inadequate), Benferhat focuses on case studies of Cicero’s contemporaries; the treatment of earlier Epicureans is comparatively short (2005: 58-66). Other recent contributions share a similar focus (e.g. Griffin 1995 or Amstrong 2011).} In contrast, this chapter puts Amafinius and his aemuli on center stage and underlines their importance for the philosophical, literary, and political goals of Cicero’s published dialogues. Finally, the recent work tracing the influence of Lucretius, Philodemus (and potentially other early Epicurean writers) on the Augustan poets has not been properly integrated into accounts of Roman Epicureanism, much less pressed for its decisive external support for Cicero’s claims about the school’s popularity in Italy.\footnote{Here I offer another important supplement to Benferhat 2005, who offers no treatment of the influence of Epicureanism on Latin poetry (and yet again poor old Egnatius is omitted). Castner’s treatment of Vergil, Horace, and L. Varius Rufus, etc. is now outdated.} In other words, I suggest that it is time to capitalize on these recent scholarly advances on Roman Epicureanism and its influence on Latin poetry in order to turn back to Cicero and how these early philosophical authors can help us understand the themes, goals, structures, and arguments of his dialogues.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: first, I offer a methodological discussion of my stance toward using Ciceronian works (in particular TD IV) as historical evidence. Second, I offer a fresh and comprehensive review of the prosopographical evidence for these authors and several early teachers of Epicureanism at Rome;\footnote{I discuss Cicero’s relationships with his Epicurean teachers Zeno of Sidon and Phaedrus as well as his connections with other Greek Epicurean philosophers in Chapter II, section iii.A.} I argue that this testimony supports Cicero’s narrative that the Epicureans were the first prominent writers of philosophy in Latin and that other schools lagged behind them. Third, I turn to the prefaces of Cicero’s
philosophical works and build on recent work that examines his justification of and goals for his writing philosophical works in Latin. I underline how these literary goals made it necessary for him to respond to the efforts of his Latin Epicurean rivals and highlight these polemics through a comparison with his more respectful comments on Varro’s literary efforts.

II. Cicero as evidence: some preliminary observations

A few preliminary comments on my use of Cicero as historical evidence are required. In particular, Amafinius’ role as the first author of philosophy in Latin depends entirely on Cicero’s testimony in his history of Italian philosophy in the preface to *TD* IV. Moreover, a number of scholars have recently problematized the use of his letters or dialogues—to say nothing of his speeches or the problem of the reliability of ancient historiography more generally—as historical sources, while others have emphasized the political agendas behind his literary, rhetorical and philosophical works.\(^{19}\) It is therefore necessary to defend my acceptance of Cicero’s account of Amafinius and Italian interest in Epicureanism, and a few comments on my use of the Ciceronian corpus as a historical source may help clarify my approach to these issues more generally. Future chapters will grapple with the difficult problem of interpreting the often ironic or passing references to Roman Epicureans in Cicero’s letters and dialogues, but this chapter’s focus on Epicurean writers is a little more straightforward and avoids a number of methodological difficulties. To put this point more concretely, while an allusion to Epicurean doctrine in a letter to an educated friend does not

\(^{19}\) For skepticism on Cicero as a source, see e.g. Woodman 1988: 70-116; Gunderson 2007; Lintott 2008; the position of Fox 2007 is more complicated (see n.35). For Cicero’s careful political self-fashioning in his writings, see Steel 2005, Dugan 2005, and the works cited in n.12. For the rhetorical nature of ancient historiography, see Wiseman 1979 and Woodman 1988; Lendon 2009 offers a rebuttal (and further references).
necessarily signify Epicurean commitment on either correspondent’s part, it seems reasonable to claim that an author of multi-book prose or verse treatise on Epicurean philosophy was in fact a fairly serious Epicurean.\(^{20}\)

Therefore the critical questions for this chapter are ones of historical reliability: can we trust Cicero that Amafinius was the first Epicurean writer? Can we trust, at least in broad outline, the history of philosophy in Italy presented in *TD IV* and its conclusions about the popularity of Epicureanism in the Late Republic? Of course Cicero’s reliability in any given case will ultimately depend upon analysis of the context of individual passage in question, and thankfully external testimony for the existence and literary activity of these early Roman Epicurean writers is sometimes available.\(^{21}\) But for several figures, Cicero is our chief or only source, and my reliance on him requires justification.

To anticipate my conclusion: my reconstruction of early Latin Epicurean writers in Italy and my assessment of the accuracy of the *Tusculans* narrative will entirely disregard Cicero’s stylistic or philosophical criticisms as biased and historically unreliable. Furthermore, neither the content of a speech nor the characterization of an individual in a dialogue or treatise will be used as evidence for that character’s historical views (be it Scipio, ...

\(^{20}\) Of course not every poem or prose work that touches on Epicurean ideas signifies serious philosophical allegiance. In particular, poets were more than able to mobilize philosophical ideas for artistic effects or the inclinations of their patrons (Statius, *Silvae* 2.2 is a good example: there is no good reason to call him a philosopher of any sect, nor are there deep philosophical themes running throughout his work as a whole; nevertheless, he is able to work in very sophisticated allusions to Lucretius in a particular poem for the sake of a particular philosophically-inclined patron—see further Chapter II, section ii). Nevertheless, I think an important distinction should be made between short poems or topical allusions and writing a multi-book *De Rerum Natura* (i.e. as did Catius, Egnatius and Lucretius) or providing translations for the technical vocabulary of the Epicurean theory of perception (i.e. as did Catius and probably Amafinius). Only the latter cases seem sufficient to identify a writer as an Epicurean.

\(^{21}\) Much of this testimony is clearly independent of Cicero. A few examples, which are discussed in section iii: Porphyrio provides the title of Catius’ work, which Cicero nowhere gives; Cassius has independent knowledge of Amafinius; and Quintilian provides a very different judgment on Catius as a writer and does not seem to be following *TD IV*. Additionally, several other Epicurean authors or teachers are in fact either omitted or unknown to Cicero. Despite or even because of their omission by Cicero, they offer valuable external support for his conclusions about the prominence of Epicureanism in Republican Italy.
Varro or Cicero himself speaking). This is not to say that Cicero is always unreliable or duplicitous in such matters;\(^2\) however, it is difficult if not impossible to verify this information. Thankfully, all that is required for my analysis of early Epicurean writers is to accept Cicero’s bare historical details: my arguments require only that he is referring to real Epicurean authors and that his historical and chronological framing in TD IV—and more specifically his discussion of more recent history—is generally reliable. This conservative approach will, I hope, provide a sound and minimally speculative foundation for my analysis of Cicero’s literary polemics with his Epicurean rivals.\(^2\)

There are a number of indications that Cicero took great care with historical details and the framing of his dialogues (the major exceptions to this are his rhetorically-charged uses of noble Roman exempla).\(^2\) His letters provide perhaps the strongest evidence for his concern for historical accuracy. A series of letters written to Atticus in May-June 45 on what

\(^2\) Obviously the characterizations and positions of historically far-removed speakers like Scipio or Laelius are likely to be almost or entirely fictive. On the other hand, the care which Cicero took to authentically characterize more recent figures is well shown by a letter to Atticus (4.16.3 = SB 89) in which he explains that the departure of the elderly Scaevola after Book I of De Orator reflected his real-life disdain for Greek technologia. At the same time, Cicero’s Scaevola simultaneously follows Plato’s characterization of Cephalus in the Republic; cf. Gildenhard 2007: 24 n.81 (‘An intertextual acknowledgement of ‘divine Plato,’ a commitment to biographical verisimilitude and the requirements of Roman decorum here seamlessly mesh in defining Cicero’s artistic choices.’). And while Cicero did toy with having rather unlikely speakers like Lucullus discourse on Academic epistemology in the first version of the Academica, he abandoned a draft precisely because it was “παρὰ τὸ πρέπον” (Att. 13.16.1 = SB 323), which is really rather good evidence that he took matters of characterization seriously. For some positive conclusions about Cicero’s characterization, see Jones 1939, Rawson 1972: 39-41, and the references in the following note.

\(^2\) My position here is a more doctrinaire application of the responsible approach adopted by Fantham 2004 in her reading of De Oratore. While she is consistently cautious about attributing the views of the characters Crassus or Antonius to their historical counterparts, she is nevertheless able to mine a great deal of information about their careers and the social and intellectual conditions of their time. For other optimistic readings of De Oratore’s historical content, see Gruen 1992: 624-8; Zetzel 2003: 131 n.23. Zetzel 1995: 3-13, esp. 12-3 concedes the basic historical framework of De Republica as reliable, but sees this as a meagre haul. Meagre it may be, but it is sufficient for the purposes of this chapter. Sympathetic accounts of Cicero as a historian more generally include Rawson 1972 and Brunt 1993 (cf. Steel 2005: 109-13). For more pessimistic readings, see the references in n.19.

\(^2\) On his willingness to stretch facts with moral exempla, see the comments and discussion of Rawson 1972: 33 with n.4 and Brunt 1993: 182 with n.2; cf. Dugan’s discussion (2005: 191-2) of the debate between Atticus and Cicero over the importance of historical detail in the case of the death of Coriolanus (Brutus, 42-4).
appears to have been an aborted political dialogue offers great insight into Cicero’s research. He had planned to set the work in Greece in 146 after the defeat of the Achaean League. He wrote to Atticus for help in identifying the ten commissioners sent by the senate to assist L. Memmius in the aftermath of the Roman victory. To take one example from this intriguing correspondence, Cicero had heard from Hortensius that a certain C. Sempronius Tuditanus was one of the commissioners and had assumed that he was the consular Tuditanus of 129. However, after checking the *Annals* of Scribonius Libo, this chronology would have resulted in a very late praetorship for Tuditanus (in 132, 14 years after the Commission of 146), who had otherwise met with speedy success in the *cursus honorum*. Such a slow advancement struck Cicero as highly unlikely. After checking Polybius in vain for the commissioners’ names, he asked Atticus and Antiochus (apparently a qualified literary assistant of some kind) to check the register of senatorial decrees for 146 for any mention of Tuditanus and to track down information on the other commissioners (his other initial guesses were also incorrect). Later letters reveal that the commissioner Tuditanus was in fact the father of the consular Tuditanus of 129. Cicero actually confesses his earlier confusion, thanks Atticus, and continues his inquiries about the other commissioners.

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25 *Ad Att.* 13.4-6, 30, 32-33 (the MSS order is, however, incorrect). The following remarks are indebted to the excellent analysis of Badian 1969; see also Sumner 1973: 156-8, 166-70 and the notes of Shackleton Bailey 1965-70 in his commentary on the relevant letters.

26 For Cicero’s use of annals and a wide range of other documentary sources, see Rawson 1972: 36-9, 41-2; Brunt 1993: 186-7. On the documents used in this particular exchange, see Badian 1969, esp. 63-5.

27 See esp. *Att.* 13.32 = SB 305: “I was inquiring about C. Tuditanus, who I had heard from Hortensius was one of the Ten [Commissioners]. I see in Libo that he was praetor in the consulship of P. Popilius and R. Rupilius. How could he have been a Commissioner fourteen years before becoming praetor? Unless, that is, he became praetor very late. Which I do not think likely as he seems to have gained the curule magistracies at the legally permitted years without the least difficulty” (Badian 1969: 56 n.1 agrees with Cicero’s assessment). Shackleton Bailey 1965-70: v.349 provides a concise summary of the prosopographical problem: “The legate C. Sempronius Tuditanus is here confused with his son of the same name who was praetor in 132 and consul in 129....” For more on the consular Tuditanus, see Sumner 1973: # R44.

28 *Att.* 13.33.3 = SB 309; the confession comes at *Att.* 13.6.4 = SB 110: “I had never heard of the Tuditanus you speak of... (*Tuditanum istum... plane non noram*) and I had thought his son was the commissioner, which at that time he could not have been.”
What is striking about the case of Tuditanus and these letters more generally is the care Cicero has taken to track down some fairly obscure details about an incident a century in the past, and all for the sake of merely framing the dialogue. If this otherwise unknown work had been published, we would rightly expect that the speeches of these commissioners could not have reflected their actual views (how would Cicero ever know?). However, it is quite clear that he worked hard to ascertain accurate historical details, and his decision to check a Liber of senatorial decrees is at once responsible and sensible (his ability to do so may also arouse jealousy in a modern ancient historian). This correspondence, then, reveals a refreshing willingness by Cicero not only to check his facts with documentary evidence but even to enlist the aid of his antiquarian friend Atticus and a learned literary assistant.

A second example of Cicero’s habitual diligence in ascertaining basic historical facts, from March 45, may have even informed the history in TD IV. Cicero asks Atticus to double check the circumstances and cause of the philosophical embassy of 155. He thinks it concerned the fine the Romans imposed on the Athenians for their sack of Oropus, but he is not sure (de Oropo, opinor, sed certum nescio) and therefore asks Atticus to check Apollodorus on this point as well as to ascertain the identity of the most prominent Epicurean philosopher in Athens at that time (who was not part of the embassy). It is tempting to

29 Nepos, Vita Attici 18 describes Atticus’ historical works; Cicero himself refers to the Liber Annalis (Brutus 13ff). For further discussion and references, see Horsfall 1989: 99-100, Dugan 2005: 194-6, and Feeney 2007: 26-8.
30 See the comments of Badian 1969: 59 and esp. 65: Cicero was “logical and scholarly to an extent which moderns only too often deny to the ancients,” a verdict echoed by Rawson 1972: 40 n.43, who adds that his scrupulous efforts to avoid anachronism set him apart from the dialogues of Plato or Heraclides of Pontus. Cicero often relied on his or Atticus’ learned associates and/or slaves for a range of research assistance on historical matters; and in preparation for De Officiis, Cicero called upon the Stoic Athenodorus to compose τὰ κεφάλαια of a recent ethical work by the Stoic Posidonius (see Atr. 16.11.4 = SB 420 and 16.14.4 = SB 425).
31 Atr. 12.23.2 = SB 262: “quibus consulibus Carneades et ea legatio Romam venerit scriptum est in tuo annali. haec nunc quae causa fuerit—de Oropo, opinor, sed certum nescio; et, si ita est, quae controversiae. praeterea, qui eo tempore nobilis Epicureus fuerit Athenisque praefuerit hortis, qui etiam Athenis πολιτικοὶ fuerint instures. quae etiam ex Apollodori puto posse inveniri.”
think that Cicero was researching the historical narrative in *TD IV*, but this is only a hypothesis. At the very least, this letter and the correspondence on the Commission of 146 offers valuable insight into Cicero’s research methods and shows he certainly had the Epicureans (or rather, their absence from the embassy) on his mind at this time. More letters could be cited, but these examples should be sufficient to underline Cicero’s diligent research. Of course it may be fairly objected that Cicero is only as reliable as his sources, and therefore his efforts in these letters do not constitute proof of the accuracy of his claims. This is a legitimate concern, but his scrupulous fact-checking is surely superior to many other ancient authors and utilizes sources we no longer have. Dismissing his basic historical testimony in the absence of other contradicting ancient evidence seems therefore overly skeptical, especially if he is speaking about more recent history (i.e. like the works of Amafinius, Catius, etc.).

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32 Shackleton Bailey 1965-70: v.320 suggests a reference to *Acad. Prior*, 137, but this passage is a passing anecdote about the Academic Carneades and has nothing to do with Cicero’s question to Atticus. If this letter does indeed have any direct relation to a published text—which is of course not certain—*TD IV* is the most relevant passage (both dialogues were finished sometime later that summer: see Marinone 2004: 214-5 and Griffin 1997a).

33 Chapters IV-V analyze Epicurean themes in a number of other letters from the same period.


35 Cicero’s letter to Lucceius (*Fam*. 5.12 = SB 22), in which Cicero requests a historical monograph on his consulship, deserves comment. The following passage is notorious: “And so I ask you quite openly to embellish (ornes) these events more energetically than perhaps you feel and that you neglect the laws of history (leges historiae) and don’t resist that expression of personal favor (gratiam)…. indulge your affection for me even a little bit more than truth allows (plusculum etiam quam concedet veritas)” (trans. M. Fox, slightly modified). I am persuaded by Brunt’s interpretation of this passage (1993: 202-3, 206): he argues that it is unlikely that Cicero was asking Lucceius to fabricate entirely false dates or events (which would hardly be expected to fool Republican contemporaries). More likely he was asking Lucceius to present his consulship in the best possible light: “[Cicero’s request] might mean no more than the employment of stylistic devices… to convince the reader of the truth and importance of whatever the writer believes…. Nor again, in asking Lucceius to magnify his own deeds… was he suggesting that in any other respect his narrative should be untruthful…” (203, 206). Furthermore, as Fox 2007: 262 points out, later comments to Atticus (*Att*. 4.6 = SB 83) reveal that the letter was written in a witty and ironic spirit, a reading suggested by Cicero’s opening statement to Lucceius (“A certain almost primitive sense of shame has prevented me from dealing with [my request] in your presence. Away from you I will now express them more boldly, for a letter does not blush.”). For a more negative interpretation, see Woodman 1988: 70-5; in contrast Fox 2007: 255-63 argues this letter reveals Cicero’s Academic deconstructionist stance toward history (see esp. 257, 259: “The letter is an elegant statement of the double-edged thinking that I have observed in the dialogues, simultaneously insisting on the
Analysis of a few examples from Cicero’s rhetorical and philosophical writings offers additional confirmation of his general historical reliability. Recent work on the rhetorical works, for example, has usefully mined Cicero’s comments on the history of Latin oratory; his historical testimony has been taken to be generally accurate, if not always precise. To take a harder case, Cicero’s notorious reference to the so-called Scipionic Circle and the corresponding learned conversations in *De Republica* are, to be sure, no longer given much credence. This may seem to undermine any positive claim about Cicero’s reliability. However, even the fiercest critics of Cicero’s narrative concede that Scipio Aemilianus was on good terms with Panaetius and Polybius; there were real historical relations between the other characters of *De Republica*, even if describing them as “members” of a “circle” is dangerously misleading. In other words, the Scipionic Circle is an unreliable idea because it suggests an exaggerated and overly unified cultural/philosophical group and has been used to advance speculative conclusions about Latin culture or Scipio’s political motivations and policy. The bare chronological framing of the dialogue’s characters and date is, however, authentic, and this is precisely the sort of information which is critical for my analysis of Amaffinius and his *aemuli*. To sum up: in my reconstruction of Cicero’s literary rivals I will

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36 See n.23 above for *De Oratore*. The history of Latin oratory in the *Brutus* is discussed by Sumner 1973, esp. 155-76, who concludes that Cicero cannot be relied upon for *precise* dating but his general chronology is usually reliable and can be used to make cautious historical inferences. In contrast, Dugan 2005 and Fox 2007 are more inclined to emphasize the shaping of historical material for the sake of Cicero’s literary and self-presentational goals.

37 The phrase derives from the comment of Laelius at *De Amicitia* 69 (*in nostro, ut ita dicam, grege*).

38 Astin 1967: 294-306 (esp. 294, on the problems of Cicero’s testimony: “That does not mean that ‘Scipionic Circle’ may not be employed in a valid and meaningful way; but there is a clear danger of imprecision, as a result of which it seems often to have acquired a number of misleading overtones.”); Zetzel 1972 is very negative about Cicero’s testimony, but his later commentary on the *Republic* (1995) is more charitable to Cicero’s efforts to accurately frame the setting and the characters of the dialogue. See also Garbarino 1973: i.13-21, ii.380-413; Wilson 1994: 271. Some scholars have attempted to offer a less sensational account of the “Circle” through a more moderate use of Cicero’s testimony (e.g. Walbank 1965 on the justification of Roman imperialism and Rawson 1973 on the religious activities and agendas of Scipio, Laelius, and Furius).
adopt an approach that is optimistic about the reliability of basic historical information in the absence of compelling reasons for doubt.

That said, general observations can only take us so far; a few comments specifically on the reliability of the historical narrative in *Tusculan* IV are required. Cicero tackles two topics in this preface. The first is a broad inquiry into the evidence for early Roman interest in philosophy and the “study of wisdom” (*TD* 4.1-5); the second topic is the paucity of Latin philosophical works and the inferiority of the Epicurean treatises of Amafinius and his Latin *aemuli* (*TD* 4.6-7). The final section contrasts these Epicurean authors and their perversely positive reception in Italy with Cicero’s Academic approach to writing philosophy—a teleological history which finds a parallel in the discussion of Roman oratory in the *Brutus*, which likewise culminates in the figure of Cicero himself. The preface also builds on Cicero’s earlier attempts, especially the prefaces to Books I-II, to “domesticate” Greek philosophy and adapt it to Roman culture. It is therefore clear that this history is far from neutral, and interpretation of the preface demands caution. Section iv of this chapter will discuss Cicero’s literary goals in more detail; here I restrict myself to offering some basic comments on the successes and failures of his prehistory of philosophy in Italy. I argue that we should separate the limited reliability of Cicero’s discussion of early Roman history from his subsequent claims about Amafinius and the recent popularity of Epicureanism.

The first five sections of the preface are a mixed bag. It is clear (and unsurprising)

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41 I do not attempt to provide a comprehensive account of the history of philosophy at Rome. For that, see Garbarino 1973 (the most comprehensive account), Rawson 1985: 282-97, and Beard 1986: 36-8.
that Cicero had limited information and sources on early Italian history.\textsuperscript{42} He openly confesses that he is forced to make inferences (\textit{coniectura}) about Pythagorean influences and is unable to speak concretely about Roman philosophical interests before the age of Scipio and the Athenian Embassy of 155 (\textit{TD} 4.2, 5)—modern scholars of Pythagoreanism will sympathize with his efforts to deal with the range of confused and late evidence for the sect.\textsuperscript{43} Despite his stress on the poor evidence, however, nearly the entirety of the prehistory is in fact devoted to tracking down the “footprints” (\textit{vestigiis}) of Pythagoreanism in Italy and a related discussion of early Roman interest in “wisdom” (\textit{sapientia}). Gildenhard has recently made a strong case that this surprising focus on undocumented early history and its ambiguous relationship with Pythagoreanism plays an important role in the larger goal of the \textit{Tusculans} to forge a philosophical tradition in Latin and to appropriate Greek philosophy to this end: the prehistory of the preface allows Cicero to show that wisdom broadly construed was esteemed by Romans very early on and encouraged them to investigate Pythagoreanism.\textsuperscript{44} These goals should put us on guard, as should the fact early Roman history offered ancient authors many opportunities for creative reshaping of the facts.\textsuperscript{45}

As far as the actual history of the first five sections goes, the quality of Cicero’s

\textsuperscript{42} Rawson 1972: 39 believes that this section is likely Cicero’s own work (on the basis of his phrase \textit{\textit{consideranti mihi studia doctrinae multa sane occurrunt}}). Graver 2002: 130 stresses parallels with the antiquarian work of Cicero’s friends Atticus and Varro.

\textsuperscript{43} On Pythagoreanism in Rome, see now Volk (forthcoming); for an earlier treatment see Garbarino 1973: ii.221-58 (with \textit{testimonia} at i.53-69). A convenient general account of the school can be found in Kahn 2001 (the foundational work is Burkert 1972).

\textsuperscript{44} In contrast, Graver 2002 interprets the preface as focusing squarely on the history of philosophy in Italy. However, Gildenhard 2007: 189 n.275, 192 n.281 points out that Cicero deliberately avoids speaking of \textit{philosophia} in these opening sections. Instead, he is speaking of an indigenous proto-Roman cultivation of wisdom that is related to, but distinct from, philosophy (which comes in only at 4.6 as the invention of Socrates). This distinction allows Cicero to valorize noble Romans of the past and thereby provide a precedent for his effort to create a Romanized philosophy, or, as Gildenhard puts it, a \textit{Paideia Romana}. See further note 48.

\textsuperscript{45} Wiseman 1979.
inferences is uneven. Sometimes he offers quite reasonable arguments. For example, after correctly arguing against the mistaken chronology which made Pythagoras and King Numa contemporaries—a myth he had sought to refute ten years earlier in *De Republica*—Cicero adds that this falsehood nevertheless provides evidence of at least some Roman awareness of Pythagoreanism, since they knew enough to link the two together. His more general claim about the likelihood of contact given Pythagoras’ activity in Southern Italy is also reasonable. However, other points are less successful. His attempt to show that the role of *carmina* at Roman banquets and religious festivals reflected Pythagorean musical influences is, for example, fairly unconvincing. Even more troubling is his closing remark on Pythagorean influences: he tells us that he will not dwell on them any further lest he seem to suggest that Roman interest in wisdom was purely an import from abroad. In the end it is hard to know how to interpret the narrative of early history: Cicero has told us that he is making conjectures and the evidence is poor, then he enlarges on this topic for several sections only to conclude by saying that he does not wish to overemphasize what amounts to the greater portion of his history. We should therefore be wary of taking his account of Pythagoreanism

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46 4.2-3; cf. *Rep*. 2.28-9; Livy also rejects the story (1.18). A passage in Pliny, *NH* 34.26 suggests a very early awareness of Pythagoreanism, much in line with Cicero’s analysis.

47 4.3-4, where Cicero cites Cato the Elder’s description of banquets in the *Origines* and the Twelve Tables as evidence (on early Roman *convivia* see Habinek 1998: 36-9 with further references at 181 nn.6-7.). Gildenhard 2007: 198-9 is surely right to call this claim “tenuous.” This passage and the following note problematize Rawson’s optimistic claim (1972: 39) that “almost all of the arguments [in this preface] are perfectly valid.”

48 4.5: “Many of our other customs are drawn from them as well, but I pass over them, lest even those things we are thought to have invented ourselves begin to appear derivative” (trans. Graver). One of the strengths of Gildenhard’s interpretation is that it can actually account for this surprising passage by stressing Cicero’s emphasis on tracing an ancient Roman zeal for the study of wisdom. On the standard reading of the preface as a straightforward history of philosophy, Cicero’s account becomes nonsensical: he begins a history of philosophy only to pull back and deny that early Romans were overly influenced by philosophy. Cicero’s focus on ancient wisdom in this preface shares a number of similarities with the Peripatetic Dichaearchus’ analysis of human history (see McConnell 2014: 128-42), to which it may be indebted.
too seriously. Thankfully, however, Cicero is explicit about his sometimes questionable inferences; his honesty allows us to control for this pro-Roman bias. At the same time, he does offer a few sensible historical judgments, and shows once again a desire for scrupulous chronology (e.g. regarding Numa and Pythagoras).

After these lengthy but aporetic comments, Cicero begins his history proper in the mid-second century, highlighting, as we have seen, the “age of Laelius and Scipio.” He gives particular importance to the Athenian embassy of 155 and argues that this event offers decisive evidence of philosophical interest in Rome: “The Athenians would certainly never have selected [the ambassadors] for this duty… if the study of wisdom had not been known to some of our leading citizens at that time” (TD 4.5). Benferhat takes Cicero to task for this inference: Greek states had for some time utilized philosophers, who were educated and often well-connected, for diplomatic missions; therefore the embassy of 155 cannot support a conclusion about the preexisting popularity of philosophy in Rome. Nevertheless, Cicero may be correct about the importance of this event, even if for different reasons. As we will see, the lecturing activities of the ambassadors (and the Academic Carneades in particular) led to their expulsion, and there were similar banishments of philosophers (and rhetoricians) in 161 and 154. The embassy had enough of an impact to result in the passage of hostile legislation, and the event continued to interest later Roman authors. In light of the

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49 Gildenhard 2007: 199 n.299 suggests that this passage “reads like an ironic commentary on his own previous attempts to attribute to earlier generations of Romans what was essentially Greek.” But an ironic reading would seem to undermine the ideological consistency of the preface which Gildenhard has so well analyzed.


51 See section iii.A.

52 Reconstructing the details and importance of the philosophers in 155 is a difficult and contested subject, which may offer some defense for Cicero, who may not have had significantly better information than we do.
immediate conservative reaction and the embassy’s legacy, it is entirely possible that this event did much to encourage philosophical interests,\textsuperscript{53} even if the ambassadors were not sent because of Roman receptiveness to philosophy.

The mid second century B.C. is a good choice for other reasons. A variety of evidence suggests an increasing Italian interest in and awareness of philosophy.

Nevertheless, it is in dealing with the second century that Cicero makes a series of surprising and unfortunate omissions.\textsuperscript{54} For example, he could have identified very definite “footprints” of wider philosophical interest with a discussion of early Roman epic and comic poets. To be sure, at \textit{TD} 2.1 he had cited (and attempted to refute) a line in Ennius which shows an

\textsuperscript{53} I.e. just as Cicero was first attracted to his teacher Philo of Larissa when the latter was lecturing in Rome as a result of the war against Mithridates (\textit{Brutus} 306).

\textsuperscript{54} It is quite reasonable, however, that he omits the apocryphal tradition that C. Fabricius encountered Epicurean doctrine while on an embassy to Pyrrhus (in the early third century). But what are we to make of the fact that he later included the legend at \textit{De Senectute} 43 (which is also the fullest account; thinner reports can be found at Plutarch, \textit{Pyrrhus} 20 and Val. Max., 4.3.6; cf. Gellius, NA 17.21.38-9)? After all, the context of the anecdote is a militant assault on pleasure (the character Cato the Elder tells Laelius that he had heard from his ancestors who had in turn heard from their elders—\textit{saeppe audivi e maioribus natu, qui se porro pueros a senibus audisse dicebant}—that Fabricius heard about Epicurus, a near contemporary, when acting as envoy to Pyrrhus—\textit{audisset… esse quendam Athenis qui sapientem proferretur [= Epicurus: cf. \textit{Fin.} 2.7, \textit{TD} 2.7; Plutarch, \textit{Non Posse} 1100A], eumque dicere omnia quae faceremus ad voluptatem esse referenda}. When Fabricius told his friends back at camp, they hoped that Pyrrhus would convert to such soft hedonism and thus be more easily defeated—\textit{quo facilius vinci possent cum se voluptatibus dedissent}). Why would Cicero leave out this anti-hedonistic anecdote in the anti-Epicurean history of \textit{TD} IV? I see two possibilities. First, he may have simply been unaware of the tradition when he wrote the \textit{Tusculans}. However, it seems to me far more probable that Cicero was aware of its dubious historicity. That is, while this anecdote would be out of place in an explicit historical survey like \textit{TD} 4, it is perhaps justifiable when described as a hoary legend coming from the mouth of a fictive and hoary Cato—on Cicero’s greater license when adducing \textit{exempla} in non-historical contexts, see n.24. On this point I therefore diverge from Castner 1988: xiii and Benferhat 2005: 46-7, who are cautiously inclined to take the story as reflecting at the very least an early Roman awareness of Epicureanism, possibly passed down orally, as in Cato’s speech (for the historical reliability of this dialogue more generally see Powell 1998: 273-9, who discusses the details of Fabricius’ embassy, but not the Epicurean incident). The story is however very likely entirely fictive. The war with Pyrrhus was the time at which Rome became interesting to the Greek intellectual world, and the synchronism of Fabricius and Epicurus probably reflected a desire to integrate Greek and Roman chronology while simultaneously asserting Roman virtue over “decadent” and “soft” Greek culture—cf. Feeney 2007: 35-6 (on Gellius) on the importance of the war of Pyrrhus as a part of more general attempts by Romans “to participate fully in the Hellenistic web of time that shaped the Mediterranean” (67).
early, if hostile, engagement with philosophy. However, even the meagre fragments of early Republican comedy and tragedy suggest a great deal more awareness of philosophy than is suggested in Cicero’s history. Our first extent usage of the word *doctrina* in the sense of “philosophical sect,” for example, comes from a joke in Terence’s *Eunuchus*, and a number of passages in Plautus can be pressed for philosophical allusions. An early and militantly Epicurean fragment of Lucilius is another surprising omission: “I wish for the images and atom of Epicurus to conquer!” (*eidola atque atomus vincere Epicuri volam*).

Likewise, Cicero might have collected more examples of Greek philosophical works
dedicated to important Romans in the second century. He might also have stressed the importance of the increasingly trendy practice of sending young Roman aristocrats abroad to Athens or Rhodes for philosophical and rhetorical training, a practice which seems to have begun toward the end of the second century. Once again, his choice of the second century as a critical point in the development of philosophical interest and awareness in Italy is sensible, but his evidence and arguments for this claim are thin and inadequate. To sum up: this narrative of the prehistory of philosophy and early Roman wisdom is not particularly successful. Cicero’s history, despite his effort to research the subject and his clearly marked conjectures, suffers from omissions and sketchy historical inferences.

This conclusion may seem to bode poorly for the reliability of his discussion of Amafinius and Epicureanism. Nevertheless, a number of factors warrant a more optimistic attitude. First, many of the weaknesses in the early portions of the narrative derive from a scarcity of reliable sources. The fact that Cicero does a poor job with early Roman history does not entail that his corresponding account of more recent literary history is also unreliable. Second, he had a good deal more information on more recent philosophical developments—indeed, it is certain that he had read at least portions of a number of these Epicurean works. For example, in the Academica he provides an example of Amafinius’ technical translations of Greek terms; he discusses with Cassius the physics and translations of the Epicurean author Catius; and a famous letter to Quintus offers decisive evidence that Cicero had read Lucretius some ten years before composing the Tusculans. Third, gone are

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59 He mentions Panaetius’ praise of a poem of Appius Caecus in a letter addressed to Q. Tubero (TD 4.4). Other examples: Clitomachus dedicated a book to Lucilius (Acad. Prior. 32.102), Hecato of Rhodes a work “De Officio” to Tubero (Off. 3.63; Cicero used Hecato’s work for Book III).
60 See the useful discussion in Daly 1950; cf. Rawson 1985: 6-11. Passing visits of Roman magistrates to philosophical lectures are also relevant here.
61 Acad. Post. 1.5-6; Fam. 15.17; Ad Q. Fr. 2.9 (each discussed below). These passages undermine his claim at TD 2.7 that he has not read the unpolished works of Latin writers who “wish to be called philosophers.” He is
the references to “footprints” and “conjectures”; his narrative becomes much more concrete when he turns to Amafinius. We have seen that Cicero was very honest about his poor sources for early history and he paid great attention to matters of chronology; in contrast he emphatically and explicitly describes Amafinius as the first Latin author of philosophy (cum interim illis silentibus C. Amafinius extitit dicens). Given his firmness on this point, he might reasonably be expected to be able to get the approximate dating correct, even if he had not seen Amafinius’ work itself. Fourth, he begins to offer nuanced qualifications to his history. He does not deny the existence of post-Amafinian non-Epicurean philosophical works; he simply underlines their paucity (nulla fere sunt aut pauca admodum) and asserts the comparative popularity of the Garden in Italy and the positive reception of the treatises of Amafinius and his aemuli. The final sections of his history are therefore very different from the less successful preceding sections.

I conclude, then, that despite the unevenness of Cicero’s TD IV narrative, there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of his basic historical claim that Amafinius was the first philosophical author in Latin. However, even if Cicero is wrong, the evidence in the following sections for various Epicurean writers in Latin should be sufficient to sustain my larger claims about the importance of Cicero’s literary relationship with them and the popularity of the sect among his contemporaries. In the following section, then, I collect this evidence and argue that he was in fact largely correct in his assessment of the philosophical scene in the first century. This conclusion, in turn, will serve as the basis of my analysis of clearly not telling the whole truth; probably he had read some but not all of these writers. But once again we have sufficient evidence to control for this falsehood, and furthermore this is a personal judgment about the style and quality of their writing, not a historical or chronological fact (on which Cicero, as we have seen, is generally reliable).

62 He engages with these works elsewhere: see section iv for an analysis of Cicero’s literary rivalry with Varro.
Cicero’s literary rivalry with these early Latin authors and will also provide the background for his interactions with his contemporary Epicurean friends, teachers, and acquaintances.

III. Epicurean authors and teachers in the Late Republic

This section offers a comprehensive reconstruction of the literary works of all securely attested Epicurean authors in Latin and identifies teachers known to have taught in Italy during the second and early first centuries B.C. A convenient summary of my conclusions is given in Figure I, section C (in Chapter II, section iv), which also appends further bibliography. One point should be made about the following reconstruction: I avoid as much as possible trying to pin down precise dates for the lives and activities of these early Epicurean writers and teachers (in contrast to much of the scholarly literature). While clear dating would of course be helpful in charting a precise narrative of the popularity of

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63 I omit two additional supposed writers of early Latin Epicurean authors, the exiled praetor T. Albucius and the Roman knight L. Saufeius; and one grammarian, a certain Aurelius Opilius. Albucius’s credentials are reviewed in n.72; I append here a few comments on the other two. Opilius is said by Suetonius (Gram. 6) to have taught philosophy, rhetoric, and grammar. He is described as the freedman of an Epicurean, but this is insufficient evidence for Epicurean commitment or teaching (so Castner 1988: 81 and Benferhat 2005: 68 n.69, against the optimism of Rawson 1985: 124 and Kaster 1995: 110-4). The case of Saufeius is more complicated. I hope to discuss his literary activities on another occasion; for now a couple of schematic comments will have to suffice. Münzer 1914 argued that a citation of a historical work on the origins of the Latin race by a certain Saufeius (ap. Servius, ad Aen. 1.6) was to be identified as the work of Cicero and Atticus’ Epicurean contemporary, L. Saufeius; Münzer further argued that this was an Epicurean work which followed Lucretius’ account of the origins of society in Book V. A few scholars have questioned the identification of the two Saufeii (e.g. Castner 1988: 67), but the Epicurean content has gone unchallenged and his hypothesis has been widely accepted (e.g. Erler 1994: 365; Canfora 2003: 44; Benferhat 2005: 170 n.395; Castner accepts the Epicurean flavor of the extract, if not the identity of the author. Rawson 1985: 9 n.28 suspends judgment). As far as the identification goes, the Servian extract derives from an expanded Aeneid Commentary known as the Servius Danielis (on which see Goold 1970, a critical article; cf. Fowler 1997) which has a proven track record of transmitting authentic fragments of Republican historians and poets (discussed in detail by Lloyd 1961), and furthermore the name Saufeius is fairly uncommon and so unlikely to be a corruption. Servius’ Saufeius is therefore likely the Republican Epicurean of the same name. However, the linguistic parallels Münzer adduces reflect a much broader tradition of speculating about the origins of society (see Cole 1967); the description of Saufeius’ book is consequently too vague to pin down a specifically Epicurean flavor. What is needed is a smoking gun like Lucretius’ emphasis on utility in his history; cf. the equally explicit comment at Horace, Sat. 1.3.98: atque ipsa utilitas, iusti prope mater et aequi. As a result, his book more likely taps into antiquarian interests in Roman history, along the lines of the work of his friends Atticus, Nepos, and Varro. This is still interesting, but Saufeius has no place in my reconstruction of Cicero’s Epicurean literary rivals.
Epicureanism in Italy, for most of these individuals the evidence is simply too thin. More importantly, my arguments will not rise or fall on whether Amafinius wrote in 120 or 90, Lucretius in 54 or 47: a general idea of the period of their activity will suffice to support my analysis of Cicero’s anti-Epicurean polemics.

A. Early Epicurean Teachers in Italy:

   Alcius and Philiscus (expelled 154 or, less plausibly, 173 B.C.)\(^ {64} \)

   M. Pompilius Andronicus (early first century B.C.)\(^ {65} \)

Three teachers of Epicureanism provide evidence for a very early Epicurean presence at Rome. The evidence for each individual derives from sources other than Cicero and therefore offers important external support for his claims about the popularity of Epicureanism. First, Alcius and Philiscus. Two late historical notices refer to them as Epicurean teachers who were expelled by a decree of the senate as a result of their hedonistic teachings.\(^ {66} \) Both sources date the expulsion to the consulate of L. Postumius, which unfortunately could refer to either 173 or 154. A few scholars have opted for the earlier date and proposed that the two Epicureans were members of an embassy of the Seleucid King Demetrius to Rome in 176-5.\(^ {67} \) This argument rests on the fact that the Epicurean philosopher Philonides was a member of Demetrius’ court and on the scattered but

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\(^ {64} \) On these individuals Benferhat 2005: 59-60 is the most reliable account. Both figures are curiously omitted by Castner, who is inconsistent with regard to Greek Epicureans working in Italy: Philodemus is included but not Siro.

\(^ {65} \) Castner 1988: 56; omitted by Benferhat. See also Crönert 1907: 147-52 and Kaster 1995: 122-8.

\(^ {66} \) Athenaeus, 12.68 (εἰςηκοῦσαν ἡδοναίς); Aelian, 12.2 (ὅτι πολλῶν καὶ ἀτόπων ἐσοχθήκα τοῖς νέοις ἐγένοντο). I accept their basic historical testimony but treat the explanation for the expulsion as unreliable.

\(^ {67} \) Farrington 1939: 166-7; Jones 1989: 65; Grimal 1994: 257 (Gemelli 1983: 282 n.3 refers to further partisans of the earlier date). De Witt 1942: 376 n.58 confuses their expulsion with an earlier banishment of Greek teachers in 161.
surprisingly abundant evidence for the popularity for the school in Syria and the Near East.\textsuperscript{68} If this early date and context are correct, then the expulsion of Alcius and Philiscus offers very early evidence of Epicurean activity in Italy. However, Benferhat has argued persuasively that the later date is far more probable and requires far fewer additional assumptions than a date of 173.\textsuperscript{69} A later dating also makes good sense in context: the previous year saw the expulsion of Carneades, Diogenes, and Critolaus as a result of their lectures during the embassy to Rome. The expulsion of Alcius and Philiscus a year later would therefore likely be a continuation of the events and policies of the previous year. If so, it is unlikely that their expulsion was connected with their Epicurean allegiance. More likely it was caused by their more general status as philosophers and reflected the distrust and/or distaste with which some conservative Romans of the time viewed Greek culture.\textsuperscript{70} Although an exact date and cause for expulsion would obviously be valuable, it is ultimately unnecessary. What is important about these figures is that they provide a background for Amafinius’ prose treatise by showing that Epicurean teaching predated his activity.

This early Epicurean activity as well as the hostility it inspired finds a parallel with a

\textsuperscript{68} Portions of a biography of Philonides, who converted Antiochus IV to Epicureanism, are preserved in the Herculaneum Papyri (the current edition is Gallo 1980: 21-166; a new edition using multi-spectral imaging is in preparation)—for more on Philonides see Gera 1999 and Benferhat 2005: 48-51. For the Epicureans in Syria, see Crönert 1907, whose discussion may be supplemented by the remarks on Philodemus’ background in Sider 1997; Rigsby 2008 argues that the onomastics of a charming Epicurean funerary epigram from Naples in the first century reveal its owner’s origins as a freedman from Syria. We also know of a priest in Apamea in the 2\textsuperscript{nd}-3\textsuperscript{rd} centuries A.D. (see Smith 1996) who is described as the Epicurean διάδοχος, which suggests the sect’s continuing influence. M. Pompilius Andronicus was another Syrian teacher of Epicureanism and will be discussed shortly.


\textsuperscript{70} For discussions of philhellenism, see e.g. Gruen 1992; Habinek 1998: 34-68, esp. 60-8; Zetzel 2003. Gildenhard 2007 and Baraz 2012 offer extended analysis of Cicero’s attempts to negotiate this prejudice in the Tusculans and elsewhere. See also n.180.
slightly later Roman Epicurean, Titus Albucius, an exiled praetor who lived and studied philosophy in Athens around the end of the second century (unlike the other individuals in this chapter, Albucius did not teach or write an Epicurean treatise). Cicero is emphatic about his Epicureanism: he was a *perfectus Epicureus*. Using a strategy that will become familiar over the next few chapters, Cicero claims that Albucius’ political activities were inconsistent with his Epicureanism and its advice to “live unknown”; he ironically adds that it took exile for Albucius to act like a proper Epicurean and live a life of apolitical leisure.

Two other Republican sources offer criticism. A fragment of Lucilius mocks Albucius for adopting an effeminate Greek lifestyle (*Graecum te, Albuci, quam Romanum atque Sabinum… maluisti dici*). It seems likely that this rebuke also reflects no more than a general disdain for excessive interest in Greek culture, not a barb directed at his Epicureanism *per se*. On the other hand, Varro’s *Eumenides* pokes the exiled praetor for his hankering for luxurious eating. This criticism may indeed reflect the well-worn anti-Epicurean cliché of gastronomic excess, but it may also be no more than a critique of his decadent exile or a

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71 The date of his praetorship is disputed. Brennan 2000: ii.706 dates it to approximately 107-6 (Albucius was tried and convicted in 105 and his command seems to have lasted longer than one year: see Brennan 2000: ii.476-7 and Castner 1988: 4-5 for details).

72 Here I depart from the common suggestion that he was the author of an Epicurean didactic poem (Klebs, *RE* 1 113.30.67; Della Valle 1932-3: 255 n.2; Dyck 2003: 176; Baraz 2012: 122 n.62). The justification for this claim is weak. The majority of our evidence concerns his philhellenism, his speeches, and possibly a work on oratory: see *Brutus* 131, *Orator* 44.149-50, *Off.* 2.14.50; Quintilian, *Inst.* 2.36, 3.3. Fronto, *De Eloquentia* (p. 131 van den Hout) does in fact refer to Albucius as a poet, but the context is insufficient to warrant the conclusion that he wrote a specifically Epicurean poem, since he is listed along with several non-Epicurean poets (“*in poetis autem quis ignorat ut gracilis sit Lucilius, Albucius aridus, sublimis Lucretius, mediocris Pacuvius, inaequalis Accius, Ennius multiformis*”). *ND* 1.93 cites Albucius as a contumacious Epicurean and brackets him between the litigious Zeno Sidonius and the irascible Phaedrus (on this passage see Pease 1954: 452; Dyck 2003: 175-7), which supports his Epicureanism but not his Epicurean authorship. None of these passages, therefore, offers clear indication of a specifically Epicurean treatise in prose or in verse and to attribute such a work to him is overly speculative (I reassert here with further argumentation the skepticism of Castner 1988: 5).

73 E.g. *Brutus* 131: Albucius was a “*perfectus Epicureus*.”

74 *TD*. 5.108.


76 On this cliché, see Chapter IV, n.36.
general tirade against sumptuous lifestyles. Nevertheless, despite our sources’ rancor, Albucius helps flesh out Epicureanism’s presence in the second century. For he is the first recorded instance of an adult Roman cultivating philosophical studies abroad for an extended period of time. It would be rash, of course, to conclude that no Roman did so before Albucius, but his very early date parallels both the teaching activities of Alcius and Philiscus as well as the conservative, anti-Greek backlash which they endured.

A third, slightly later Epicurean teacher, M. Pompilius Andronicus, is mentioned by Suetonius as a Syrian-born teacher of grammar (natione Syrus studio Epicureae sectae). The combination of his name and origin suggest that he was a freedman, and the Garden’s popularity in Syria has already been noted. The report goes on to mention one of his rival grammatici, Antonius Gnipho, the teacher of Caesar; this reference allows us to place Andronicus’ activity in the early part of the first century. Suetonius adds after the reference to Andronicus’ Epicureanism that he was “held to be rather lazy as a grammaticus and unsuitable for overseeing a school” (desidiosior in professione grammatica habebatur minusque idoneus ad tuendam scholam). Andronicus thereafter left Rome for Cumae where he lived in leisure (in otio vixit) and wrote a 16-book commentary on Ennius’ Annales.

Suetonius’ links between Andronicus’ Epicureanism, his low reputation, and his departure

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77 Other Romans heard Greek philosophers, of course, but it is important to make a distinction between extended study with philosophers abroad and a passing visit to a philosopher’s school that a Roman magistrate might make along the way to his province or back home. A few examples of the latter practice: Cicero tells us that Crassus heard Greek teachers, including the Academic Metrodorus, on his way to Asia (De Or. 3.74-5) and that Q. Caecilius Metellus Numidicus heard Carneades at Athens (De Or. 3.68); at Leg. 1.53 Cicero records a charming anecdote about the proconsul L. Gellius’ offer to arbitrate the disputes of the philosophical schools in Athens (further examples in Gruen 1992: 251-2 and Garbarino 1973). These visits do not necessarily suggest any philosophical allegiance: an Epicurean visited the Stoic Epictetus at Diss. 3.12; Plutarch, Cato Min. 65 reports the Stoic Cato’s discussions with a Peripatetic.

78 Suetonius, Gram. 8. It is possible that Cicero’s refers to him in a letter to Paetus (Fam. 9.16.7 = SB 190), but the text is uncertain.

79 Kaster 1995: 123 argues that we should not preclude the possibility that he was an enfranchised peregrinus.
for Cumae seem speculative and unreliable.\textsuperscript{80} Competition from a well-respected teacher like Gnipo, for example, is more than sufficient to explain a departure from Rome. However, once again the exact reason for Andronicus’ departure is not critical. What is important is that he offers evidence for yet another early Epicurean teacher active in not only Rome, but in Campania, where, as we will see in the next chapter, there was great interest in Epicureanism.

To sum up: these three Epicurean teachers and the Epicurean studies of T. Albucius in Athens provide important evidence for the very early presence of the school in Italy. They also do much to contextualize the prose treatise of Amafinius by showing that his work was part of a larger interest in Epicureanism. This is not to claim that there was no interest in Stoicism or the other schools. However, our evidence for such interest is the dubious “Scipionic Circle,” a brief embassy composed of non-Epicureans at a time when Alcius and Philiscus were already teaching, and anecdotes about governors or other Roman officials dropping by a lecture on their way to or from the provinces.\textsuperscript{81} For our purposes, precise dates are not critical, nor is it overly important to know whether these Epicureans were expelled as a result of their hedonistic beliefs or whether they were simply casualties of a conservative reaction against Greek culture. Whatever the answers to these questions, these early Latin Epicureans offer initial positive corroboration for Cicero’s account of the popularity of the school in the Late Republic.

\textsuperscript{80} Castner 1988: 56 thinks Suetonius is highlighting an “an incompatibility of Epicureanism with traditional studies [i.e. of poetry].” However, recent work has underlined that Epicureanism was not so straight-forwardly hostile to poetry or literature (see the essays in Obbink 1995).

\textsuperscript{81} Additionally, we have evidence for the strong Stoic commitments of P. Rutilius Rufus as well as his relationships with Panaetius and Posidonius (on Rufus see Fantham 2004: 43-4, 126-8). But Rufus was active later than Albucius; furthermore, there is no evidence of Stoic teachers comparable Alcius and Philiscus in the second century—unless we wish to accept Panaetius’ influence on Scipio. But even if we do give his influence credence, his activity in Rome was intermittent (he continued to be active in Athens and Rhodes).
**B. Gaius Amafinius**: fl. c. 120-70 B.C. (?), author of an Epicurean prose work

With Amafinius we move away from teachers and turn to our first Epicurean writer. The evidence for his life and activity consists of three passages: the hostile comments of *TD* 4.6-7, similar criticisms in the second edition of the *Academica*, and an off-hand stylistic judgment from Cassius to Cicero which compares Amafinius to the Epicurean writer Catius.

I begin with the dating of Amafinius, which depends solely on Cicero’s testimony in the *Tusculans*. For reasons discussed in section ii, I accept Cicero’s firm claim there that Amafinius was the first philosophical writer in Latin, who therefore has chronological priority over the other Epicurean authors described in this chapter. Any precise dating of his activity is, however, fairly arbitrary. The majority of scholars date his activity to the last two or three decades of the second century.\(^\text{82}\) Support for this date has been found in Cicero’s references in *TD IV* to the embassy of 155 and the preoccupations of the leading Romans (*propter magnitudinem rerum occupationemque hominum*)\(^\text{83}\) in the “age of Scipio and Laelius.” It is inferred that the comment “meanwhile while they were silent C. Amafinius…” implies that he was active sometime shortly after this period. This dating is plausible but takes the rather vague expressions of time somewhat literally. Cicero moves quickly through history in this passage: his phrase *post Amafinium* to describe other Epicurean writers and the contemporary popularity of the movement apparently extends up to the time of the *Tusculans* in 45.\(^\text{84}\) There is no indication as to whether Amafinius was active ten years later than Scipio or fifty, and it is therefore not impossible that he wrote at the beginning of the first century or...

\(^{82}\) Benferhat 2005: 61-2; it is already described as the “orthodox view” in Castner 1988: 8. I discuss alternatives below.

\(^{83}\) Benferhat 2005: 62 suggests that this phrase refers to the Roman sack of Corinth and Carthage.

\(^{84}\) Castner 1988: 9 well stresses the vagueness of Cicero’s expressions of time in order to refute more radical dates for Amafinius, but the orthodox dating is open to the same objections, even if to a lesser degree.
even later. Pressing Cicero here for a precise dating therefore seems futile. I suggest that a more cautious approach is prudent: we may accept that Amafinius was the first philosophical writer in Latin, that he was not a close contemporary of Cicero, and that he wrote sometime after Scipio and the embassy but before the activities of later Epicurean writers like Catius, Rabirius, etc. For the sake of reference I will date his activity between 120-70, but even this may not be generous enough.

Some scholars, however, have found an early date unsatisfactory and have questioned Cicero’s testimony (their skepticism would extend even to my generous dating of Amafinius’ activity). The main objection is Lucretius’ claim that “I myself am now found to be the very first to be able to describe [Epicurean philosophy] in our mother tongue.” The worry is that if Cicero is correct about chronology, then Lucretius is not telling the truth. This “problem” has been much discussed in the literature on Roman Epicureanism, but J.S. Reid had already offered the essentials of a solution in the 19th century:

If… we interpret the boast of Lucr. in v.336… to mean that he was the first Latin writer in order of time, the matter would be settled. But it is not altogether certain that the expression ‘primus cum primis’ has this sense; and if it had, we should not be bound to take Lucr. au pied de la lettre. In 1.66, for example, he says that Epicurus was the first man who dared face the gods without terror, and in 1.117 that Ennius was the first Italian who gained fame from Helicon; statements not literally true. Parallels from Vergil and other Latin poets strongly support Reid’s cautious approach to Lucretius’ poetic self-promotion. His skepticism is further strengthened by my discussion

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85 DRN 5.336: et hanc primus cum primis ipse repertus/nunc ego sum in patrias qui possim vertere voces.
86 E.g. Leonard and Smith 1942: 674; Bailey 1947: iii.1371; Boyancé 1963: 8-9; Paratore 1973: 149-50; Rouse and Smith 1992: 404 note c. For drastic alternative solutions to this question, see my discussion of Howe 1951 below.
87 Reid 1885: 22 n.1, sensibly followed by Castner 1988: 11.
88 In addition to DRN 5.336, compare DRN 1.117-19: Ennius ut noster cecinit, qui primus amoeno/detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam/per gentes Italas hominum quae clara clueret – Vergil, G. 3.10-2: primus ego in patriam mecum, modo vita supersit/Aonio reidiens deducam vertice Musas/primus Idumaeas referam tibi Mantua, palmas. I take these examples from Hinds 1998: 52-83 (who also discusses Ennius’ disparagement of
of Cicero’s chronological reliability in section ii: there is no good reason to attribute a similar historical scrupulousness to Lucretius, much less should Cicero’s generally reliable historical research be undermined by the silence of a poet with his own literary agenda. More charitably, it has been noted that it would be perfectly fair for Lucretius to say that he was the first Epicurean poet writing in Latin—after all, he explicitly engages with Ennius and Latin poetry, not prose.\textsuperscript{89} In any case, Lucretius’ silence is not a fatal objection to Cicero’s chronology.

Whereas commentators on Lucretius were troubled by his silence on Amafinius, H.M. Howe, who was building on the earlier arguments of Della Valle, offered a more radical solution and argued for a very late date for Amafinius’ treatise.\textsuperscript{90} The upshot of his argument was that the chronological claims of \textit{TD IV} should be ignored; Amafinius should be redated as a slightly younger contemporary of Lucretius; and Cicero’s extended anti-Epicurean polemics of 45-44 were inspired by the recent publication of Amafinius’ treatise (and Cicero’s limited political role after Pharsalus). This theory has not met with approval,\textsuperscript{91} but a review of his arguments will be useful in underlining how necessary it is to be wary of pressing our data for precise chronology or taking Cicero’s hostile stylistic judgments too

\textsuperscript{89}E.g. Classen 1968: 113; Paratore 1973: 149. However, Lucretius’ comment seems a little more general than this, and Hinds’ reading (previous note) seems the more plausible explanation.
\textsuperscript{90}Howe 1951; Della Valle 1932-3: 169-81 (whose arguments are even less persuasive). Canfora 2003: 47 has recently revived the suggestion of a late date for Amafinius (“\textit{mais qui en tout cas devrait être classé comme contemporain de Lucrèce et de Cicéron.”}).
\textsuperscript{91}E.g. D’Anna 1965: 7-23; Masłowski 1985; Castner 1988: 8-10.
seriously when dealing with the fragmentary evidence for any of these writers.

Howe begins by pressing Lucretius’ silence about Amafinius. He further argues that Lucretius’ “*volgus abhorret ab hac* [=Epicurean philosophy]” (*DRN* 1.95) would not make sense if Amafinius’ work had been popular; likewise, Lucretius’ claim about the poverty (*egestas*) of the Latin language (*DRN* 1.139) would be misleading if Amafinius had already offered Latin translations for technical Greek terms. These objections depend once again upon a very literal reading of Lucretius’ own attempts at self-promotion and therefore pose little threat to Cicero’s firm assertion about Amafinius’ chronological priority. Howe’s second argument is that Cicero sought to check the influence of Epicureanism only in his works after Pharsalus; the lack of Epicurean polemic in the 50s does not make sense if Epicureanism and its Latin translators had already enjoyed great popularity. However, it is an exaggeration to say that Cicero did not criticize Epicureanism in the dialogues of the 50s. As we will see in Chapter III, Cicero attacked the Epicureans in both his philosophical and rhetorical works of this earlier period: the preface to *De Republica* argues forcefully against Epicurean abstention from politics; in *De Legibus* the Epicurean Atticus is asked to concede divine providence (thus sidelining Epicureanism from the outset) so Cicero can offer a Stoic-inspired account of justice and natural law; and in *De Oratore* Epicureans are politely but pointedly asked to stay in their Gardens (*sed in hortulis quiescit suis*) and leave politics and oratory to those who are better qualified.92 It is true that these polemics are more limited than the systematic refutations of the school in later works like *De Finibus* I-II or *De Natura Deorum* I; Cicero’s earlier works instead find ways to exclude the school from the discussion

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92 *Rep.* pref; *Leg.* 1.21ff; *De Or.* 3.63-4. The Epicurean polemic in *Rep.* is analyzed by Maslowski 1985 and Zetzel 1995 *ad loc*. On Maslowski’s suggestion that Lucretius was the impetus for the anti-Epicurean polemics of the works of 40s, see section iii.F.
altogether. These consistent efforts are certainly hostile, but in any case the increased intensity and range of the polemics in later works may simply be the result of the increasingly ambitious scope for Cicero’s philosophical works. There is no hint of his desire to systematically “illuminate” Latin literature in his works of the 50s, and it is therefore not surprising that his attacks on his Epicurean predecessors are less comprehensive: he was not competing with Amafinius and his *aemuli* in the same way that he was when he began his comprehensive philosophical surveys of the 40s. These more limited polemics of the 50s, then, are likewise insufficient to warrant redating Amafinius to such a precise period of time; much less do they overturn the extensive evidence for Epicurean activity stretching back to Alcius and Philiscus.

Howe’s final claim is his most extravagant and paradoxically the one which has found the greatest favor in later treatments of Roman Epicureanism. Pressing Cicero’s references to Amafinius’ popularity among the multitude, Howe offers a hypothesis as to the identity of these early Latin readers:

[T]hey were presumably well-to-do citizens of the *municipia*, grown prosperous since the end of the Social War. Newly risen from low estate, they would be alive to the terrors of superstition, which in the eyes of Cicero could frighten no old woman (*Tusc.* 1.48); they may have been the people for whom Lucretius wrote his diatribes against the blind fears of heaven, and to whom he offered Epicureanism as a refuge.

This hypothesis cannot, of course, be disproven, and for reasons discussed below it is

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93 A couple of qualifications are required. Cicero included *De Republica* and *De Oratore* in the catalogue of his philosophical works (*Div.* 2.1ff) as part of his efforts to benefit his countrymen through writing. But the inclusion of these works in this project smacks of retrojection; none of these early dialogues suggest that Cicero had such a broad goal in mind at the time of their composition. Second, his letters reveal that there was no single, consistent plan to the works of the 40s; Cicero’s goals seem to have changed several times (see Griffin 1997a).
94 *TD* 4.6-7. Cf. 2.7-10 (with another contrast between Epicureanism and Cicero’s academic stance), *Fin.* 1.13, and my discussion of *Acad. Post.* 1.5-8 below.
95 Howe 1951: 60.
actually preferable to even vaguer references to Amafinius’ appeals to the “lower classes” or the “masses.” Nevertheless, there is simply insufficient evidence to hypothesize that these Epicurean authors aimed to educate the superstitious citizens of the municipia. The thesis depends entirely on taking completely seriously Cicero’s contemptuous remarks about Epicurean writers’ simple, unpolished style and their lowly readership. Furthermore, our abundant prosopographical evidence for a very wide social range of Roman Epicureans does not yield readers such as are described by Howe. This fantasy has sometimes been taken seriously even by critics of Howe’s redating of Amafinius, and we will see shortly that Cicero’s claim about Epicureanism’s popularity in the municipia lives on in the comments about Epicurean “popularizing works.” Howe’s reconstruction, then, illustrates the dangers involved in pressing our evidence too far. Speculative and overly precise dating is combined with literal readings of Cicero’s hostile stylistic judgments. The results of such hypotheses are appealingly definite but entirely unreliable.

So much for the dating of Amafinius’ activity. I now turn to the second Ciceronian reference to Amafinius and attempt to reconstruct the broad outline of his Latin treatise.

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96 *Fin.* 2.12 might seem to support Howe’s thesis about Epicureanism takeover of small Italian towns: “And so you’re collecting from every little village men who are good but certainly not learned” (*sic vos de pagis omnibus colligitis bonos illos quidem viros sed certe non pereruditos*). But the context is an attack on Epicurus’s assertion that paideia was unnecessary for being a good man; the speakers in the dialogue are contesting their respective citations of noble Roman exempla as evidence for their philosophical positions. Therefore this passage has nothing to say about Roman Epicureanism—in the municipia or elsewhere.

97 Canfora 2003: 47 thinks that Roman Epicureanism was an aristocratic phenomenon appealing to individuals like Piso and Cassius (and so rejects Howe’s hypothesis). But this refutation is not compelling: it is neither surprising nor significant that Cicero’s letters to his famous Roman friends have survived while letters to leaders of small Italian towns have perished (and he no doubt wrote many of such “lesser” letters: see White 2010: 31-62 for the focus on famous men and events in our surviving corpus of letters). Even more decisive is our evidence for less famous Roman Epicureans, including knights (e.g. L. Saufeius, L. Papirius Paetus) and freedmen (C. Stallius Hauranus, Piso’s freedwoman Calpurnia); these individuals do not seem to be the uneducated, superstitious readers of Howe’s thesis. The closest candidate is the knight P. Volumnius Eutrapelus, whose limited intellect is mocked in several letters to Atticus and Paetus. However, the actual evidence for Eutrapelus’ Epicureanism is really rather thin and based essentially on his associations with several well-attested Epicurean friends (see Castner 1988: 89-90, who rightly classifies him under *Epicurei incerti*).

98 E.g. Castner 1988: 9 (“The followers of Amafinius can be plausibly identified with the well-to-do citizens of the municipia, grown prosperous since the end of the social war.”).
Cicero’s criticisms are voiced by the character Varro in the final version of the *Academica*. Varro is explaining why he has avoided writing a philosophical work in Latin. One of his main worries is the difficulty of translating technical Greek terms into good Latin. This problem, he claims, is not shared by Epicurean translators:

\[ \textit{vides autem (eadem enim ipse didicisti) non posse nos Amafinii aut Rabirii similes esse, qui nulla arte adhibita de rebus ante oculos positis vulgari sermone disputant, nihil definiunt, nihil partiantur, nihil apta interrogatione concludunt, nullam denique artem esse nec dicendi nec disserendi putant… iam vero physica, si Epicurum id est si Democritum probarem, possem scribere ita plane ut Amafinius. quid est enim magnum, cum causas rerum effectuam sustuleris, de corpusculorum (ita enim appellant atomos) concursione fortuita loqui? …. haec ipsa de vita et moribus et de expetendis fugiendisque rebus illi simpliciter, pecudis enim et hominis idem bonum esse consent…} \]

You see, of course, since you’ve studied the same philosophical doctrines yourself, that we can’t be like Amafinius and Rabirius. They argue unsystematically about what’s under their noses in ordinary language; they have no recourse to definition, division, or dialectic; and, in fact, they consider the systematic study of speech and argument worthless…. As for physics, if I approved of Epicurus’ views—that is, the views of Democritus—I could of course write about it as plainly as Amafinius. Once you’ve done away with active causes, what’s impressive about writing about the chance interactions of “little bodies” (his term for “atoms”)? …. As for writing about our lives, ethical dispositions, and what we should seek or avoid, that’s easy for them, because they think the good is the same for man and beast.

(Acad. Post. 1.5-6)

Punctuating Varro’s criticisms of Amafinius and his colleague Rabirius (on whom see below) are explanations for why he and Marcus—who are both described here as disciples of “that old and famous philosophy which arose from Socrates (Acad. Post. 1.3; cf. TD 4.6: illius

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99 I refer to the historical senator and writer as “Cicero” and the dialogic character of the same name as “Marcus.” I offer a few comments on the vexed problem of Cicero’s personal philosophical views in Chapter III, section iv. For present purposes, it does not seem contentious to claim that his attacks on Epicurean writers and attempts to valorize his own translations and treatises reflect his own views—or at least a coherent and consistent strategy of the texts of this period.
verae elegantisque philosophiae quae ducta a Socrate)—could not avail themselves of the simple language employed by Epicurean translators. The literary objectives of these polemical stylistic criticisms will be discussed in the following section; here I attempt to press this passage for what it can tell us about the treatise of Amafinius.

Perhaps the single most important piece of information is the reference to Amafinius’ translation of atoms as “corpuscula” (de corpusculorum—ita enim appellat atomos).\footnote{Reid 1885: 95; Howe 1951: 59; Lévy 2003: 52. Sedley 1998a: 38-9 offers the best discussion.} This is decisive evidence that his work addressed Epicurean physics, at least to some extent. His translation was not a bad choice. Both Lucretius and Cicero himself occasionally used the term, although elsewhere Cicero preferred individua.\footnote{ND 1.66, 2.94 (individua: Acad. Prior. 2.55; Fat. 22).} Next, it is worth asking whether we are justified in postulating anything beyond a work on physics. More specifically, did Amafinius elaborate on the ethical consequences of his physics? The tight connection between physics and ethics is well illustrated by Lucretius and the fragments of Epicurus,\footnote{E.g. Epicurus, Ep. ad Hdt. 79; Ep. ad Pyth. 85; and esp. KD 10-11, where the purely instrumental value of physics is forcefully stated. Cf. Lucretius, 4.33ff, 5.110ff, 5.1204-40. Lucretius also emphasizes the ethical importance of physics on a larger scale: take, for example, his discussion of the mortality of the soul at the beginning of Book III, which grounds his ethical conclusions and the diatribe against death at the end of the book.} and we will see shortly that Catius seems to have followed in this tradition. While it is a reasonable hypothesis that Amafinius did so as well, Varro’s statements offer no support for this claim. His critique marches through the traditional philosophical fields of logic, physics, and ethics; Amafinius and Rabirius are cited for their bad logic, Amafinius for his bad physics. The discussion of ethics refers only to illi, which may refer to these Latin writers or Epicureans more generally. This passage is therefore too ambiguous to justify an ethical component, however reasonable that would be.

It is high time to discuss in more detail Cicero’s stylistic criticisms. With the
exception of a few passing doubts, the overwhelming consensus over the past hundred years has been to take at face value Cicero’s stylistic criticisms along with his related claim that Amafinius and his aemuli courted the vulgus with their simple prose. Thus we hear of their “popularizing” or “vulgar” works aimed at the “masses” or the “lower classes” (or the insufficiently educated citizens of the municipia); these remarks are often combined with an explicit contrast to the loftier language of Lucretius, who is taken to have appealed to a more learned audience. On the other hand, Pierre Boyancé more plausibly suggested that the spare style of these early writers reflected Epicurus’ admonishments to avoid the trappings of paideia and the technicalities of logic. But despite this more positive spin, Cicero’s judgments are nevertheless accepted.

This credulity is misguided and stands in need of correction. Cicero’s stylistic complaints simply cannot be trusted. The greatest objection is that his criticisms in the TD IV preface and Academica 1.5-6 both slide from specific barbs directed at Amafinius into a

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103 Lévy 2003: 52 notes Lucretius’ use of Amafinius’ corpuscula and wonders in passing whether the latter was really such a bad writer; Roskam 2007: 85 objects to the category of “popular literature”; Rawson 1978: 22 n.45 (cf. Rawson 1985: 139, 284) notes the important parallels between Cicero’s criticisms of Amafinius and Epicureanism more generally but does not offer a firm verdict.

104 E.g. Howe 1951: 59 (“…barbarous style of writing.”); Classen 1968: 113-4; Paratore 1973: 149 (“… di bassa propaganda di Amafino…”); Gigante 1983: 26 (“… la diffusione della dottrina epicurea a Roma è diretta non ad una élite, ma al popolo e, in particolare, ai giovani.”); Gargiulo 1983: 636 (“Dopo che Amafino ebbe svolto la sua opera di volgarizzazione…”); Maslowski 1985: 76 (“[Epicureans] were largely recruited from the lower classes of Rome and Italy…”); Castner 1988: 8-9; Erler 1994: 365 (“Vor allem Amafinius hat das Interesse der Menge geweckt.”); Grimai 1994: 302 (“Catius, est celui d’un vulgarisateur d’Epicure…”); Kilpatrick 1996: 90, 88 (“… while the less sophisticated might consult the Latin prose works of Amafinius.”); Canfora 2003: 47 refers to them as “abbreviated drafts” aimed at readers with weak or no Greek; Gildenhard 2007: 107, (“… vulgar philosophizing characteristic of an Amafinius, Rabirius, or their Epicurean brethren.”), 146-7; see also the pejorative remarks quoted in n.5 (“penpushers”). Passing references (e.g. Brittain 2006: 88 n.4) often refer more vaguely to “popular works on Epicurean philosophy,” which suggests that Cicero’s comments about the vulgus have been accepted.

more general polemic against the limitations of Epicurean philosophy. This is brought out well by Varro’s (or rather Cicero’s) use of the three traditional divisions of philosophy to structure his criticisms: in this general framework he explains why all branches of Epicurean philosophy lend themselves to the crude and simple language which was so appealing to the masses (in contrast, that is, to the more subtle approach of the “Socratic School” of Cicero and Varro). Although Amafinius and Rabirius are singled out for their poor style, the actual charges brought against them are broad criticisms of the school’s approach to logic and definition, and Cicero virtually repeats them elsewhere. In particular compare the criticisms at De Finibus 1.22: “[Epicurus] abolishes definition, and teachings nothing about division and classification. He hands down no system for conducting and concluding arguments…” (tollit definitiones, nihil de dividendo ac partiendo docet, non quo modo efficiatur consequaturque ratio tradit). Indeed, in all of these passages there is really only one criticism which is specific to Amafinius: his use of the word corpuscula. But since Cicero

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106 Cicero’s criticism of Catius’ translations (Fam. 15.16 = SB 215) similarly slides into a general critique of Epicurean physics. Classen 1968: 113 is aware of this problem but nevertheless chooses to accept Cicero’s criticisms wholesale in order to stress the achievement of Lucretius.

107 Despite the fact that Varro was a follower of Antiochus of Ascalon and Cicero an Academic Skeptic, we are well-justified in taking Varro’s speech to represent Cicero’s criticisms. First, Varro’s dismissal of Amafinius and Epicureanism echoes the claims published in TD IV as well Cicero’s criticisms of Catius in a private letter (Fam. 15.16). Second, Varro’s emphatic and repeated first person plural vocabulary establishes common ground between the two: “eadem enim ipse didicisti (=Cicero)... non posse nos Amafini aut Rabiri simul... nos autem... a nobis... nostra tu physica nosti.. apud nostros autem...” Varro’s concluding comment also uses the first person plural, but in a way that suggests a “royal we”: “But if we follow the Old Academy, which we, as you know, approve, think how subtly we’ll have to expound its position” (si vero Academiam veterem persequamur, quam nos, ut scis, probamus, quam erit illa acute explicanda nobis). However, the parallels with Cicero’s other anti-Epicurean stylistic comments, his frequent use elsewhere of the syncretic historiography of Varro’s teacher Antiochus (see n.1), and his amply attested desire to please and find common ground with Varro (on this see Griffin 1997a: 15-6; Leach 1999: 165-8; Baraz 2012: 80 n.2, 207-9) provide sufficient justification to take these criticisms to reflect at the very least Cicero’s literary/polemical strategy and probably also his own views.

108 Trans. R. Woolfe. Cf. Fin. 2.4, 2.11, 2.26-7, and 2.30. At Fin. 1.8 it is suggested that some Romans were disdainful of Latin philosophical works “because they have encountered certain rough and unpolished books stemming from bad Greek books and written in even worse Latin” (inciderint in inculta quaedam et horrida, de malis Graecis Latine scripta deterius). It seems very likely that Cicero has in mind Amafinius and co. here as well; if so, it reveals that Cicero himself was aware that his stylistic charges reflected a broader disagreement with Epicurus, not just his Latin translators.

109 For the criticism of Catius’ coinage spectrum, see iii.D.
himself found recourse to this translation, this criticism is far from decisive evidence for the low quality of Amafinius’ Epicurean treatise.

It is therefore extremely difficult to know when the report of Amafinius begins and ends, and when Cicero is simply attacking Epicurean logic and dialect more generally. As far as the purchase of his more general stylistic critique of the Garden’s style goes, he is at the very least guilty of exaggeration. While the rebarbative prose of Philodemus’ *De Pietate* or the fragments of Epicurus’ *On Nature* may seem to support Cicero’s complaints, other texts, such as Philodemus’ *De Morte* or Epicurus’ *Letter to Menoeceus*, employ sophisticated and carefully-wrought prose. Furthermore, we will see that other ancient authors had a more positive view of the style of Catius, and Cicero actually admits to his brother that Lucretius showed “flashes of genius but nevertheless much skill” (*multis luminibus ingeni multae tamen artis*). In other words, if Cicero is guilty of overgeneralizing about the prose style of Epicurean authors, what reason is there to justify the claim that Cicero is offering a fair judgment about the quality of Amafinius’ work or its intended audience? These worries are sufficient to prohibit giving any credence to Cicero’s stylistic criticisms. And while Boyancé’s more moderate thesis may in fact be on the right track, Cicero cannot be pressed in support of it.

Finally, the audience of Amafinius’ treatise. It is extremely unlikely that he (or any other Epicurean writer in all of Antiquity) aimed to court the favor of “the masses” or “lower classes” with some form of “popular literature.” If my rejection of Cicero’s stylistic

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110 *On De Morte* and in particular the conclusion to Book IV (text in Henry 2009), see the remarks of Armstrong 2003 (who plans in a forthcoming article to make a similar case for Philodemus’ *De Ira*). At ND 93 Cicero has to confess that the Epicurean courtesan Leontion wrote against Theophrastus in excellent Attic Greek (*scito illa quidem sermone et Attico*); *Pis.* 69 refers to Philodemus’ sophistication as a poet (see further Chapter II, section iii.C).
criticisms is correct, any such claim is undermined by the loss of one of its fundamental assumptions, namely that Amafinius wrote non-technical prose aimed at a less literate or less sophisticated audience. Moreover, it is very unclear what it would actually mean for a writer to “appeal to the masses” or write “popularizing works.” It has been argued, in fact, that popular literature of this sort simply did not exist in the ancient world;\(^{111}\) it would be very surprising if Cicero’s Epicurean rivals are our only examples of such literature. For this reason Howe’s old argument about the Epicurean invasion of the Italian *municipia* is in fact far more plausible than any claim about Amafinius’ subaltern appeals, since it at least clearly defines the audience for this popularizing literature. It is therefore incumbent on the many proponents of the popular literature hypothesis to explain in more detail what this would actually mean in terms of ancient readers and to suggest reasons why we should believe Cicero in spite of his open hostility. Amafinius’ appeal to the masses must therefore be disregarded alongside Cicero’s other stylistic criticisms. I confess that I have no suggested audience to replace these admittedly exciting conclusions about appeals to the masses or the citizens of the *municipia*; but I trust that a sober reconstruction makes for a better foundation for my thesis than sexy speculations. I assume simply that Amafinius was, like virtually all other Latin authors, writing for a readership of educated Roman males.

C. Rabirius: fl. c. 110-46 B.C. (?), author of an Epicurean prose work

Rabirius is known only from the *Academica* passage discussed above. As such he has

\(^{111}\) So Roskam 2007: 85 n.4, citing Harris 1989: 227 (“There was no such thing as ‘popular literature’ in the Roman Empire, if that means literature which became known to tens or hundreds of thousands of people by means of personal reading…. As for works written expressly for the masses, there were none.”). Recent work on the political uses of literature and the social factors involved in its publication (e.g. Habinek 1998, Murphy 1998, and Gurd 2012) also undermines the plausibility of a subaltern audience.
been the subject of a number of minor speculations which require pruning. On the basis of his link with Amafinius it is usually assumed that he was a younger contemporary writing around the same time or shortly after Amafinius, with a floruit of approximately 100 B.C.\textsuperscript{112} However, it is even more dangerous to be overly doctrinaire about this dating or his relationship to Amafinius. The fact that Varro links the two together does not necessarily imply a close chronological relationship. The focus of the passage is, as we have seen, the broad stylistic and philosophical inferiority of Epicureanism and its Latin translators; it does not offer a historical narrative like the preface to Tusculans IV, nor should we expect one. Indeed, by the same reasoning Catius would therefore also be a contemporary of both Amafinius and Rabirius, since the first two are linked by Cassius in Ad Fam. 15.19 (also on stylistic defects) and the latter two in the Academica passage. This seems highly unlikely and underlines the weakness of pressing the Academica link. It therefore seems prudent to adopt a more conservative conclusion: Rabirius wrote sometime after Amafinius, perhaps as early as the end of the second century but before the composition of the Academica.

Varro’s comments on physics and Amafinius’ use of the word corpuscula might suggest that Rabirius also wrote on that subject, which is after all a very standard Epicurean topic. However, not every Epicurean wrote on physics (e.g. Philodemus), and only Amafinius is cited for his physics. Finally, on a more historical note, it has been suggested on the basis of his name that Rabirius had Campanian origins.\textsuperscript{113} If so, Rabirius would add to our evidence for the popularity of Epicureanism in Southern Italy and potentially connect him with Philodemus. However, the evidence for this claim is entirely circumstantial and

\textsuperscript{112} E.g. Castner 1988: 63 (“A date in s. II is probable since Cicero mentions him in conjunction with Amafinius...”); Benferhat 2005: 60-1 is more tentative but ultimately follows Castner.

\textsuperscript{113} Rawson 1985: 23 n.22.
cannot be used to support a link between Rabirius and Neapolitan Epicureanism.\textsuperscript{114}

A limited, conservative conclusion will once again be sufficient for the purposes of this chapter: Rabirius wrote a work of Epicurean philosophy sometime around in the early- to mid-1st century, and Cicero thought his work was relevant enough to disparage it as a foil for the sophistication of his own Academica. Rabirius therefore provides limited but important evidence for the marked presence of Epicurean writers at the end of the Republic, offers modest support for Cicero’s Tusculans narrative, and continues to build the case for Cicero’s literary rivalry with Epicurus’ Latin disciples.

**D. Catius Insuber:** d. 46 B.C., author of *De Rerum Natura et De Summo Bono* in 3 books\textsuperscript{115}

We move onto firmer ground when we turn to Catius Insuber: a number of later authors refer to his Latin treatise and his Epicureanism. First, his dating. Cicero helpfully provides an approximate date of death, which is also the only secure fact about his life:\textsuperscript{116} in a letter to Cassius written around January 45 (Fam. 15.16), Cicero notes that Catius had recently died. A death in 46 would make him a contemporary of both Lucretius and Cicero, but probably significantly younger than Amafinius. The fact that later authors like Quintilian, Horace, and Porphyrio (all discussed below) knew about or had read Catius—whereas Amafinius and Rabirius seem to disappear—may offer further circumstantial

\textsuperscript{114} Rawson cites Wiseman 1971: 255 as evidence of Rabirius’ Campanian origins, but Wiseman’s entry concerns C. Rabirius (who adopted Rabirius Postumous, whom Cicero defended in *Pro Rabirio*), the owner of a villa near Naples. There is no evidence that these *Rabirii* were closely related to the Epicurean Rabirius, or that the latter had any relations with Philodemus, other Neapolitan Epicureans, or even a Campanian origin.

\textsuperscript{115} On Catius see Castner 1988: 32; Benferhat 2005: 61-2 (who unfortunately does not discuss the afterlife of Catius’ literary works).

\textsuperscript{116} Shackleton Bailey 1977: ii.379 says “Almost certainly [Catius Insuber] was the T. Catius whose portrait Herenius Severus wanted to set up in his library along with that of his fellow-townsmen, Cornelius Nepos (Pliny, *Ep.* 4.28.1).” This identification is plausible—there can only have been so many Insubrian authors named Catius—but it is far from “almost certain.” If these *Catti* are the same individual, however, Pliny’s testimony offers further evidence of Catius’ literary influence.
evidence of a later date for Amafinius and at the very least important evidence for Catius’ influence.

Next, the title and nature of his treatise. Porphyrio’s gloss on the Catius of Horace, *Sat.* 2.4 tells us that “Catius was an Epicurean who wrote *On the Nature of Things and On the Highest Good* (*De Rerum Natura et De Summo Bono*)” in four books.\(^{117}\) *De Summo Bono* suggests a work on ethics and pleasure (the highest good for an Epicurean), while *De Rerum Natura* has obvious associations with Lucretius’ work of the same name (for the *De Rerum Natura* of Egnatius see below) and suggests a treatment of physics.\(^{118}\) The emphasis on physics is supported by Cicero’s critique in *Fam.* 15.16: Catius translated *εἴδωλα*—the Epicurean term for thin atomic films emitted by an external object which allow us to see—as *spectrum*. Cicero thereafter uses the discussion of Catius’ translation as a springboard for an attack on the Epicurean account of perception, dreams, and thought.\(^{119}\) As with the *Academica* passage discussed above, this critique begins with a stylistic criticism of Catius and widens into a more general anti-Epicurean polemic. It is therefore difficult to press Cicero’s comments for details of Catius’ treatise. Still, a discussion of *εἴδωλα* and perception in a work entitled *De Rerum Natura* is significant.\(^{120}\) Catius emerges as the

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\(^{117}\) This identity of Horace’s Catius is disputed (see below). Even if Porphyrio is mistaken, he nevertheless had access to external information on our Epicurean writer that is probably reliable—i.e. it seems more plausible that he forged a false connection between two different *Catii* and less likely that he invented a book title (even if we may suspect that *De Summo Bono* may be a gloss on *De Rerum Natura*).

\(^{118}\) Clay 1983: 83-5 argues (*pace* Leonard and Smith 1942: 71) on the basis of Lucretius’ poem and its invocation of *Venus genetrix* that the title *De Rerum Natura* (≠ ΠΕΡΙΦΥΣΕΩΣ) would have suggested to readers that the work would explain the generation/origin of things (as opposed to a reference to Nature as the totality of the universe). Whatever the precise import of the title, it implies a treatment of physics.

\(^{119}\) This letter is analyzed in detail in Chapter IV, where I argue that we can observe Cicero practicing his arguments while engaging with the translations of both Catius and Lucretius, and that this correspondence shaped relevant passages in *De Natura Deorum*.

\(^{120}\) It may be objected that Lucilius, fr. 753 Marx also refers to *eidola* without any suggestion of a detailed treatment of physics. But Catius wrote a four book *De Rerum Natura*, which suggests a bit more depth than the scattered allusions to the Garden in Lucilius.
author of a multi-book work treating both ethics and physics; he may have treated specific
technical subjects such as perception in some detail.\textsuperscript{121}

Both correspondents’ discussion of Catius’ style warrants a few comments. Cassius
apparently agreed (or at least pretended to agree) with Cicero’s negative judgment: “all those
Catiuses and Amafiniuses, bad translators of the words [of Epicurus]” (\textit{omnes Cati et
Amafinii, mali verborum interpretes}), which he followed up with a citation of Epicurus in
Greek.\textsuperscript{122} Cassius’ response is interesting for several reasons. As discussed above, his
apparent independent knowledge of Amafinius shows an awareness of his work well into the
first century. Second, his disdain for Latin translations and preference for Greek—in
addition to his quotation of Epicurus, he prefers to leave untranslated key philosophical terms
like \textit{\alpha\tau\alpha\rho\alpha\varepsilon\iota\alpha} and \textit{\tau\omicron\kappa\alpha\lambda\omicron\nu}—is precisely the attitude of the unnamed critics against
which Cicero argues at some length in his prefaces to \textit{De Finibus} (1.4-10) and in Varro’s
speech in the \textit{Academica}. Baraz has well analyzed these prefaces and Cicero’s attempts to
justify writing a philosophical treatise in Latin; I suggest that her conclusions can be
strengthened by Cassius’ reactions.\textsuperscript{123} For his preference for “real” Greek philosophy is an
example of precisely the sort of criticism that Cicero felt he had to refute repeatedly. Third,
Cassius’ use of the plural (\textit{omnes Cati et Amafinii}) suggests an awareness of a range of
Epicurean writers. This would certainly seem to support Cicero’s claim about the Epicurean
occupation of Italy, but Cassius’ remark must be counterbalanced by his additional comment.
In response to Cicero’s taunts about \textit{spectrum}, Cassius replies that “in return for Catius I’ll

\textsuperscript{121} This description could apply just as well to Lucretius’ homonymous poem and suggests that despite his
prominence in modern accounts of Epicureanism, he was just one of many Epicurean voices in the Late
Republic; see iii.F for further discussion.
\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Fam.} 15.19.2 = SB 216.
\textsuperscript{123} Baraz 2012. Gordon 2013: 109-38 claims that Cassius also has the more specific goal of avoiding getting
trapped by the Latin connotations of Cicero’s loaded binary opposition between \textit{virtus} and \textit{voluptas}. 
thrown back so many boorish

124 Stoics in my next letter that you’ll say that Catius was born in Athens” (pro quo [= Catius] tibi proxima epistula tot rusticos Stoicos regeram, ut Catium Athenis natum esse dicas). Shackleton Bailey thought that Cassius was referring to the famously frigid style of the Stoic Chrysippus—that is, Catius is no worse than bad Greek stylist—but Griffin has argued more recently that the comment is more naturally construed as referring to bad Latin translators of Stoicism who would make even the terrible Catius and Amafinius look like they wrote polished Attic Greek.125

In light of Cassius’ desire to stick to Greek and Epicurus himself for matters of philosophy, Griffin’s interpretation seems to make more sense of Cassius’ rejoinder. If so, the reference to the unnamed rusticos stoicos may seem troubling for the claim that the Epicureans were the first to the scene or were the most popular sect in Italy. However, there is no reason to think Cassius is referring to authors as old as Amafinius or the second century. By the time of the letter we know that other authors had started to write philosophical works in Latin, and Cassius may well have been referring to some of these or other lost works.126 Furthermore, Cassius is hardly specific: he seems content to dismiss Catii, Amafinii, and rusticos Stoicos together; this says nothing of the popularity of either sect. Therefore it does seem rash to interpret these nameless Stoics to be writing as early as Amafinius, nor should Cassius’ single vague comment undermine in any way the abundant

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124 Rusticus properly refers to the countryside or farms and does not always necessitate negative connotations. But the context of Cassius’ comment is clearly pejorative and suggests he viewed Catius’ work as clumsy, unpolished, or coarse (see OLD s.v. rusticus, 4-6).
126 A number of references to such works survive. Section iv briefly discusses Varro’s own philosophical writings; we also know of the Empedoclea of a certain Sallustius (Ad Q. Fr. 2.9 = SB 14). Cicero compliments Brutus for a work on virtue, and he seems to have written a couple of other philosophical works (on Brutus’ convictions and his treatises, see Hendrickson 1939; Rawson 1985: 285-6; Sedley 1997; Murphy 1998: 499). Finally, Horace refers to three Stoic writers of philosophy, Fabius, Stertinius and Crispinus (Sat. 1.1.14, 1.3.139, 2.3.33-4; see Rawson 1985: 49 n.50). There is no indication that any of these individuals preceded Amafinius, Catius, etc.
evidence for the early Epicurean teachers and writers active in the second and early first centuries B.C. or the school’s popularity.

Cicero’s own stylistic dismissal of Catius is also worth discussing. It can, I think, be profitably analyzed alongside his explicit discussions of translating philosophy in the works of the 40s. Neither correspondent offers a reason for his distaste, nor have recent commentators explained why Catius’ *spectrum* was so offensive.\(^{127}\) Catius’ choice is apparently derived from the verb *specto*, whose base meaning of seeing and observing is obviously germane for a term describing what we actually “see”: eidolic emanations from external objects. Intriguingly, the word is also used in the sense of “paying close attention” and even of proof (as in testing coins).\(^{128}\) Both of these ideas well communicate two important Epicurean claims: first, it is necessary for the mind to focus to select from the infinite number of available ἐἴδωλα (e.g. as we often tune out background noise if we are focused on something); second, the evidence of these ἐἴδωλα and perception more generally forms the foundation of Epicurean epistemology. It is impossible to know exactly what Catius intended with his translation, of course, but his choice was perfectly sensible. Cicero’s rejection is therefore all the more curious.

I suggest that Cicero is objecting not to the sense of Catius’ translation but to his use of a neologism as a translation crutch. Cicero is very explicit about his policy of translating philosophical terms.\(^{129}\) He was also clearly proud of his results and sought to promote

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\(^{127}\) Sedley 1998a: “I have no idea what connotations it conveyed to a Roman ear, but Cicero and Cassius seem to have found them comic.” Shackleton Bailey’s comments on *Fam.* 15.16 do not illuminate this issue.

\(^{128}\) *OLD*, s.v. *specto*, 8-9. For “proof” or “test,” see e.g. Ovid, *Tr.* 1.5.25: “*ut flavum spectatur in ignibus aurum*”; cf. *Off.* 2.38: “*hunc igni spectatum arbitrantur.*”

\(^{129}\) His strategies have received a number of recent treatments. Sedley 1998a: 38-46 is especially helpful on Cicero’s translations of philosophical terms (cf. Brittain 2006: xxxix-xliii); his analysis of Lucretius’ practice is equally valuable. More general treatments include Powell 1995b; Baraz 2012: 96-127; Sedley 2013; there are also many useful observations in Gildenhard 2007.
them. His general practice is to avoid using Greek as much as possible and instead search out a good Latin equivalent in common use. Cicero readily confesses this is not always possible, and that it is sometimes necessary to coin new terms, just as the Greeks did themselves, especially with thorny issues of epistemology; at other times he employed a range of alternative translations, sometimes narrowing down his usage later in the work. Discussions in letters to Atticus once again reveal concrete examples of this practice. In one letter, for example, we see him defend his translation of καθῆκα as officium by citing idiomatic Latin phrases which map on to the broad connotations of the Greek term. One can disagree with his choice or point out its limitations, of course, but it is clear that he took matters of translation very seriously and strove to live up to his own stylistic ideals. Indeed, as Baraz and Gildenhard have emphasized, his efforts at translation in this period

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130 E.g. at Fin. 3.40 the character Cato is complimented by Marcus for his translations of Stoic ethical terminology, which, of course, are actually Cicero’s. In the Academica, as we have seen, the character Varro complains about the difficulty of translating technical Greek terms in the very work where Cicero tackles an epistemological debate bristling with technical jargon—e.g. ακατάληπτος and πρόληψις (for other technical terms in this work see the helpful list in Brittain 2006: 138-42)—in need of Latin equivalents.

131 This is made clear at Acad. Post. 1.24, where Varro is speaking: “I’m sure you’ll allow me to use novel terms in these unfamiliar subjects, as the Greeks themselves… do?” ‘Of course,’ said Atticus, ‘and you can even use Greek terms, when needed, should Latin fail you.’ ‘That’s very kind of you, but I’ll try to speak entirely in Latin, except when I use terms like ‘philosophy’… which, like many others, ordinary usage now accepts…’ “‘Absolutely, Varro,’ I said [=Marcus], ‘and I think you’ll have done very well by your fellow citizens if you increase their supply of words…”’). While it is true that Varro is speaking, we are justified in taking this passage as Cicero’s own views in light of his explicit assent to Varro’s practice. More importantly, as noted, the reader of the Academica is seeing Cicero’s translations, not Varro: here as elsewhere Cicero is finding a way to indirectly compliment his own translations. This tactic is also employed for his non-philosophical works: Atticus and Quintus both quote and discuss Cicero’s poem Marius (Leg. 1.1ff; Div. 1.106); at Div. 1.17-22 poor Quintus claims he has “memorized” a huge chunk of his brother’s De Consulatu and dutifully quotes it. On Cicero’s habits of quoting his own literature in his letters, see Chapter IV, n.47.


133 Att. 16.11.4 = SB 420. Atticus had apparently claimed that officium was imperfect because it referred only to personal obligations (as opposed to obligations to one’s state or city); Cicero defends himself by citing phrase’s like “the officium of the senate.” At Att. 13.21.3 = SB 351 Cicero discusses the appropriate rendering for ἔτοποχή.

134 The Greek term means something like “appropriate action” and is applied broadly—even plants have καθήκα. In this sense the morally charged officium is imperfect, but a better alternative is not readily apparent—as Cicero says to Atticus, “or give me something better” (aut da melius). I discuss the role of this important ethical idea in Cicero’s discussions of political philosophy in Chapter III, section iv.
reflect concerns for linguistic/cultural purity as well as ethnic/national pride. An additional attractive, if speculative, idea is that in his criticisms of Amafinius and Catius Cicero may have also had in mind a response to Lucretius’ complaint of the egestas of the Latin language (DRN 1.139).

In light of Cicero’s interest in and high standards for translation, I suggest that Catius’ resort to an unheard of neologism may have struck Cicero as an easy cop-out. After all, Epicurean εἰδωλα are not as tricky as something like “cataleptic impression”; Lucretius and Cicero both found common Latin words like simulacrum or imago and did not need to invent a new word like spectrum. Again, we need not share Cicero’s lofty ideals of correct translation, but they do offer a plausible reason for his stylistic criticisms of early Epicurean writers—other, that is, than blatant hostile bias. Catius’ clunky neologism offered, therefore, further evidence to Cicero of the need for a real writer to tackle philosophy in Latin—himself.

I close with an analysis of two later references to Catius Insuber, Horace’s Satire 2.4 and a passing comment in Quintilian (Inst. 10.124). The identification of Catius in Horace is contested; I therefore discuss Quintilian first. The context of his comment is a historical sketch of Latin authors of philosophy up to Quintilian’s time, along with his stylistic judgments. We can perhaps see how effective Cicero’s philosophical works were in suppressing his Epicurean rivals: Amafinius and Rabirius are absent, and so is Varro, while

136 This idea is old (it is presented as fact by De Witt 1954, quoted above, n.15).
137 Leeman 1963: 208 anticipates my conclusion here.
138 Both terms are commonly used by Lucretius and Cicero, but elsewhere Lucretius prefers the translation effigies and figura. Later authors choose freely among these options (for references see Sedley 1998a: 39 n.12; cf. Bailey 1947: iii.1183). There is no other Classical attestation of spectrum.
Cicero is given pride of place and characterized as a “Platonis aemulus.”*139 Near the end of the section, before Quintilian moves on to Seneca the Younger, he offers the following characterization of our Insubrian Epicurean: “Catius is an author who is indeed lightweight in his Epicureanism but he is nevertheless not unpleasant” (in Epicuriis levis quidem sed non iniucundus tamen auctor est Catius). We find once again a combination of stylistic and philosophical judgments. That said, while Cicero and Cassius could unite in their disdain for Catius’ style, Quintilian offers a less harsh if ultimately lukewarm verdict. The chief importance of this passage, however, is that it provides a data point beyond the epistolary exchange of the two Republican senators and suggests that there was at least some awareness of Catius’ treatise in the early imperial period. Quintilian’s differing stylistic judgment also gives further reason to distrust Cicero’s claims about “vulgar” or “popularizing” treatises. It was clearly possible to have a different view.

The second non-Ciceronian source is Horace, Satires 2.4, where the narrator relates the speech of a certain Catius. The beginning of the poem builds the expectation that we will hear from Catius moral advice (praeccepta) of greater import than Plato, Pythagoras, and Socrates (ponere signa novis praeceptis, qualia vincent/Pythagoran Anytique reum [=Socrates] doctumque Platona), but the content of his lecture suddenly devolves into a parody of gastronomic science and fine dining.141 A clear Lucretian allusion and other philosophical language underline the poem’s engagement with Epicurean ideas.142 Classen has provided an incisive analysis of what seems to me to be the most natural reading of the

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139 Inst. 10.1.123. The full line is: “idem igitur M. Tullius qui ubique etiam in hoc opere Platonis aemulus exstitit.” It is intriguing that Cicero “stood out” just as Amafinius “stood out” in Cicero’s Tusculans narrative. 140 Cf. OLD, s.v. levis (1), 12-5. 141 This Epicurean stereotype is discussed in detail in Chapter IV, section iii. 142 2.4.93-5: “… at mihi cura/hon mediocris inest, fontis ut adire remotos/atque haurire queam vitae praecepta beatae” ~ Lucretius, 1.927-8: “… inuat integros accedere fontis/atque haurire...” More general philosophical language in Sat. 2.4: sapiens (44); doctus eris (19); exacta tenui ratione saporum (36); natura (21, 45).
poem: Horace has our Epicurean Catius in mind and builds up the reader’s expectations of a philosophical discourse (along the lines of *Sat.* 1.2 or 1.3), only to frustrate these expectations by painting him as an adherent of a crude, debased Epicureanism. As we have seen, Horace’s commentator Porphyrio reads the poem in this way, and in the doing so helpfully provides the name of Catius’ treatise. That said, many scholars have been inclined to deny this identification and have instead suggested that Horace refers to an Augustan cooking author of the same *gens*, a certain Catius Miltiades, or see a play on the similar name C. Matius; sometimes it is alleged that Horace (or the text) is ambiguous or may even intend any or all of these possibilities. There is perhaps little to be gained by arguing at length for the Epicurean identification—there is enough non-Ciceronian evidence about Catius that my claims about him do not depend upon Horace’s testimony, which, in the end, is only of limited use anyway. I am therefore content here to express my agreement with Classen and argue that Horace’s careful build-up of his readers’ expectations for a philosophical diatribe, his use of Lucretian language, and his deployment of a well-worn anti-Epicurean culinary stereotype are completely spoiled if Catius is not in fact an Epicurean philosopher. More skeptical readers are welcome to suspend judgment, but if this is our Catius, then Horace pushes our evidence for a continuing awareness of one of Cicero’s rivals into the following generation.

To sum up: Catius, like Lucretius and Egnatius (see below), wrote a *De Rerum Natura*, covering both physics and ethics. Several later sources beyond Cicero attest to awareness of his Epicurean treatise long after his death; they provide a range of positive and

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143 Classen 1978.
144 Various opinions in Gowers 1993: 135-42; Berg 1995: 145-7; Courtney 2012: 142-3. None of these views are new; Classen 1978: 343-4 provides references to earlier statements of all these positions.
negative verdicts, both with respect to his style and philosophical rigor. Catius is one of the more well-documented Epicureans of the Tusculans narrative, and his reception offers important support for my reconstruction of Cicero’s continued criticisms of them and their school.

**E. Egnatius**: contemp. of Lucretius, author of a poetic *De Rerum Natura* in multiple books.\(^{145}\)

Egnatius is perhaps the most shadowy Epicurean in this already shadowy cast of characters. We know of him and his *De Rerum Natura* from two passing quotations in the Saturnalia, where Macrobius is showing how Vergil “borrowed” epithets from other poets.\(^{146}\) Commenting on the word “Mulciber,” Macrobius cites attestations in Accius, Lucretius and Egnatius in his *De Rerum Natura*, Book I (*libro primo*).\(^{147}\) The lines are not particularly philosophical. Nevertheless, Egnatius must be pressed for all the information he can provide.

As in the case of Catius’ work of the same name, Egnatius’ title suggests a treatment of the physical world. This intuition is borne out by the fragments themselves, which describe a volcanic eruption and “gliding stars” (*astris labentibus*).\(^{148}\) Hollis comments that the latter passage shows signs of an archaic Latin style with similarities to Lucretius.\(^{149}\) More importantly, Macrobius designates the quotation as coming from Book I, which indicates further books and suggests that Egnatius’ work was no small occasion piece but a poem of some length. Was it a specifically Epicurean poem? There is no certainty here, but

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\(^{145}\) Courtney 1993: 147-8 and Hollis 2007: 87-90 are the best treatments of Egnatius. As I have repeatedly noted, Egnatius tends to be omitted or marginalized in accounts of Roman Epicureanism.

\(^{146}\) Skutsch’s suggestion (*RE* 5: 1993-4, Egnatius. 3) that he is the piss-gargling Spaniard of Catullus 37 and 39 is, in the words of Hollis, “no more than fantasy.”

\(^{147}\) Macrobius, 6.5ff (the quotations come at 6.5.2 and 6.5.12).

\(^{148}\) For the eruption, see the parallels of Courtney 1993: 147. Rawson 1985: 285 describes the fragments as “mythologico-astronomical.”

\(^{149}\) 2007: 87 (“Suppression of the final -s in… *‘labentibus Phoebe,’* considered ‘subrusticum’ by the *poetae novi…* aligns him with Lucretius’ generally old-fashioned style.”).
the title of the poem, its interest in physics, and certain linguistic similarities to Lucretius’ poem of the same name would seem to suggest a significant Epicurean theme for the work.\footnote{As the context in Macrobius would suggest, Vergil, whose Epicurean interests are well documented (see section iii.G), seems to have imitated Egnatius (fr. 43A Hollis ~ Aen. 10.215-16; so Hollis 2007: 88-9). This may offer some further circumstantial support for Egnatius’ Epicurean credentials.}

Further conclusions are impossible. It is not even clear whether Egnatius preceded Lucretius or not.\footnote{Courtney says simply “presumably Egnatius followed [Lucretius]” (1993: 148), but Hollis offers a sounder judgment (2007: 87-8): “one naturally tends to believe that the greater poet wrote first, but the possibility that a lesser work provoked a greater one cannot be excluded.”} Nevertheless, this shadowy poet is valuable to our understanding of early Epicurean influence in Italy. For in Egnatius we see evidence of an Epicurean author mentioned neither by Cicero nor his contemporaries, whose work a much-later author could still connect to Lucretius and Vergil. Like the insubstantial Rabirius, Egnatius offers valuable if thin evidence of the popularity of Epicureanism in the Late Republic.

F. Lucretius: early first century to mid-50s B.C., author of a poem, \textit{De Rerum Natura}

The historical accident of the preservation of Lucretius’ \textit{De Rerum Natura} has understandably caused the poem to loom large in discussions of Roman Epicureanism and the sect more generally. I hope, however, that my reconstruction of Amafinius and his \textit{aemuli} has shown that Lucretius was just one Epicurean voice among many in the Late Republic.\footnote{Pace Minyard 1985: 33 (“On the basis of knowledge of Epicureanism before Lucretius and of Epicureanism in contemporary Italy outside of Lucretius, it would have been difficult to predict or explain this poem.”).} I will therefore not attempt to offer a comprehensive account of his poem or the vast scholarship it has generated; I offer here instead a few basic comments on the date of his poem and his relationship with Cicero.\footnote{His influence on Vergil and Horace is treated at iii.G.}

The chief evidence for the dissemination of \textit{De Rerum Natura} and Lucretius’ life comes from the internal evidence of the poem itself and from a small number of other ancient
sources. A precise date is once again impossible. Cicero’s praise of Lucretius in a letter to Quintus has been noted above and is the most reliable testimony for ancient awareness of the poem and its author (*Ad Q. Fr.* 2.9). The letter was written in 54 and reveals that the poem was being read not only in Rome but in Gaul, where Quintus was serving under Caesar. Since *De Rerum Natura* is unfinished, the circulation of the text in 54 suggests that Lucretius was already dead at the time of the letter and the poem should be dated to the early to mid-50s. Other ancient reports are less reliable. The *Life of Vergil* attributed to Donatus records that Vergil donned the *toga virilis* on the day that Lucretius died. This is an entertaining story, but it is far more likely to be the case that a later commentator wished to forge a historical link between Vergil and one of his greatest literary models. On the other hand, a passage from St. Jerome’s *Chronicle* tells us that he was born around 94 and died 44 years later. This fits well with Cicero’s letter, but Jerome is a very late source and his other comments (which will be discussed shortly) do not inspire confidence. G.O.

Hutchinson, however, has recently dissented and argued on the basis of poem’s proem that a date after the Civil War is more likely: he lays particular stress on Lucretius’ prayer for peace and the reference to “*patriae tempore iniquo*” (*DRN* 1.29-43). The discussion of Howe

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154 This is the general consensus; a helpful breakdown of scholarly views ranging from the early to late 50s is provided by Volk 2010: 131 n.14 (Castner surprisingly offers no discussion of Lucretius’ dates). Hutchinson 2010 suggests that Cicero could have been referring to a different poem by Lucretius, and even if Cicero were referring to *De Rerum Natura*, he may have seen only a draft or a partial copy. There is no clear rebuttal to these points, but it seems overly skeptical to postulate another philosophical poem in order to sweep away Cicero’s testimony.

155 Jerome’s work (completed in 381 A.D.) is an updated Latin version of Eusebius’ *Chronicle* (c. 300 A.D.): see Burgess 2002 and Feeney 2007: 28-32; the modern edition is Helm 1956. The surviving *Chronicle* is composed of parallel columns which list political, cultural, religious, and literary events in Roman, Greek, Judaic, and Christian history. Feeney 2007: 29 offers a good summary of the goals of this parallel format (“These works are part of a long-standing Christian project of synchronizing the new sacred history with the old profane history of the pagans and the old sacred history of the Jews so as to create a new truly universal human history, the plan of God for salvation, one that was regularly interpreted as part of various end-time obsessions.”).

156 Hutchinson 2010. He also suggests that the dedicatee of Lucretius’ poem, Memmius, was not in fact the exiled Roman who wrangled with the Epicurean scholarch Patro over the remains of Epicurus’ house.
above should put us on guard against reading Lucretius’ proem so literally. This worry finds support in the forceful arguments of Volk, who has underlined that the generic conventions of didactic poetry allow references to imagined events and should not be read literally as historical evidence. Here as elsewhere we are well advised to steer clear of precise dates and be content with evidence for another one of Cicero’s Latin Epicurean literary rivals.

The relationship of the two men is unclear. Cicero’s letter offers proof that he had read at least part of the poem, but he never names Lucretius in his published works. And while Lucretius seems to have used Cicero’s translation of Aratus’ Phainomena as a model for his own Epicurean cosmological language, this tells us nothing about Cicero’s later reactions to the poem. It has occasionally been suggested that Cicero wished to combat the popularity of De Rerum Natura in the works of 45-44. However appealing this thesis may be—and it is appealing—there is little concrete evidence for it, and it is furthermore difficult to explain why Cicero waited eight years to combat the work. But despite the lack of evidence, some small progress can be made. I argue in Chapter IV that Cicero used Lucretius as a source for Epicurean physics in De Natura Deorum; and possible allusions to Lucretius’ poems can be identified in the Tusculans. Baraz also seems right to suggest that

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157 Volk 2010.
159 Maslowski 1985; Minyard 1985: 75-6 (this position does not sit well with Minyard’s acceptance of Cicero’s emendation of the poem). Nepos, Vita Attici 12 comments in passing that Lucretius (and Catullus) had died, and thus shows that the Lucretius was admired by Cicero’s contemporaries who were outside of philosophical circles.
160 Maslowski 1985 claims that this anti-Lucretian polemic began as early as De Republica, but his verbal allusions to Lucretius are thin. Cf. Gee 2013b: 91, who sees a Ciceronian reaction to Lucretius in the cosmology of the Somnium Scipionis. However, any non-Epicurean cosmology (Stoic, Platonist, etc.) which assumes some sort of divine providence can be read as anti-Epicurean. As such the parallel is too vague, for by similar reasoning Urania’s speech to Cicero in his epic poem about his consulship, which refers to a divine mind ordering the planets and stars (see Steel 2005: 55-8), would also qualify as a reaction to Lucretius. But Cicero’s poem was published by the end of 60 and so almost certainly predates De Rerum Natura.
161 E.g. TD 1.21.47, where Epicureanism is ridiculed for “rescuing” men from fantastical fears of punishments in the afterlife which, says Cicero, no educated person believes. Cf. Lucretius, 3.1-30 and 5.1-64.
Cicero’s omission of Lucretius may be a tactical maneuver to condemn a potent rival author to silence.\textsuperscript{162} But beyond this little more can be said about their relationship.

Finally, Jerome famously adds that Cicero “emended” Lucretius’ unfinished poem (\textit{libros… quos postea Cicero emendauit}). This theory is usually rejected as implausible,\textsuperscript{163} but it nevertheless continues to find the occasional partisan.\textsuperscript{164} Such optimism is, however, deeply misguided. For in the same entry Jerome adds that Lucretius went mad from a love potion, composed his book during intervals of sanity, and committed suicide. Surely such gossip undermines Jerome’s reliability and provides a speculative and unstable foundation for far-reaching conclusions on the relationship between the two writers and their philosophical works. Furthermore, if nothing else I hope my thesis as a whole is sufficient to put to rest any credence to Jerome’s fantasy: if I am correct about Cicero’s fundamental opposition to Epicureanism and his literary rivalry with Latin Epicurean writers, it would be almost unthinkable that he would help disseminate the poem of a rival whose eloquence he could only confess in private.

Granting Lucretius’ importance and the strength of his challenge to Cicero’s literary and philosophical goals, he is only one of many Latin Epicurean authors. When we contextualize Lucretius against the teachers and authors that I have discussed in this section,

\begin{itemize}
  \item Baraz 2012: 17 n.10: “[Cicero] shows a tendency to choose a clearly inferior opponent, an easy target, as a representative of whatever view or school of thought he wants to dismiss. He then uses that representative’s obvious shortcomings to make the entire group and its beliefs look ridiculous.”
  \item Most recently in Gee 2013: 61 (cf. White 2010: 99-100); Bailey 1947: i.21 suggests that Cicero “glanced at the poem, or parts of it, and suggested some verbal alterations” (cf. Leonard and Smith 1965: 9-11). The speculative assumptions of such readings are well illustrated by Minyard 1985: 72ff, esp. 73: “Cicero’s reading of the poem…. his interest in literature, his friendly relationship with a number of Epicureans, including his intimate friendship with Atticus, who was a publisher, his refusal to associate Lucretius with official Epicureanism (likely thinking of him always as a poet, not an analytic philosopher), and his vast knowledge of Greek philosophy make plausible beyond reasonable doubt Jerome’s claim that he had surveyed a fair copy of the poem as a kind of scholarly and literary proofreader to purify it of error in production.” The theory is also accepted by Morford 2002: 98 (on the many problems of this work see the review by Inwood 2002).
\end{itemize}
a picture emerges which does much to explain why Cicero could declare “the Epicureans have taken over Italy.”

G. Later poetic responses to Epicureanism in the first century B.C.

I conclude my reconstruction with a few general observations about the prominence of Epicurean ideas in Vergil, Horace, and their associates like the poet and tragedian L. Varius Rufus (who survives only in fragments). Cicero, of course, is unlikely to have had these poets in mind when he wrote his anti-Epicurean polemics (their works postdated his dismemberment). Nevertheless, the presence of Epicurean ideas and arguments in Augustan poetry offers powerful evidence of the continuing cultural influence of Epicurean ideas in the generations after Amafinius’ aemuli. I limit myself to gesturing at the wide range of recent readings of Epicurean themes and arguments in the works of the Augustan poets. The purpose of this excursus is not to prove that any particular poet was deeply committed to Epicureanism or that he aimed to provide a systematic or even coherent account of the school’s physics or ethics. Instead, I argue only that the pervasive presence of Epicurean arguments and language in their poetry offers decisive external support for Cicero’s claims about the popularity of Epicureanism in Italy. It also makes his efforts to combat the

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165 A fragment from Varro’s earlier Modius (fr. 481 Astbury) also deserves citation: “And this is the difference between Epicurus and our gluttons, for whom the measure of life is the kitchen” (et hoc interest inter Epicurum et ganeonés nostros quibus modulus vitae culina). Other fragments suggest a broad work on temperance and an attack on luxurious living; cf. Benferhat 2005: 65-6. It is tempting to see in fr. 481 a reference to the movement’s popularity in Italy, but there is no reason to take Varro literally in what seems to have been an attack on the cliché of gastronomic indulgence (on this see again Chapter IV, section iii). Benferhat’s claim that Varro is trying to make a place for a refined and noble Epicureanism through the contrast with its superficial adherents may find support in fr. 243, where Porphyrio reports that Varro claimed that the debate between Stoics and Epicureans was a “war of words” (Λογομαχία). The emphasis on merely verbal differences is reminiscent of Antiochus’ syncretic interpretation of the history of philosophy. Intriguingly, however, Varro’s attempt to find common ground with Epicureanism amounts to a much broader syncretic strategy than Antiochus’ more limited goal of reconciling Stoics, Aristotelians, and Academics under the umbrella of the Old Academy. On Varro and Antiochus, see n. 190.
Garden’s influence more understandable.

Although both Vergil and Horace had multiple models and goals, scholars have increasingly stressed the presence of Epicurean ideas throughout their poetry on a wide range of topics. The oldest and most well-known Epicurean influence is Lucretius’ cosmological language, which heavily shaped Vergil’s own description of the universe in all his poems, perhaps most clearly in the *Song of Silenus* (*Buc. 1.6*). A number of recent studies have turned to explore the Epicurean affinities of Vergil’s emotional therapy for love-sickness. The danger of love is also the focus of Horace, *Sat. 1.2*: Philodemus is cited for his advice (stick to prostitutes, married women have too much baggage), and Horace reworks material from Lucretius’ diatribe against love (*DRN 4.1030-1287*) into his own catalogue of euphemistic nicknames for ugly women. Books I-II contain a number of other poems which deploy Epicurean arguments and ideas, including a fascinating prehistory of mankind with a corresponding Epicurean genealogy of morals (*Sat. 1.3*); and in the *Epistles* he famously declares that he is “a pig from Epicurus’ flock” (1.4.16). Returning to Vergil, the *Georgics* contain perhaps the most famous allusion (or rather inversion) of Lucretius in its notorious “double makarismos,” and work like Monica Gale’s *Vergil on the Nature of*...

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166 E.g. Hardie 1986 on the *Aeneid* and Gale 2000 on the *Georgics*; cf. Braund 1997. Stewart 1959 is still the most incisive reading of *Buc. 1.6*. For the influence of Aratus, Cicero, and Lucretius on later poets, see Gee 2013a.


170 *Georgics* 2.490-4: “Happy is he who knows the nature of things and has thrown beneath his feet all fear and inexorable fate and the howl of greedy Acheron; fortunate is that one, too, who knows the rustic gods, Pan and old Silvanus and the sisterhood of the nymphs” (*felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas/atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum/subiecit pedibus strepitumque Acheronis auari/fortunatus et ille deos qui nouit agrestis/Panaque Siluanumque senem Nymphasque sorores*). The Lucretian fanfare of the first few lines is...
*Things* (2000) makes a strong case for engagement with Lucretius and Epicurean ideas throughout the poem. A number of Epicurean characters in the *Aeneid*, especially Dido, were already noted by Servius (who relied on Donatus’ even earlier commentary)\(^{171}\) and have continued to provoke discussion.\(^{172}\)

It would be a mistake to think that Epicurean influence was limited to Lucretius. As we have seen, Vergil seems to have imitated Egnatius’ *De Rerum Natura*, and I have argued with Classen that Horace is parodying the Epicurean treatise of Catius Insuber in *Sat.* 2.4. *Catalepton* 5, which is now increasingly held to be authentic,\(^{173}\) states that the poet is leaving behind rhetoric and poetry to seek “the learned words of the wise Siro” (*magni petentes docta dicta Sironis*). As we will see in Chapter II, Siro was an Epicurean teacher in Naples and an associate of Philodemus.\(^{174}\) Furthermore, for what it is worth, the ancient biographical tradition consistently describes Vergil and several of his friends as members of Neapolitan Epicurean circles,\(^{175}\) and—a fact of significantly greater import—Philodemus names Vergil several times in the dedications to his philosophical works, which themselves strongly undermined by the praise of superstitious farmers and their worship of Pan and Old Silvanus (on this passage see e.g. Heyne 1830: i.486-7; Conington 1865: i.259-60; Thomas 1988: 253-4; Mynors 1990: 169). This inversion of Lucretius’ language is characteristic of Vergil’s engagement with *De Rerum Natura*. Elsewhere, for example, he deploys striking Lucretian language to describe the most un-Epicurean underworld of *Aeneid* VI (Habinek 1989: 35; on Lucretian inversion more generally see the classic treatment of Hardie 1986: 153-237; on Lucretius’ influence on later Latin poets, see Hardie 2009).

\(^{171}\) E.g. Servius ad *Aen.* 4.34 and 10.67; ad *Buc.* 6.31 (in the edition of Thilo and Hagen 1961).

\(^{172}\) Dyson 1996 argues that Dido and her death are described in Epicurean terms; Gordon 1998 (cf. 2012: 38-71, 104-5) has explored Vergil’s use of the Homeric Phaeacians as a potent metaphors for Epicurean tranquil society (a theme used positively by Philodemus and negatively by hostile critics); cf. Lyne 1994: 193-6. See also Kronenberg 2005 on Mezentius’ Epicureanism. Adler 2003 is less reliable (see the review by Gale 2004).

\(^{173}\) On the *Catalepta* see Clay 2004 and Chambert 2004 (who offers further discussion of their authenticity); cf. Armstrong 2004a: 2.

\(^{174}\) *Catalepton* 8 actually states that Vergil lived into Siro’s house after the latter died, but this stretches belief and is likely to be a later forgery, perhaps elaborating on *Cat.* 5.

\(^{175}\) E.g. Probus, *Life of Vergil*: “Vergil lived for many years following the sect of Epicurus [*secutus Epicuri sectam*] in freeborn leisure and enjoyed a remarkable friendship and concord with Quintilius, Tucca, and Varus.”
have been put to use to explain Vergil’s poetry on a range of issues, such as death or anger.\textsuperscript{176} A few fragments of the \textit{De Morte} of L. Varius Rufus, Vergil’s friend and the editor of the \textit{Aeneid}, survive. Finding philosophical content in these fragments requires some ingenuity, but in light of Rufus’ connections with Philodemus (Rufus was another dedicatee), Philodemus’ own similarly-entitled treatise \(\pi\varepsilon\varsigma\iota\theta\varepsilon\alpha\nu\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\), and the fact that Vergil’s imitations of Rufus’ work are combined with Lucretius’ language all point towards a serious Epicurean interest and probably an Epicurean poem.\textsuperscript{177}

To conclude: the poetry of Vergil, Horace, and L. Varius Rufus shows close links with the arguments, ideas and works of a range of Epicurean authors described in this chapter. It is ultimately immaterial whether the Augustan poets were themselves sincere Epicureans or simply able to adopt an Epicurean \textit{persona} with appropriate arguments and language when it suited the various goals of their poems. Indeed, in a sense the latter case would offer even stronger evidence for the power and resonance of Epicurean ideas in the first century: you talked about the school even if you were not an Epicurean. I conclude that the combination of their documented personal connections with Italian Greek Epicureans like Philodemus and Siro, their use of Epicurean arguments and language, and above all their deep knowledge of and engagement with Lucretius’ \textit{De Rerum Natura} amount decisive evidence of the influence and popularity of Epicurean ideas in the generations after Amafinius and his \textit{aemuli}.

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{176} E.g. “\(\omega\ \Pi\lambda\omega\tau\epsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \Omega\iota\acute{\alpha}\varphi[i]\epsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \Omega\iota\varphi\varphi\gamma\iota\lambda\epsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \Ko\nu\nu\tau[i]\lambda\epsilon\ \ldots\)" \textit{(PHerc. Paris} 2.21-3); for further references, see Gigante 2004: 85-7. In light of the scholarly work discussed in this section, the skepticism of Horsfall 1995: 10-11, 7-8 about the influence of Epicureanism and the relevance of the prosopographical links between the Augustan poets and Philodemus, Siro, and Lucretius (to say nothing of Egnatius and Catius) is increasingly difficult to sustain.

\textsuperscript{177} See Hollis 1979 and 2007: 263-5 (the lines in Vergil are \textit{Buc.} 8.85-8 and \textit{G.} 2.505ff); cf. Courtney 1993: 275.
\end{footnotesize}
IV. Cicero’s literary-philosophical rivalries

My reconstruction in the preceding section has shown that when Cicero began his ambitious plans to “illuminate Latin literature,” he was writing at a time when Italy had recently seen three Epicurean works in prose and poetry entitled *De Rerum Natura* (Catius, Lucretius, Egnatius), and two further prose works (Amafinius, Rabirius). Epicurean teachers had already been active in 155, and Andronicus’ later teaching and the leisurely exile of T. Albucius all attest to a marked early popularity of the sect in Italy. Chapter II will examine Cicero’s networks of Roman Epicurean acquaintances, which will thereby offer additional support for the veracity of his claims about the prominence of Epicurean ideas and writers in Republican Italy; I close this chapter with a brief analysis of why it was so necessary for Cicero to criticize repeatedly his Latin philosophical predecessors.

Recent work has underlined Cicero’s burning desire to be the first writer—or at least the first *good* writer—of philosophy in Latin. I have already mentioned the important recent monographs of Gildenhard and Baraz, which have emphasized in particular Cicero’s elaborate justifications for the educational value and consular appropriateness of writing philosophy, a subject which had encountered resistance from conservative Romans of earlier generations and continued to be viewed with some suspicion in Cicero’s time and after. Thus many of the prefaces to his philosophical works seek at length to carve out a respectable space for philosophy in Latin literature, thereby justifying his literary activities.

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178 Gildenhard 2007 and Baraz 2012. Earlier treatments offer anticipations of their work (e.g. Reid 1885: 21-22; Leeman 1963: 198ff).
179 This typically happens in the prefaces to Cicero’s dialogues (e.g. *Fin. I, TD I, IV*), but sometimes also in the speeches of various interlocutors (e.g. the debate between Scipio and Laelius on the proper place and role of philosophical discussion for Roman aristocrats in *Rep. I*; cf. the opening of *Academica Post.*).
180 Baraz 2012: ch. 1 uses other Late Republican texts to explore the stigma attached to aristocrats who authored literary and historical works more generally—Cicero’s arguments to justify this use of his *otium* in writing philosophy amounts to one particular case of a larger intellectual issue of the time. While philosophy continued to gain ground among educated Romans in the course of the empire (leading, for example, to two philosophical
However, Cicero’s literary self-fashioning demanded more than an *apologia* for his philosophical writings to distrustful Roman readers. He did not see his writings as merely justified; they were original and sophisticated contributions to Latin literature, a fact which he does not fail to remind his readers in a variety of ways.\(^1\) It was therefore necessary for him on another level to undermine the claims of earlier authors, who might undercut his preeminence in Latin philosophy. While he could not seriously deny the existence of these early Epicureans,\(^2\) he could ridicule their efforts and present them as hack writers who offered no real threat to the elegance and intellectual sophistication of his own dialogues and translations.\(^3\) Although I can only gesture toward a few examples, the anti-Epicurean polemics in the *TD* 4 and elsewhere are very much in line with a venerable tradition of...

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\(^{1}\) in addition to his favorable comparisons with Epicurean writers, at *TD* 1.4.7 he declares that he is able to debate philosophy as an equal to professional Greeks (*in quam exercitationem [=philosophia] ita nos studiose dedimus, ut iam etiam scholas Graecorum more habere auderemus*). In *Off*. III Cicero confidently states that he is setting out to fill-in a gap in the literature: the Stoic Panaetius had not fulfilled his promise to mediate between the *honestum* and the *utile*. See also n.130 on his praise of his own translations.

\(^{2}\) As we have seen, Amafinius and Catius Insuber were known by other contemporaries and later sources.

\(^{3}\) So Baraz 2012: 109-10. She believes that Cicero does not omit these Epicurean writers from his history of philosophy because “[e]stablishing an enduring claim to an elevated position is, ironically, more easily done when there are others with whom to compare oneself.” While I certainly agree that Cicero’s presentation of Amafinius and Catius was designed to make his own work look superior, I would like to think, perhaps optimistically, that part of the reason why he included these writers in his history is because he wanted to offer a truthful account of the development of philosophy in Rome, even if he painted that picture in a self-serving manner. Besides, as I suggested in the previous note, contemporary and later Romans were aware of these authors, and they would see through any historical whitewashing.
aggressive self-promotion in Latin poetry, and there is abundant evidence for similar moves in the genres of history, rhetoric and philosophy (as early as the Presocratics and as late as the Neoplatonist Damascius). Cicero’s literary polemics are therefore entirely natural, and the consistent contrast between his works and his Epicurean predecessors deserves to be fully recognized as a core part of Cicero’s strategies of literary self-promotion in his philosophical works. One final example of his marginalization of philosophical rivals will help underline the intensity and importance of his feud with the Garden.

We can see him employ another, more tactful approach when he describes the prolific Varro’s literary output. In the beginning of the second version of the Academica, the interlocutor Marcus inquires why Varro had not written any works of philosophy in Latin and

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184 See Hinds 1998: 52-98 and the discussion of Lucretius in section iii.B. For the rivalries and claims of originality in Hellenistic poetry, see e.g. the discussion in Lefkowitz 2012: 113-127 of Callimachus’ relationship with Apollonius of Rhodes and his criticisms of the Telchines (Aetia 1, fr. 1 Pfeiffer). Lefkowitz also emphasizes how eagerly ancient readers and biographers obsessed and speculated about these rivalries.

185 Greek historians offer a number of parallels for aggressive self-promotion. Thucydides’ preface seems to read as a dig at Herodotus’ weakness for tall tales, and Herodotus himself had criticized Hecataeus (2.143, 6.137), who in turn had pilloried the absurdity of certain legends (FGH, 1.F.1). Polybius tears into his predecessor Timaeus, who seems to have been the first author of a significant treatment of Rome—Polybius’ theme (see Feeney 2007: 50-1).

186 Cicero’s rivalry with Hortensius, his efforts to disseminate his speeches, and the Brutus’ teleological narrative of Roman oratory culminating in Cicero himself provide excellent parallels for his rivalry with Latin Epicurean authors. But other examples are not lacking. Early: e.g. Gorgias’ celebration of his powers of persuasion in Helen and his anti-Eleatic criticisms in On Not Being; cf. the rival interpretations of Simonides depicted in Plato’s Protagoras. Late: the quarrels of the Second Sophistic are amply documented in Philostratus’ Lives of the Sophists—see Gleason 1995 for a discussion of sophistic “self-presentation,” including an engaging reading of the shockingly hostile literary quarrel between Polemo and Favorinus; cf. Bowersock 1969: 89-100.

187 Such rivalries and efforts at self-promotion are endemic to philosophy from all periods. Epicurus’ abuse of his rivals and praise of his untaught genius was notorious in Antiquity (for a charitable reading, see Erler 2011); certain speeches of Isocrates can be read as criticisms of Plato or the “sophists” (e.g. the Antidosis or Against the Sophists; cf. Nightingale 1995: 13-59); Aristoxenus slandered Plato with a number of blatantly false charges (see Owen 1983). The strategies of literary self-promotion of several Presocratics offer an interesting case. They were writing at a time when literary and philosophical genres had not fully formed or become distinct, so they variously attack Homer, contemporary poets, and other “philosophers” while often quite bluntly singing their own praises (e.g. Heraclitus, DK 1, 40, 42, 56-7, 81, 106, 108, 129; Xenophanes DK 1.19-24, 2.10-22, 7-8, 11, 21). On the other end of Antiquity, Porphyry’s Life of Plotinus contains a consistent subtext of contrasting Porphyry’s Plotinian purity with his rival Amelius’ theurgical ritual-mongering (of the sort that Porphyry and Iamblichus debated in the Letter to Anebo and De Mysteriis, respectively—on which see Clarke et al. 2003: xxvi-xxxvii); cf. the analysis of the professional rivalries in Damascius’ Philosophical History in O’Meara 2006. Perhaps the closest parallel to Cicero’s deeply hostile rivalry with the Epicureans is Plato’s relentless attacks on the sophists.
bemoans, as in the Tusculans, the lack of a properly ‘Socratic’ work of philosophy in Latin. With this statement Cicero has sent a fairly clear signal to readers about the importance of his own philosophical dialogue which they are currently reading, as well as Varro’s place outside this new literary tradition (and he soon undermines, as we have seen, the works of Amafinius and Rabirius, who are sidelined from Varro’s otherwise syncretic philosophical history). Of course, Cicero does not treat his friend with hostility or call him philosophically ignorant, as he did with the Epicureans. Cicero praises Varro to the skies for his varied and learned output, and offers acknowledgement of his friend’s philosophical interests. The dialogical Varro responds to Cicero by pointing out that while he made sure to include bits of philosophy and even dialectic in his various works, he simply did not see the need for a strictly philosophical treatise to be written in Latin when so many Greek works were available; the necessity for coinages, awkward Latin, and an uncertain readership further problematized the undertaking. Marcus offers a short rebuttal of Varro’s claims. He cites the literary precedents of the Latin poets Ennius, Accius, and Pacuvius as proof that

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188 Acad. Post. 1: “sed nunc postea quam sum ingressus res eas quas tecum simul didici mandare monumentis philosophiamque veterem illam a Socrate ortam Latinis litteris illustrare, quaero quid sit cur cum multa scribas genus hoc praetermittas, praesertim cum et ipse in eo excellas et id studium totaque ea res longe ceteris et studiis et artibus antecedat.” On the Socratic school, see n.1.

189 Acad. Post. 3ff: “nam nos in nostra urbe peregrinantis errantisque tamquam hospites tui libri quasi domum deduxerunt ut possemus aliquando qui et ubi esses agnosceres. tu aetatem patriae tu descriptiones temporum tu sacrorum iura tu sacerdotum tu domesticam tu bellicam disciplinam, tu sedum regionum locorum tu omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum nomina genera officia causas aperuisti…” The passage continues for some time.

190 It is of course not to be taken for granted that Varro would personally subscribe to the speech Cicero gives to him. The point of this discussion, however, is to examine Cicero’s efforts to marginalize his philosophical rivals, not reconstruct the positions of the historical Varro. For what it is worth, our evidence for Varro’s output strongly supports reading his works as sprinkled with philosophical insights but hardly philosophical treatises. Here, as above, we do not see Cicero fabricating stories, even if we may suspect that he may have other motives. On Varro’s Antiochean leanings, see Tarver 1997 and Blank 2012 (who is, however, unnecessarily inclined to minimize Antiochus’ influence on Varro).

191 Acad. Post. 2: multa admixa ex intima philosophia multa dicta dialectice.

192 Varro reasons that when so many other good Greek works were available, there was no need for educated, bilingual Romans to read Latin derivatives. On the other hand, those who did not know Latin were unlikely to profit from philosophy regardless of the language.
Latin translations are both valuable and desirable; the numerous translations of Academic epistemological terminology in this work amounts to a grand refutation of Varro’s linguistic worries.¹⁹³ In the first preface to his next published work, *De Finibus*, Cicero returned to these same charges and argued against them at greater length. To summarize, Cicero has praised Varro’s literary efforts, offered acknowledgement of the philosophical character of at least some of his works, but nevertheless manages to make clear that it is Cicero himself who is writing an encyclopedia of philosophy for the first time in the history of Latin.¹⁹⁴ The learned Varro is allowed to tactfully bow out of the competition within Cicero’s own dialogue.

Cicero’s polemics against the Epicureans, then, like his careful displacement of Varro and his attempts to justify philosophical writing more generally, are literary moves aimed at establishing the significance of his own place in the history of Latin literature. Compared to his courteous competition with Varro, however, Cicero’s rivalry with Latin Epicurean writers is at once more extensive and infinitely more polemical. My reconstruction of Epicurean authors and teachers in Republican Italy offers a partial explanation for this significantly more intense rivalry, which scholarship has not recognized. The following chapters will offer further reasons for Cicero’s uncompromising opposition to the Garden.

¹⁹³ For a detailed discussion of Cicero’s arguments for the value of Latin translations, see Baraz 2012 (especially pp. 113-27).
Chapter II: Cicero’s Epicurean Friends, Teachers and Correspondents

I. Introduction

The last chapter offered a reconstruction of Cicero’s Epicurean literary rivals and the marked early presence of the Garden in Republican Rome. This chapter offers a reconstruction of Cicero’s social relationships with his Greek and Roman Epicurean contemporaries. I aim to accomplish two goals with this historical background. First, I argue that our evidence for a large number of well-attested Roman Epicureans from a wide range of social and geographical backgrounds strongly supports Cicero’s *Tusculans* narrative about the popularity of the school in Italy in the first century B.C. and can ground my attempt to read his philosophical works in light of his efforts to kill the school’s influence in Italy. Second, I chart his numerous and sometimes long-standing political, social, and intellectual associations with these Epicureans as well as their tight relations with each other. Future chapters will explore Cicero’s epistolary interactions with this broad social network of Epicurean friends in order to investigate the significance of his correspondence for interpreting and tracing the development of similar criticisms in his *philosophica*. This chapter is therefore transitional: it fleshes out our evidence for Roman Epicureanism and maps out Cicero’s “intellectual network” of Epicurean contemporaries in order to provide the appropriate historical background for my literary, philosophical, and sociological analysis of his life-long opposition to the Garden.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, I offer an overview of scholarly attempts in the past hundred years to grapple with the social/cultural phenomenon of Roman Epicureanism; I also discuss several important methodological issues: responsible criteria for identifying philosophical allegiance and the “problem” of the potentially surprising political
activities of a several prominent Roman adherents. I then turn to three case studies of
Cicero’s interactions with Roman Epicureans and show how the Garden was very much a
part of his social and intellectual life; at the same time, these studies will provide still further
support for his claims about the popularity of the school in Italy. In the final section I
synthesize recent and more distant work on Roman Epicureanism and offer two
prosopographical charts, which I hope will not only support my analysis of Cicero’s
Epicurean friends in the following chapters but will also provide a useful reference tool for
social and cultural historians interested in what I claim was a very real social and intellectual
movement in the Late Republic.

II. Roman Epicureans in the Late Republic: Identification and Interpretation

Cicero’s correspondence and various other ancient sources have preserved a startling
abundance of references to the Epicurean interests and commitments of a number of Late
Republican Romans, ranging from consuls and praetors to apolitical knights and a shadowy
Syrian freedman. It should come as no surprise that this reservoir of historical data has been
discussed by scholars over the past century. As I mentioned in Chapter I,¹ this discussion has
focused primarily on two critical issues: delineating responsible criteria for the identification
of philosophical allegiance (who counts as an Epicurean and why?); and interpreting the
seriousness of philosophical commitment—in particular how the political activities of Roman
Epicureans like C. Cassius or L. Piso can be reconciled with the notorious Epicurean dicta,
“avoid participation in politics” (μὴ πολιτεύεσθαι) and “live unknown” (λαθέβιώσας).²

¹ Section i. I refer here only to the most crucial bibliography; further references can be found in Figure I in
section iv of this chapter as well as in the bibliographies of Castner 1988, Erler 1994: 374-80, and Benferhat
2005.
² Fr. 8 and 551 Us., respectively.
A brief review of the scholarship will clarify what is at stake with these questions as well as make clear my approach toward interpreting this historical material.

The work of Norman De Witt is a good example of early attempts to classify and interpret the social phenomenon of Roman Epicureanism. His criteria for identifying allegiance were fast and loose. Mere association with other Epicureans or a penchant for fine dining were deemed, for example, to be sufficient evidence to label Caesar’s lieutenant A. Hirtius an Epicurean. It will probably be apparent to most modern readers that guilt by association and buying into clichés about Epicurean gastronomic excess are weak foundations for identification. It is furthermore surprising that Cicero never mentions Hirtius’ Epicureanism in his correspondence, as he does for so many other Roman Epicureans, or in the dialogue *De Fato*, where Hirtius is a character. This is not at all to say that Hirtius could not have been an Epicurean, of course, merely that such impressionistic standards for evidence of Epicurean commitment led De Witt to posit without much justification a bewildering range of Roman Epicureans. These identifications are therefore so speculative that they inject a great deal of uncertainty into any larger interpretations or conclusions, which could sometimes be extreme. On Benjamin Farrington’s reading, for example, Roman Epicureanism (and especially Lucretius’ poem) amounted to a secular scientific revolution aimed at educating the masses, freeing them from superstition, and

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3 E.g. De Witt 1932a, 1932b, 1936, 1945, 1954: 340-6 (Della Valle 1932-3 is no better). De Witt’s methodology and conclusions about Epicureanism and its Roman adherents, including his curious tendency for making speculative parallels between Epicureanism and Christianity, have been subjected to repeated criticism (e.g. Castner 1988: xii; Asmis 2004a: 136 n.16, 141 n.43).

4 De Witt 1932b: 92; Della Valle 1932-3: 84-95. Sounder treatments still occasionally repeat this claim (e.g. Momigliano 1941: 152; Armstrong 2011: 119).

5 For healthy skepticism about Hirtius, see Castner 1988: 82-3. Benferhat 2005: 241-7 is also cautious but more willing to allow a possible Epicurean allegiance (*est probable, mais non certaine*). I have not been able to find any evidence for her claim that “Philodème aurait dédié l’un de ses ouvrages à Hirtius, ce qui pourrait être interprété comme un témoignage de leurs relations, et donc de l’adhésion d’Hirtius à l’épicurisme” (p. 241).
combating the conservative ideology of Cicero and the Roman aristocracy. This extravagant thesis was something of a breaking point, and in a devastating review Arnaldo Momigliano exposed the weaknesses of Farrington’s methodology and provided, in a few dense and learned pages, the foundation for a more responsible approach based on passages where an individual is called an Epicurean (or his Epicurean views are alluded to) by one of his contemporaries. This more conservative approach was extended and consolidated in Castner’s important *Prosopography of Roman Epicureans*, whose work in turn has been corrected and expanded by Benferhat. More recently Roman Epicureanism has also benefited from an interest in situating Philodemus in the social, philosophical, and poetic currents of the Late Republic.

For Castner and most other recent discussions, contemporary references to philosophical allegiance are the gold standard for identifying Roman Epicureans. In other words, if an individual was considered to be and was talked about as an Epicurean by one or more of his contemporaries, this information would seem to warrant positing at least some commitment to the school and his inclusion into an account of the sect’s popularity in Italy. Of course, personal testimony of some kind would be even more decisive, but outside the response of C. Cassius Longinus in *Fam.* 15.19 (analyzed in Chapter V, section iii), such 1st person statements are simply not available. Another option would be to justify adherence on the basis of an individual’s actions or political policy, but this is unappealing: our evidence rarely allows insight into motives and this approach encounters a number of more general

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6 Farrington 1939.  
7 Momigliano 1941.  
8 See section iii.C on Philodemus; and Chapter I, section iii.G for Epicurean influences on Augustan poetry.  
9 Castner 1988: xv (“… the single reliable proof of any Roman’s adherence… is the testimony of his contemporaries or near contemporaries.”).
worries associated with biographical criticism. Castner is therefore surely right to reject the looser criteria of scholars like De Witt and to emphasize instead the critical importance of contemporary ancient references to an individual’s Epicurean allegiance or interests. Nevertheless, this general principle requires interrogation and qualification, for it can sometimes lead us astray. As we will see over the course of the following chapters, Cicero’s references to his correspondent’s philosophical interests are often passing, allusive, and generally far from clear. This general principle will therefore only take us so far: every identification of Epicurean commitment must be judged on a case by case basis, based on the context of the passage in question as well as any other complementary evidence.

A brief excursion into the early Empire will offer a good illustration of the broad and unwieldy the general category of “contemporary testimony” really is. Two of the poems in Statius’ Silvae make much of Epicurean buzzwords like voluptas and quies and even invoke Epicurus’ name and famous Garden. Since Statius was writing praise poetry for wealthy intellectual patrons, it has been suggested (not unreasonably) that the Epicurean ideas in these two poems reflect the philosophical interests of their dedicatees, Manilius Vopiscus and Pollius Felix. On the basis of Statius’ “contemporary testimony” Castner therefore confidently lists both Romans under the heading “Epicurei certi.” However, even  

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10 Griffin 1989: 22-37 offers a nuanced discussion of the difficulties of ascertaining allegiance from biographical evidence. For Castner the biographical approach is unreliable because Roman Epicureans themselves did not bother to practice their philosophical beliefs. I discuss this and other similar reductionist interpretations below.

11 Statius more specifically calls him “the Gargettian,” a learned allusion to Epicurus’ deme (D.L. 10.1; Fam. 15.16).

12 Silvae 1.3 and 2.2. For good readings of the Epicurean ideas in these poems (especially 2.2), see Cancik 1968; Nisbet 1978; A. Hardie 1983: 176-9; and Newlands 2002: 136-8, 141-2, 170-2, who also detects the influence of Philodemus’ On Household Management.

13 Castner 1988: 38-9 (on Vopiscus: “[W]e can confidently claim his adherence on the basis of this poem alone.”); 47-9 (on Pollius: “Given the assiduous cultivation of his patrons obvious in Statius’ work through the pervasive praise of elements of these patrons’ lives, we may be sure that these Epicurean descriptions are intentional compliments…”).
granting that Statius is complimenting his patrons, the evidence for these two individuals is very different. *Silvae* 1.3 offers limited and generic Epicurean allusions to Vopiscus’ *fecunda quies virtusque serena*; his villa is depicted as one which Epicurus himself would have preferred to his own Garden.\(^{14}\) Are these handful of lines really sufficient evidence for Vopiscus’ Epicurean convictions, or is Statius merely offering a couple of passing literary flourishes to praise the *otium* and charming villa of his patron in a more general way? A comparison with Statius’ poem to Pollius Felix suggests the latter, for there the Epicurean ideas and language are much more intense. Statius repeats the allusive reference to Epicurus but then forcefully elaborates on this comparison. Pollius emerges as an Epicurean sage who enjoys “pleasure free from cares” (2.2.150: *curarum ignara voluptas*) and looks down in contempt from the “citadel of his mind” at the masses wandering in ignorance and striving pointlessly after honors and political office while Pollius himself avoids political entanglements and is prepared to meet his death with Epicurean calm.\(^{15}\) These lines seem clearly modeled on *De Rerum Natura* 2.1-14, and Statius’ simile of departing from life as a well-fed banqueter probably alludes to passages in Lucretius’ diatribe against death in Book III or to Horace’s own homage to Lucretius—or perhaps to both.\(^{16}\) The dense Lucretian language and imagery, the repeated references to pleasure and tranquility, and the invocation

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\(^{14}\) 1.3.90-4: *deliciae, quas ipse suis digressus Athenis/mallet deserto senior Gargettius horto*; cf. 1.3.22: *placidi… Vopisci.*

\(^{15}\) 2.2.128-32 (trans. Shackleton Bailey, slightly modified): “Your final day shall not find you caught in the whirl of events, but ready to depart and full of life. But we, the wretched mob, ever ready to enslave ourselves to transitory goods, ever hoping for more, are scattered to the winds of chance; whereas you from your mind’s high citadel look down upon our wanderings and laugh at mortal joys” (*dubio quem non in turbine rerum/deprendet suprema dies, sed abire paratum/ac plenum vita. nos, vilis turba, caducis/deservire bonis semperque optare parati/spargimur in casus: celsa tu mentis ab arce/despisic errantes humanaque gaudia rides*).

of Epicurus make the case for Pollius’ Epicureanism far more substantial and persuasive than the thin allusions in the poem to Vopiscus.\textsuperscript{17} The general category of “contemporary testimony,” then, varies widely in evidential strength. Furthermore, as the genre of praise poetry in this example suggests, our evidence for Roman Epicureans is scattered, diverse and can require very specific assumptions about the relationship between poet and dedicatee; or, in the case of Cicero’s correspondence, his epistolary intentions or relationship with a correspondent. The resulting range of genres and contexts in which our evidence is found is sufficiently broad to make any general appeal to contemporary testimony somewhat beside the point. A careful reading of a passage’s context in light of any additional evidence is always the decisive factor.

My second methodological point is to underline further the often circumstantial nature of our evidence for philosophical commitment. Only occasionally can we confidently identify a Roman as an Epicurean on the basis on a single ancient reference; far more often a case for his allegiance depends upon the accumulation of circumstantial evidence. A brief sketch of a few scenarios which are representative of our evidence should make this point clear. First, references to study or even a prolonged association with a philosopher—and such references are plentiful—are by themselves fairly unreliable for determining allegiance. It was already a common practice in Cicero’s day to study with philosophers of a range of sects. He studied with the Epicurean Phaedrus, the head of the Athenian Garden, and quite clearly did not become an Epicurean; the Stoic Diodotus actually lived with Cicero despite his firm Academic commitments.\textsuperscript{18} Therefore the fact that an old friend of Cicero’s, the

\textsuperscript{17} Cf. Newlands 2002: 170.
\textsuperscript{18} On Cicero’s association with three generations of Athenian scholarchs of the Garden, see section iii.A. For Diodotus, who continued to teach after he was blind and whom Cicero held in high regard, see Brutus 90 and TD 5.39. Reports in Diogenes Laertius suggest that study with a range of teachers was common and already
knight Lucius Saufeius, studied with Phaedrus and even dedicated a statue to him is insufficient to justify his Epicurean convictions. Saufeius’ commitment becomes highly plausible, however, when additional evidence is considered. For example, in one letter Cicero mentions Saufeius as an example of Epicurean egoism, along with Phaedrus’ successor, Patro; in another letter to Atticus, Cicero tells his friend that he will hide a supposed lapse from Epicurean doctrine on Atticus’ part from Saufeius, who, it is suggested, would have strongly disapproved.¹⁹ I will discuss Saufeius’ credentials in section iii.A; my point here is that the case for his allegiance must be made on careful weighing of a range of evidence. Second, dedications to a Roman magnate by an Epicurean philosopher are similarly inconclusive. The isolated facts that Philodemus dedicated *On the Good King According to Homer* to the consul L. Calpurnius Piso and *On Rhetoric IV* to the equally consular C. Vibius Pansa do not necessitate that either man was a committed Epicurean; their allegiance is once again justified by the confluence of other evidence. Piso’s allegiance is supported by a charming dinner epigram inviting him to celebrate Epicurus’ birthday with Philodemus, Cicero’s hostile Epicurean slanders in his speeches, a passing allusion in one of his letters, and perhaps, as David Armstrong suggests, by the intriguingly Epicurean name of one of Piso’s slaves, Ikidion.²⁰ Pansa’s commitment is confirmed by his boast of converting the young legal expert Trebatius Testa to Epicureanism in Gaul, and from a letter in the next decade where Cicero depicts Pansa as a living inconsistently with his Epicurean egoism.²¹

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¹⁹ See *Att. 7.2* = SB 125; cf. 15.4.2 = SB 181; for the inscription see Raubitschek 1949.
²⁰ E.g. epigram 27 Sider = *PA* 11.44 = 22 Gow and Page; *In Pis. 20*, 37, 69 (cf. *Pro Sesto* 23-4, *Red. Sen*. 14-15). For the allusion in Cicero’s correspondence, see Griffin 1995: 328 n.14; for Ikidion (“Mr. Twentieth”) as a reference to the monthly celebration for Epicurus, see Armstrong 1993: 201. Philodemus dedicated *On the Good King According to Homer* to Piso (a new edition of which is currently being prepared by Jeff Fish).
²¹ I discuss Pansa in a number of places: see section iii.B; Chapter IV, section iii; and Chapter V, section ii-iii. For the dedication of *On Rhetoric IV*, see Dorandi 1996.
Third, the fact that a Roman included Epicurean ideas in a poem or that an individual in one of Cicero’s dialogues defends the school does not by itself justify the identification of that person as an Epicurean. There is no reason, for example, to believe that Statius had any real Epicurean sympathies, despite his use of hedonistic buzzwords. Once again additional information is required. As far as Amafinius and his aemuli go, I argued in Chapter I that their works spanned multiple books and sometimes dealt with (and offered translations for) quite technical issues in physics. These factors establish their Epicurean credentials, not the simple fact of authoring a poem with a suggestive Epicurean title. As noted in the previous chapter, Vergil was the dedicatee of Philodemus; a persistent biographical tradition underlines his extended association and friendship with Philodemus and his Neapolitan associate, the Epicurean Siro; and his poetry displays a profound mastery and creative redeployment of Lucretian language and ideas—all of this together seems to warrant positing a commitment to or at least serious long-term interest in Epicureanism and therefore a place in my history of the school’s influence in Rome. Finally, a word on Epicurean speakers in Cicero’s dialogues is required. I would argue once again that Cicero’s use of L. Manlius Torquatus and C. Velleius (of De Finibus I-II and De Natura Deorum I, respectively), as spokesmen for Epicurean philosophy is suggestive but far from decisive.22 The critical factor is not their mere presence as Epicurean characters but Cicero’s comments on the seriousness of their commitment, which are explicit, emphatic and very different from the far more ambiguous characterization of, say, Lucullus.23 To sum up, the diverse evidence for the

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22 For example, it would be dangerous to assume that Scipio in De Republica speaks as a Stoic or the speakers of the original version of the Academica were strongly committed to their positions (see the following note).

23 Torquatus: Fin. 1.13-4 and especially 2.3 (non enim solum Torquatus dixit quid sentiret, sed etiam cur). Velleius: ND 1.58 (C. Velleio senator… ad quem tum Epicurei primas ex nostris hominibus deferebant); cf. 1.66. A few words on the Academica are in order, since the first edition of this work may seem to undermine the case for the convictions of Cicero’s speakers: he, after all, confesses to Atticus that his depiction of a Roman like Lucullus discussing complex technical doctrines was “παρὰ τὸ ποτέπον” (Att. 13.16.1 = SB 323). This
philosophical interests of Cicero’s contemporaries demands close attention to context and usually requires pressing circumstantial evidence for additional support. And while a century of serious work on Roman Epicureanism has done much to identify a number of highly plausible Roman Epicureans and to reject or problematize more ambiguous cases, I think it is important to be honest and underline the simple reality that there is a good deal of speculation involved in any attempt to reconstruct the social and prosopographical reality of Roman Epicureanism, including my own. For this reason I have tried to limit my claims to a hard core of well-attested individuals; otherwise my attempt to trace Cicero’s interactions with them will turn out to be based upon a very uncertain foundation.

Once we have our list of Roman Epicureans, another important methodological problem arises when we move on to consider the significance of their philosophical beliefs. That is to say, how serious were Romans like Piso or Cassius in their Epicurean convictions? To what degree did these convictions influence their political conduct or guide their decision-making? More generally, what does it even mean to be a “Roman Epicurean,” or, for that matter, a Stoic, Greek or Roman? If we ask the philosophers, both ancient and modern, we worry is, however, more apparent than real. First, Cicero in the end chose to change speakers and selected Varro to defend Antiochus’ position precisely because he was more qualified to speak about epistemology than Lucullus; Cicero made no such change for his the Epicurean speakers, presumably because their knowledge of the Garden was believable. Second, the characterization of Lucullus’ philosophical interests is very different from Cicero’s comments about Torquatus and Velleius. Indeed, he explicitly distanced Lucullus from the content of his speech, which is repeatedly described as the product of his prodigious memory of Antiochus’ lectures (Acad. Pr. 2.4; cf. 2.11). This point is even more clearly underlined at 2.10, where Catulus says: “But I am still waiting, Lucullus, for the arguments you heard from Antiochus, which you promised you would tell us about” (tamen expecto ea quae te pollicitus es, Luculle, ab Antiocho audita dicturum). The distance between Lucullus and his speech is immediately reemphasized in his reply: “I’m not worked up about how well I’m going to prove the points I make: the arguments aren’t mine or ones that, if they weren’t true, I’d not prefer to be beaten than to win… I know the material well because I listened to him with my mind free and with considerable interest and heard him quite often on the same subject…” (sed quia non laboro quam valde ea quae dico probaturus sim, eo minus conturbor. dicam enim nec mea nec ea, in quibus non, si non fuertint, vinci me malim quam vincere… nota enim mihi res est; nam et vacuo animo illum audiebam et magno studio, eadem de re etiam saepius…); cf. the analysis of Lucullus’ sincerity in Gorman 2005: 99-101. I conclude that Cicero’s distancing characterization of Lucullus in the Academica is therefore entirely different than his depiction of the philosophical convictions of Torquatus and Velleius. Indeed, the contrast would seem to support my case for the sincerity of their Epicureanism.
are told in no uncertain terms that Epicureanism was “a way of life” which demanded from its adherents the internalization and practical implementation of its doctrines. The ancient school itself emphasized the memorization of doctrine and ethical self-monitoring, encouraged the practice of submitting oneself to the almost confessional-like frank admonishment of other Epicureans (παρρησία), and made provisions for social events in honor of Epicurus’ birthday. All of this would seem to suggest that we should expect serious and life-altering commitment from our Roman Epicureans.

However, conditions on the ground may not always reflect the normative claims of philosophers praising their own school or the benefits of philosophy. And so up until very recently Cicero’s Roman Epicureans friends were overwhelmingly dismissed and characterized as superficial in their knowledge of and commitment to the Garden. Castner’s conclusions are emblematic of the abuse which Roman Epicureans have endured:

At the end of the Republic, however, Epicureanism manifests itself not so much as a political doctrine but rather as a cultural influence, and the ethical doctrines, weakened and dissipated, pervade the poetry of the Augustan Age as vague and attractive hedonistic ingredients. The

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25 For example, the use of rings engraved with the image of the Master as potent reminders to live according to Epicurean doctrines. Cicero pokes fun at this practice at Fin. 5.3 (quoted in n.68). A number of such rings have survived: see Richter 1965: fig. 1221-2 with p. 199 (cf. Frischer 1982: 87 n.1). A collection of key doctrines, the so-called Kuriai Doxai, also served as a mnemonic for internalizing doctrine. The opening of the Letter to Herodotus is even more explicit that “one should memorize” (δει μνημονεύειν) concise doctrinal summaries: Epicurus says he wrote the Letter to Pythocles “in order that you might memorize [my doctrines] more easily” (ἐνα ὅσις μνημονεύτης).

26 See Philodemus, On Frankness of Speech with the helpful introduction in Konstan et al 1998: 1-24. Of particular interest to my discussion of the meaning of philosophical allegiance in the ancient world is fr. 45 of this work: “And this is the most encompassing and chief point: we will obey Epicurus, according to whom we have chosen to live” (καὶ τὸ συνέχον καὶ κυριώτατον, Ἐπικούρῳ, καθ’ ὅν ἐνι ἐνι ἡ πεπήμεθα, πειθαρχήσομεν).

27 Epicurus made provisions for the celebration of his birthday in his will (ap. D.L. 10.18), and Philodemus, epigram 27 Sider (which invites L. Piso to a feast in Epicurus’ honor) suggests this practice had spread beyond the Athenian Garden (see further Clay 1986 and Sider 1997: 152-3).
Romans were pragmatists and politicians, and any philosophy they favored would only be a superficial and easily discarded allegiance. When it was socially useful, and did not interfere with political goals, they would profess adherence.28

A number of other scholars have been similarly inclined toward dismissive readings. Take, for example, Peter Brunt’s heavy-handed battery of rhetorical questions:

How many [Roman Epicureans] 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 nití praestante labore ad summas emergere opes rerumque potiri”?29

Brunt here introduces one of the main arguments for reductive and dismissive readings:

Epicurean quietism clashes sharply with the political and economic activities of its Roman adherents. A second charge is one of intellectual dilettantism. Take, for example, Shackleton Bailey’s judgment of Atticus: “… his membership of the sect was not taken seriously. He may be supposed to have professed it partly to be in the fashion and partly because as a devotee of things Hellenic he had to have a philosophy and Epicureanism suited him better than any other.”30 The explosion of interest in Cicero’s letters has not treated Roman Epicureans kindly, either: several scholars have been inclined to read philosophical passages in his correspondence as little more than exchanges of cultural capital, networking, idle banter divorced from everyday life, or as political code.31 Now, it is certainly salutary to reflect on the possibility that some Roman Epicureans probably were superficial in their philosophical commitments, whether as the result of a desire to show off their learning or

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28 Castner 1988: xiv-v; cf. 31, 71-2 on Cassius and Trebatius, respectively.
30 Shackleton Bailey 1965-70: i.8 n.5 (cf. iii. 286 on Att. 7.2 = SB 125). Atticus has attracted a number of other critics and this picture of an intellectual dilettante has persisted: see further section iii.A.
31 E.g. Dettenhofer 1990; Lintott 2008: 324; White 2010: 55. I respond to these claims in Chapter IV.
because their knowledge of the school was limited to picking out a few ideas to justify, for example, a licentious life or abstention from the *cursus honorum*. But these dismissive and reductive readings have generalized a legitimate caution that commitment must have varied from individual to individual into a blanket dismissal of the seriousness of Roman Epicureanism as a whole. Even Benferhat, whose important recent monograph takes the Epicurean convictions of Cicero’s contemporaries far more seriously than most scholars, at several points claims that a number of well-attested Roman Epicureans show signs of philosophical “eclecticism.” Cassius’ exchanges with Cicero, for example, “*révèle surtout une sorte de synthèse entre épurisme et stoïcisme.*”

These varied judgments all tend in different ways to undermine the seriousness of the philosophical interests of Roman Epicureans. I suspect that this mistrust has been motivated by several factors. To some extent these interpretations likely reflect the view that the political activities of Roman politicians were largely mentally segregated from their philhellenic interests, or alternatively that knowledge of Greek philosophy was used

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32 This caution is intuitively plausible, and a number of sources complain about Romans whose interests in philosophy showed no real intellectual depth or commitment. In *Fam.* 7.12, for example, Cicero alludes to the possibility that the jurist Trebatius might have feigned interest in Epicureanism to flatter the Epicurean Pansa (see section iii.B). Cicero also seems to mock P. Volumnius Eutrapelus’ Epicurean interests behind his back (*Fam.* 9.26.3 = SB 197) and calls him a *baro*, a word used rather consistently by Cicero to characterize crude Epicureans (see Weyssenhoff 1970: 70 and Shackleton Bailey 1965-70: iii.209; intriguingly, Pansa is called a *baro* in a fragment of a lost letter of Cicero, fr. 5.4 Weyssenhoff, but the source, a lexical entry, does not provide sufficient context for interpretation). Later Roman sources echo Cicero’s charges. One is reminded of the ostentatious and absurd displays of learning in Petronius’ *Trimalchio*—e.g. the boorish claim that “*nec unquam philosophum audivit*” (71) is part of the pseudo-philosophical *meditatio mortis* of his mock funeral (cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 12, who apparently approved of this practice). A persistent and related trope is that of the “false” philosopher. A number of Lucian’s dialogues, for example, relentlessly attack philosophers for their greed and hypocrisy (e.g. *Hermotimus, Icaromenippus,* and his delightful *Symposium*). More tellingly, it is difficult to believe that Marcus Aurelius would have praised his adopted father for his cultivation of “true” philosophers (*Med.* 1.16.5: τὸ τιμητικὸν τῶν ἀληθῶς φιλοσοφούντων) in what was probably a work not intended for publication if these tropes about true and false philosophers were completely fictitious.

33 Benferhat 2005: 264; at p. 263 she mentions supposed Platonic influences. Atticus is also described as an eclectic (p.107). I address Benferhat’s reading of Cassius’ eclecticism in Chapter V, section iii; for Atticus, see section iii.A below.
tactically to further personal, literary or political ends. But the most insistent worry is the political involvement of a number of prominent Epicureans, such as the consuls Pansa and Piso, or Cassius, a distinguished military commander and the assassin of Caesar. Given the many ancient reports of Epicurus’ wariness about the risks of a political career and his famous advice to “avoid politics” or “live unknown,” the conclusion that these politically active Roman Epicureans simply did not follow the advice of their sect’s ethical advice may seem inescapable, thus providing the foundation for a dismissive reading of their philosophical interests and commitment.

This “problem” is however entirely illusory. Specialist work in Epicurean philosophy has for over a century recognized that Epicurus and his school offered a variety of arguments for the importance of a functional government and, on occasion, the need to participate in it. But the old specter of “live unknown” has continued to linger and it is only since Geert Roskam’s important study of this notorious catch-phrase that scholars have started to adopt a more consistently nuanced approach to interpreting the political activities of Roman Epicureans. The upshot of this work is not to deny that Epicurus and his followers expressed deep and persistent concerns about the complications and dangers of politics or disparaged “empty desires” for fame and glory—the sort of motivations which, on their view, and with some plausibility, compelled most people to take up political careers. Instead, Roskam and others have argued persuasively that the Epicurus adopted a fairly flexible, if often pessimistic, approach to politics. He stressed the positive value of laws and

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34 For examples of such approaches toward interpreting Roman relationships with Greek literature, see Gruen 1984; Gruen 1992; Habinek 1998; Zetzel 2003.
36 Roskam 2007. Benferhat 2005: 20-42 is also more sophisticated in her approach to Epicurean politics (despite the occasional recourse to charges of eclecticism); cf. Armstrong 2011 and Fish 2011.
government for their ability to help avoid dangers and threats which could undermine one’s tranquility.  Although he famously denied any intrinsic value to or even the independent existence of justice, he held that this virtue was instrumentally valuable in bringing about and maintaining a mutually beneficial agreement of mutual non-aggression which could provide the stability and safety required for a tranquil life. Other fragments of Epicurus therefore underline the value of obtaining “security” (ἀσφάλεια) through associations of mutual protection with other humans. That said, while these arguments offer good reasons for an Epicurean to obey the laws or establish a government if there is none, they may not seem sufficient to justify active participation in already-existing societies, such as Republican Rome.

There are a number of responses to this worry. First, there is the so-called “escape clause”: several ancient sources report that Epicurus approved of political activity in times of emergency or as a result of some other pressing cause. This might seem to justify the assassination of Caesar or the effort to keep the tumultuous political situation at the end of the Republic under control. Unfortunately, however, this is pure speculation: no source really clarifies what exactly Seneca’s “si quid intervenerit” means or what sorts of political

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37 Lucretius’ prehistory at 5.1011-1457 is the most expansive treatment of this theme; cf. the report of Colotes in Plutarch, Adv. Col. 1124D and Porphyry’s lengthy paraphrase of Hermarchus at De Abst. 1.7-12, 26 (on which see Vander Waerdt 1988, though he is sometimes too speculative for my taste).

38 KD 33: “Justice does not exist in itself but is a certain compact to neither injure nor suffer injury” (οὐκ ἐν τι καθ’ ἑαυτῷ δικαιοσύνη, ἀλλ’... συνθήκη τις υπὲρ τοῦ μὴ βλάπτειν ἡ βλάπτεσθαι); cf. 32, 36, and 31.


40 Most famously by Seneca at De Otio 3.2: “Epicurus says, ‘The sage will not take part in political affair unless something intervenes’” (Epicurus ait, “non accedet ad rem publicam sapiens, nisi si quid intervenerit”); cf. Rep. 1.10 (illa autem exceptio cui probari tandem potest, quod negant sapientem suscipiendum ullam re publicae partem, extra quam si in tempus et necessitas coegerit).

activity it might warrant.\textsuperscript{42} Furthermore, this defense seems extremely vulnerable to an argument which Cicero makes in the preface to \textit{De Republica}. If the Epicureans claim the sage will intervene in a crisis, how will they have the experience, connections, or the ability to push through successful political action? After all, as Cicero points out with characteristic eagerness, he had to work for many years to be a position to save the state from the machinations of Catiline.\textsuperscript{43} The escape clause, therefore, looks painfully naïve and its application lacks any explicit clarification in Epicurean sources. And no wonder: Epicurean political theory is both more complicated and more sophisticated.

A more plausible explanation for the role of politics in Epicurean philosophy—and thus for my analysis of Roman Epicurean politicians—is that in certain circumstances political activity can be productive of long-term pleasure.\textsuperscript{44} Epicurus was quite clear that pains and labors could be undertaken for greater or longer-lasting pleasures—this is the so-called Epicurean hedonistic calculus.\textsuperscript{45} In other words, if in a particular situation political action is likely to generate more long-term pleasure than any other alternative, the hedonistic calculus would seem to justify such activity, even if it involved risks or discomfort. But on this view the rationality of political participation has to be judged on a case by case basis; generalizations cannot capture the nuances of complex situations. One important \textit{Kuria Doxa} is quite explicit on this point:

\begin{quote}
Ενδοξοί καὶ περιβλεπτοί τινες ἐβουλήθησαν γενέσθαι, τὴν ἐξ ἄνθρωπων
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Rep} 1.10: “What could I have done at that time unless I had been consul? But how could I have been consul, unless I had held to a course of life since childhood, which led me from an equestrian background to the highest renown?” This argument is compelling and has not received the attention it deserves. This passage is also one of the reasons why I have not adopted a developmental account of Cicero’s anti-Epicurean polemics (\textit{pace} Howe 1951 and Maslowski 1985): he is quite able to craft a good anti-Epicurean argument in his works from the 50s.
\textsuperscript{44} Cf. Roskam 2007: 35-6.
\textsuperscript{45} This position is canonically described in Epicurus, \textit{Letter to Menoeceus} 129-32; cf. Chapter V, section iv.
Some have wished to become famous and respected, thinking in this way that they would procure security arising from association with other men. Therefore if the life of such men is secure, they have acquired the natural good; but if their life is not secure, they do not possess that for the sake of which they strove from the beginning in accordance with what is naturally congenial.

(EKD 7, trans. Inwood and Gerson, slightly modified)

Epicurus underlines here the risk of politics, it is true, but also its very real potential gain (τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἀγαθόν)—all this on the critical assumption, of course, that such political activity is undertaken to secure the legitimate goal of ἀσφάλεια, not as the result of empty desires about glory or wealth. Epicurus therefore provides no simple answer, only a warning to make sure that one is careful in one’s calculations of risk, reward, and the chance of success. The discussion of wealth in Philodemus’ treatise On Household Management offers a good parallel to this interpretation (this work follows Metrodorus closely at several points and reflects early Epicurean orthodoxy).46 There too the labor-intensive management of an estate turns out to be justified as long as money is not pursued for the sake of empty desires but rather for the satisfaction of natural desires, security, and the possibilities for cultivating friendship.47 This last point is crucial and does much to supply a concrete reason for the

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46 Asmis 2004a: 150-1, 173-6 and Tsouna 2012: 94, 96 argue for a great deal more originality on Philodemus’ part and suggest he adapted Epicurean ideas to the social realities of the Roman world. This may or may not be the case, but both authors readily agree that the basics of Philodemus’ position on wealth go back to Metrodorus if not Epicurus himself (Wolf 2009 argues for the latter, though he unfortunately does not make use of Philodemus).

47 Philodemus invokes the calculus in columns 13-5 as the basis for his discussion of proper use of wealth and management of property. The value of wealth for cultivating friendship is discussed throughout the treatise (see Tsouna 2012: xxix for references).
benefits of political action. Friendship, of course, is among the most pleasurable things in life;\textsuperscript{48} the good will and esteem that political power enables offer incredible opportunities for the cultivation of friendship. On this point David Armstrong has recently brought attention to passages from Philodemus’ \textit{On Rhetoric} and the anonymous Epicurean treatise [\textit{On Choices and Avoidances}] which strongly support the interpretation of the Garden’s political theory I have been describing.\textsuperscript{49} \textit{On Rhetoric} tells us that politics is “often the cause of incurable evils… but when it is taken up with perfect virtue it contributes many and good things to cities, while to its possessors sometimes greater things than what is to be found in private life, and often greater evils.”\textsuperscript{50} Like Epicurus in \textit{KD} 7, Philodemus weaves pessimistic comments into his analysis while conceding the possibility that political activity can yield a “sky-high difference for the better” (διαφορὰν οὐρανομήκη … πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον). In [\textit{On Choices and Avoidances}] the author stresses repeatedly the pleasurable consequences of acting in a way that produces friends (φιλοποητικῶς) and with goodwill to everyone (φιλανθρώπως).\textsuperscript{51} In the following chapters we will see that Pansa’s political support of exiled Pompeians resulted in great opportunities for friendship and goodwill, and that such benefits provide the most plausible defense to many of Cicero’s anti-Epicurean criticisms throughout his dialogues. For the present purposes, however, I hope this discussion suffices to show that the political activities of Cassius, Pansa, Piso, and others in

\textsuperscript{48} E.g. \textit{KD} 27: “Of the things which wisdom provides for the blessedness of one’s whole life, by far the greatest is the possession of friendship” (trans. Inwood and Gerson). Cf. \textit{VS} 39, 52, 78.
\textsuperscript{49} Armstrong 2011: 120-8 (with a helpful discussion of the orthodoxy of Philodemus’ position on pp. 122-3). The second text may or may not be by Philodemus, but it nevertheless provides helpful evidence for Epicurean ideas (for a modern edition and discussion of authorship, see Indelli and Tsouna-McKirahan 1995; a fully accurate title would be the ridiculous “Anonymous, \textit{Untitled}”).
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Rhett.} 3 cols. 14a, 19ff (trans. Armstrong, based on the text of Hammerstaedt 1992). The subject of the quote is actually the political “δύναμις”: Philodemus is involved in a discussion of the technicity of politics as well as a description of its risks and rewards.
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{De Elect.} col. 14.1ff and col. 21 Indelli/Tsouna-McKirahan.
no way necessitate the negative verdicts to which they have so often been subjected. This is not of course to say that they were card-carrying Epicureans who hedonistically calculated their every action, simply that the intellectual credentials of Cicero’s Epicurean debating partners should not be so easily dismissed.

It may be objected that the preceding discussion still has not answered a more general question raised earlier: what do phrases like “philosophical allegiance” or “Epicurean commitment” actually mean? This is a broad and difficult question; I limit myself to two brief comments to clarify my position and explain its relevance to my larger goals. First, at the risk of becoming tedious, I suggest that there is little to be gained by generalizations; the seriousness of every Roman Epicurean must be judged on a case by case basis. For some individuals there are good indications that the Garden probably did affect their political or apolitical activities; for others, the evidence is either lacking or we may suspect their engagement with the sect was limited to a more general cultural or intellectual interest. The proof is in the pudding, and I will endeavor in the following chapters to make the case for the seriousness of several of Cicero’s Epicurean friends and acquaintances. That said, there is more than enough evidence that a wide range of his correspondents were witty and well-educated; his frequent efforts to make learned literary or philosophical jokes in letters to them strongly suggest he took their intelligence seriously enough to expect that they would understand his often recondite philosophical references.\(^52\) I am therefore inclined to agree in general with the recent work by Armstrong, Benferhat, Fish, and Griffin which tends to read the Epicurean commitments of many Roman adherents as serious and far from divorced from their social and politics lives. But the reader may still want something more. As far as

\(^{52}\) So Griffin 1995: 327-8.
generalizations go, it may be helpful to cite Peter Brunt’s conclusion about Stoic senators in the early Empire:

[A] Helvidius [Priscus] or a Marcus [Aurelius] was inspired by his beliefs not to revalue or reform the established order, but to fulfill his place in that order, in conformity with notions that men of their time and class usually accepted, at least in name, *but with unusual resolution, zeal, and fortitude.*

Despite some important differences, the Epicureans too had to live in society and endeavored to participate in traditional activities, including religious worship and social/political obligations. We should therefore not expect Roman Epicureans to withdraw completely from society. Instead, we are far better served by asking how Epicurean doctrines, particularly the hedonistic calculus, could justify their actions and structure their decision-making.

Finally, in an important sense pinning down the exact implications of the significance of any given individual’s Epicurean commitments is not strictly necessary for the goal of my thesis, which is to interpret Cicero’s social interactions with Roman Epicureans as potential sources and interlocutors with whom he could practice ideas and arguments for his *philosophica*. It is perhaps to some extent important that his Epicurean friends do not turn out to be hopelessly superficial or completely ignorant about their sect, since such...

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54 This seems true even if we grant that the Epicureans were more willing to buck traditional beliefs than Stoics were. Another difference is the role of Stoic *persona* theory in guiding one’s actions, though I suspect that the hedonistic calculus might often lead to similar conclusions about fulfilling social obligations.
55 It is also worth emphasizing that Brunt’s conclusion provides an important response to critics who see philosophy as “superfluous” to considerations of traditional Roman beliefs and practices—e.g. Perlwitz 1992: 97, who concludes his deflationary reading of Atticus’ Epicureanism with the comment that “*die Zurückhaltung des Atticus gegenüber den angestammten Formen politischer Betätigung wird dabei zu großen Teilen aus den politischen Verhältnissen dieser Zeit selbst zu erklären sein und den Rückgriff auf geistesgeschichtliche Erklärungsmuster überflüssig machen.*” No doubt many Romans did opportunistically seize on philosophy to justify preexisting preferences for a life of *otium* or public service. But an action motivated by traditional beliefs is very different from an action which has also been charged by hundreds of years of ideas and debate. In saying this I do not wish at all to deny the importance of Roman tradition, only to say that we should view the actions of committed Roman Epicureans (or adherents of any other sect) as the result of hybridized motivations.
correspondents would seem to make for unlikely sparring partners for substantial debates in ethics or physics. But on this point I hope to have shown that the sweeping negative verdicts of Castner and others are misguided and overblown. If this is right, then all that is really necessary for my purposes is to establish that Cicero viewed certain contemporaries as Epicureans and thought they were sufficiently educated to understand his criticisms of the Garden. This would seem to be a firm enough foundation for exploring the significance of these epistolary debates for his later published works; the deeper motivations and commitments of Cicero’s Epicurean correspondents are therefore ultimately beside the point.

III. Three case studies in Roman Epicureanism

In this section I offer three case studies which illustrate the tightly interconnected social networks of Cicero’s Roman Epicurean contemporaries. I hope to accomplish three related goals. First, I argue that these brief studies strongly support Cicero’s claims about the popularity of Epicureanism in Republican Italy; I thus build on conclusions in Chapter I about the influence of the school in the first and second centuries B.C. Second, by charting their relationships with Cicero and each other, we can see how Epicureanism was a very real part of his social life—his opposition to the Garden, in other words, was more than an armchair intellectual debate. Third, this section will introduce a cast of Roman Epicurean characters who will return at various points in the next three chapters as philosophical sparring partners.

A. Cicero’s Epicurean teachers, their pupils Atticus and Saufeius, and the house of Epicurus

I begin with a discussion of Cicero’s long-standing association with three successive
scholarchs of the Athenian Garden and their Roman pupils; I then try to chart how these relationships played out over the course of his life. Cicero was remarkably well-trained in Epicurean philosophy.\textsuperscript{56} He studied with the Epicurean Phaedrus during his sojourn to Athens and Asia Minor in 79/8.\textsuperscript{57} There he heard a lecture by the elderly Zeno of Sidon,\textsuperscript{58} Phaedrus’ predecessor; he also met, or perhaps studied with, Phaedrus’ eventual successor, Patro.\textsuperscript{59} On a more speculative note, it is possible that Cicero had first met Philodemus during this visit, for the latter also studied under Zeno in Athens and had probably not yet left for Rome.\textsuperscript{60} In any case Cicero was taught by three of the foremost Epicureans of his century. His teachers, especially the polemical and prolific Zeno, made a strong impression on him,\textsuperscript{61} and his association with the Athenian Garden continued for decades.\textsuperscript{62} I will return to Cicero’s reminiscences of these philosophical lectures in my conclusion, but for present purposes it should suffice to emphasize that his knowledge of Epicurean doctrine was not merely the result of his readings or the mindless transcription of Hellenistic treatises but reflected decades-long associations with distinguished Greek Epicureans.

This visit also led to the cultivation of friendship with Phaedrus’ other Roman pupils, two knights of means and leisure, T. Pomponius Atticus and L. Saufeius. The first is of course Cicero’s lifelong friend and correspondent; the second is a mutual friend who

\textsuperscript{56} The following comments are not intended as a general account of Cicero’s education or even his philosophical education, which embraced studies with Antiochus, Diodotus, Philo, and Posidonius. For this see e.g. Reid 1885: 1-5, Fantham 2004: 93-6, or any biography of Cicero.

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Fin.} 1.5 (Phaedrus and Zeno), 5.3; \textit{ND} 1.93; \textit{Fam.} 13.1-2 = \textit{SB} 63. Cicero provides a broader account of his philosophical and rhetorical studies on this trip at \textit{Brutus} 313ff.

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Fin.} 1.5; \textit{ND} 1.93; \textit{TD} 3.38.

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Fam.} 13.1; cf. \textit{Att.} 7.2 = \textit{SB} 125. This was noticed by Reid 1885: 3 but has rarely been mentioned since.

\textsuperscript{60} Several of Philodemus’ treatises are in fact lecture notes taken from his time with Zeno (e.g. \textit{On Signs} and \textit{On Frankness of Speech}). The exact chronology of his earlier career before meeting Piso is unclear (see section iii.C).

\textsuperscript{61} E.g. \textit{TD} 3.38: \textit{ille acriculus me audiente Athenis senex Zeno, istorum acutissimus}. \textit{D.L.} 10.25 numbers him among prominent Epicureans and calls him a πολυγράφος ἀνήρ.

\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Fam.} 13.1, which I will examine shortly, was written almost 30 years after his stay in Athens. Cicero seems to allude to a later visit with Patro and Saufeius at \textit{Att.} 7.2 (on which see Chapter III, section iv).
conducted business for Cicero, carried his letters, and was later saved from the proscriptions by Atticus. The fact that these two Romans audited Phaedrus does not by itself, of course, necessitate that they were Epicureans. There is, however, enough additional evidence to justify such a commitment for both individuals. Saufeius’ attachment to Phaedrus is well attested by the survival of a base of a herm which Saufeius dedicated to his teacher during his stay in Athens with Cicero and Atticus. His association with the Garden continued: one of Cicero’s letters puts him in the company of the next Epicurean scholarch, Patro, over two decades later, while Nepos says more generally that he spent many years in Athens studying philosophy (qui complures annos studio ducit philosophiae Athenis habitabat)—i.e. just as Atticus, Memmius and (much earlier) Albucius had done. He is depicted elsewhere in the correspondence as something of an Epicurean diehard; his name is sometimes used as a sort of shorthand for the hedonistic positions of the school. All of this suggests that L. Saufeius was a life-long committed Epicurean, living a life of intellectual otium between Athens and Rome and cultivating connections with prominent Epicureans, Greek and Roman.

63 Business: Att. 14.18 = SB 373, 16.3 = SB 413; letter-carrying: 7.1 = SB 124. Proscription: Nepos, Life of Atticus 12—his land was what landed him in trouble: “nam cum L. Saufeius, equitis Romani, aequalis su[i, qui complures annos studio ducit philosophiae Athenis habitabat habebatque in Italia pretiosas possessiones, triumviri bona vendidissent consuetudine ea, qua tum res gerebantur, Attici labore atque industria factum est, ut eodem nuntio Saufeius fieret certior se patrimonium amisisse et recuperasse.” On his family, which could claim only a few senators of lower ranks, see Syme 1979: 600; the most notable name is M. Saufeius, an associate of Milo whom Cicero defended and acquitted in the aftermath of Clodius’ murder.

64 See Raubitschek 1949, who provides a squeeze of the inscription, which reads: Δ[ε]ύκιος Σωφήιος Απ[πιου ὅς] Φαίδρος [Αυ]σωμ[δου Βε[θενεκίδην] τὸν ἐαυτ[ου κα]θηγη[τὴν ἀνέθηκεν]. The date of the inscription (79) corresponds to Cicero’s visit to Athens; this strongly suggests he was Cicero and Atticus’ co-pupil.

65 Att. 7.2.


67 It is certainly tempting to read his choice to abstain from the cursus as a reflection of his Epicurean beliefs; cf. Syme 1979: 600: “It is suitable that the last Saufeius of any consequence should be a votary of abstention, namely L. Saufeius, one of the Epicurean friends of T. Pomponius Atticus.”
The case of Atticus’ allegiance is rather more complicated, but this is more a product of the generalized negative verdicts of the scholarship, not the evidence. First, Cicero repeatedly emphasizes his friend’s Epicurean beliefs and seems to take a certain delight in putting the dialogic or epistolary Atticus in compromising situations. In one particularly charming passage the character Atticus actually complains about Cicero’s jests about Epicureanism while simultaneously alluding to the school’s somewhat ridiculous veneration of signet rings with the image of Epicurus. This teasing is in fact characteristic of Cicero’s engagement with Atticus’ Epicureanism in both the dialogues and the correspondence, and I suspect that the harsh verdicts which paint him as an eclectic or intellectual dilettante stem from Cicero’s incessant philosophical needling and repeated attempts to get his friend to abandon his foolish Epicurean convictions and concede that Cicero’s positions are in fact the right ones. Second, in a number of letters Cicero seems to quote with annoyance bits of his friend’s political advice, and a couple of these passages in particular suggest that Atticus urged Cicero to μὴ πολιτεύεσθαι and/or pursue a course which would secure ἀσφάλεια, both phrases charged with Epicurean associations. One comment particularly rankled

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68 Fin. 5.3: “As for me, you are accustomed to harass me as being devoted to Epicurus, and I do indeed spend a good amount of time with Phaedrus, whom you know I cherish singularly, in Epicurus’ Garden, which we just now passed by. But I follow the old proverb, ‘Remember the living’; nevertheless, even if I wanted to, I am not permitted to forget Epicurus, whose likeness my friends have not only in paintings, but even on their cups and rings” (tum Pomponius: at ego, quem vos ut deditum Epicuro insectari soletis, sum multum equidem cum Phaedro, quem unice diligo, ut scitis, in Epicuri hortis, quos modo praetereritamus, sed veteris proverbii admonitu “vivorum memini,” nec tamen Epicuri licet oblivisci, si cupiam, cuius imaginem non modo in tabulis nostri familiares, sed etiam in poculis et in anulis habent). On the rings see n.25.

69 I cannot argue this point at length here, which I hope to justify more fully in a future article. Other passages where Cicero playfully tries to get Atticus to renounce his Epicurean ways: Leg. 1.21-2, on which see Dyck 2004: 117; Att. 7.2.4 = SB 125, on which see Chapter III, section iv. Cf. 15.4.2-3 = SB 381.

70 See Att. 14.20 = SB 370: “You make mention of Epicurus and dare to tell me to “stay out of politics?” (Epicuri mentionem facis et audes dicere μὴ πολιτεύεσθαι?); and Att. 2.19.4 = SB 39: istam ipsam ἀσφάλειαν—I take istam to indicate that Cicero is quoting Atticus’s words (OLD, s.v. iste, 2); Cicero also alludes to this advice to “play it safe” earlier in section 1. On the Epicurean provenance of this language, see section ii.
Cicero: he quotes back a bit of Atticus’ letter which stated that Cicero would not have found himself in a political mess had he followed Phaedrus’ school (*deinceps igitur haec: “nam si a Phaedro nostro esses, expedita excusatio esset; nunc quid respondemus?” ergo id erat meum factum quod Catoni probare non possim?). Atticus’ approving reference to his teacher Phaedrus is particularly important, for Cicero stresses in both his dialogues and correspondence the depth of his friend’s devotion to his Greek teacher. As we will see shortly, this concern for Epicurus actually extended to getting Cicero to intercede on behalf of Patro in a property dispute over Epicurus’ house in Athens. All of this once again suggests that Atticus was a serious lifelong Epicurean, one with whom Cicero debated philosophy in his correspondence and in person. The tantalizing quotations of Atticus’ apparently Epicurean advice suggest that he advised Cicero on the basis of these convictions.

I turn now to a brief reading of Cicero’s celebrated letter to Memmius (*Fam. 13.1 = SB 63) in order to underline how these intellectual associations with Epicureans sometimes spilled over into his social life. This letter, written in 51, is a remarkably elegant and witty request for a favor on behalf of Patro in a matter concerning Epicurus’ house in Athens. C.

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71 *Att. 15.7.3-4 = SB 415*, written Aug. 44; the underlined portions reflect what I see as Cicero’s quotation from Atticus’ letter. The letter concerns Cicero’s aborted trip to Greece, which became something of an embarrassment when he belatedly turned back to resist Antonius after others, including the prominent Epicurean L. Piso, had spoken out against the future triumvir.

72 *Fin. 1.15* and especially *Fam. 13.1*: “But Atticus has great regard for Patro and had great love for Phaedrus” (*sed valde diligit Patronem, valde Phaedrum amavit*).

73 Cicero tells us at *Fin. 1.15* that he and Atticus debated the lectures of Phaedrus and Zeno in 79/8, and *Fam. 9.4 = SB 180* closes with the anticipation of a philosophical discussion between Cicero, Atticus, and Varro (for this interpretation of the letter see McConnell 2014: 60; cf. Griffin 1995: 341).

74 Note once again that I deliberately avoid the use of biographical information to determine philosophical allegiance. That said, once allegiance has been established through other means, it becomes legitimate, I think, to argue that Atticus’ apolitical equestrian life devoted to intellectual pursuits, his cultivation of friendships, his temperate villa life and moderate use of wealth really do make for a compelling portrait of an Epicurean. Nepos’ report (*Vita Att.* 12) that Atticus saved his Epicurean friend Saufeius through friendship with Antonius would seem to serve as a potent illustration of the power of Epicurean friendship.

Memmius, the exiled praetor and probable dedicatee of Lucretius, either owned or otherwise controlled Epicurus’ house and had apparently been planning something drastic. What exactly he proposed to do to the house—demolish it, renovate it, or something else entirely—is unclear. What is clear is that whatever these plans were, they horrified Patro, now scholarch. Patro pressed Atticus and Cicero to write to Memmius: the result of these activities is *Fam. 13.1*. Cicero begins with a brief summary of the Greek’s request, citing Patro’s *officium*, his reverence for the *auctoritatem Epicuri*, the memory of Phaedrus, and the importance of preserving the “footprints of great men” (*vestigia summorum virorum*). But thereafter Cicero distances himself from the Greek: he disagreed with his philosophy, his support stemmed mainly from his fondness for Phaedrus, and Patro’s manner was boorish. It becomes apparent that he is really writing at the request of Atticus. Citing Atticus’ insistence on the matter and his close ties to Epicureans, above all to the dead Phaedrus, Cicero does not want to fail his friend, and thus Memmius stands to gain the deep gratitude of both men.

This letter is interesting for a number of reasons. First, it seems to be strong evidence indeed for Atticus’ Epicureanism: we see him working to help two successive scholarchs of the Athenian Garden in a dispute over Epicurus’ house with the dedicatee of Lucretius. His efforts in this affair and his continued connections with such a wide range of Roman and Greek Epicureans fit very well with the evidence we have been examining. Second, this

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77 Nevertheless some scholars (e.g. Shackleton Bailey 1980: 163; Castner 1988: 59) have seen in this letter evidence against Atticus’ Epicureanism. It is claimed that Cicero distances Atticus (and Memmius) from Patro’s Epicureanism when he says, “is [Atticus]—non quo sit ex istis; est enim omni liberali doctrina politissimus, sed valde diliget Patronem, valde Phaedrum amavit…” Consideration of two factors will be sufficient to dissolve this worry. First, Cicero characterizes several Epicureans elsewhere as being more polished than other boorish members of their sect: Torquatus is described as “*hominem omni doctrina erudito*” (*Fin. 1.13*), Velleius as “*ornatius quam solent vestri*” (*ND* 58). Even more strikingly, Zeno of Sidon and Philodemus are praised for their unusually sophisticated style and broad learning (Zeno: *ND* 59; Philodemus: *Pis. 70*—*est autem hic de quo loquor non philosophia solum sed etiam ceteris studiis quae fere ceteros Epicureos neglegere dicunt perpolitus*), and it is patently absurd to claim that either Greek was not in fact an Epicurean. Second, the rhetoric of Cicero’s request clarifies the supposedly troubling “*non… ex istis*” clause.
incident shows how deep and multi-layered Cicero’s interactions with Roman Epicureans really were. Not only is he mediating a dispute between Patro, Atticus, and Memmius, he is doing so over the issue of Epicurus’ own house while invoking his personal ties and obligations to Phaedrus. I think it is safe to say that few other critics of the Garden in Antiquity were quite so involved with the school or so closely connected to several generations of important Epicurean philosophers. This first case study, then, offers insight into prominence of Epicureanism in the Late Republic and illustrates how this popularity played out in Cicero’s social network of friends and teachers.

B. Epicurean Conversion in Gaul

We encounter Epicureanism in a very different social scene in Ad Familiares 7.12 (= SB 35, written Feb. 53). In April 54 Cicero had arranged for a promising young protégé, Gaius Trebatius Testa, to take up a minor command under Caesar in Gaul. However, apparently did not keep up his end of their continued correspondence. When Caesar’s lieutenant, the future consul and committed Epicurean C. Vibius Pansa, boasted in

Patro is a Greek philosopher who is repeatedly pressing an influential—if exiled—Roman, and he has in a sense gone over Memmius’ head by appealing directly to Cicero (for Memmius’ irritation at Patro see Att. 5.11.6 = SB 104). And so to smooth things over this carefully composed letter refocuses the impatient nagging of Patro as an attempt to oblige Atticus. The effect is to transform the request into a favor between gentlemanly Roman aristocrats, a request phrased in a way that pays proper respect to Memmius’ position, unlike the obstinate pleas of a presumptuous Greeking. That Atticus is distanced from Patro is not surprising and even necessary if this reading of the rhetorical strategy of the letter is on the right track. Similar arguments can be made on behalf of Memmius, whose Epicurean commitments have also been questioned (for a defense of Memmius, see Griffin 1995: 333 n.36).

Fam. 7.5 = SB 26 is the famous letter of recommendation; Fam. 7.6-22 documents Cicero’s correspondence with the young jurist; he was later the dedicatee of the Topica. Taylor 1968: 474-6 thinks he owed his equestrian status to Caesar.

Pansa’s Epicureanism: Cicero and Cassius both refer to Pansa’s adherence in their debate about the instrumental or intrinsic nature of virtue (Fam. 15.17 and 19, analyzed in detail in Chapter V); for the dedication, see Dorandi 1996. For his family and background see Ryan 1996; for his help in restoring exiled Pompeians after the civil war, see Chapter IV, section iii. Several books of Cicero’s letters to Pansa were available in Antiquity but are now lost (White 2010: 171-3 provides further information; the fragments can have been collected by Weyssenhoff 1970). Most of these letters probably concerned their mutual opposition to Antonius after Caesar’s murder.
a letter that he had converted Trebatius to Epicureanism, Cicero’s young friend received a stern rebuke: “I was wondering why you had stopped sending me letters. Now my friend Pansa tells me that you have become an Epicurean” (*mirabar quid esset quod tu mihi litteras mittere intermisisses: indicavit mihi Pansa meus Epicureum te esse factum*). Thereafter Cicero launches into an attack on the coherency of Epicurean social theory by asking, for example, how Trebatius can swear an oath as an Epicurean or reconcile his juridical activities with his hedonistic convictions. The brisk letter thereafter ends by leaving an opening for his beleaguered correspondent to save face: “But if it is merely convenient to humor Pansa, I forgive you” (*qua re si plane a nobis deficis, moleste fero, sin Pansae adsentari commodum est, ignosco*).

Cicero’s philosophical criticisms in this letter and their relation to his later published critiques will be analyzed in the next chapter. Right now I want to focus on the question of Trebatius’ “conversion” and the implications of this letter for our understanding of the influence of the school in the Late Republic. Was Trebatius an Epicurean? The nearly unanimous verdict is a confident assertion that his conversion and resulting commitment were sincere.80 Some caution is needed here, however.81 The major problem is the closing line about the possibility that Trebatius may have been playing along with Pansa. It is not at all implausible to imagine the young newcomer Trebatius trying to fit in and cozy up to a prominent Caesarian; there is likewise no way to adjudicate the seriousness of Pansa’s original letter or even Cicero’s intentions when writing 7.12. In order to get out of this

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81 I reassert here with additional arguments the skepticism of two older accounts: Shackleton Bailey 1977: i.339 notes simply that we don’t have enough information about the seriousness of Pansa’s letter; the worries in Sonnet’s *RE* article are less persuasive (for rebuttals see the references in Castner 1988: 71 and Griffin 1995: 333 n.32).
impasse, we need further evidence for Trebatius’ philosophical interests, but this is unfortunately lacking. Other philosophical content in the letters between the two men is thin: a reference to a Stoic paradox and a brief allusion to the Epicurean theory of vision. There is also no sign of the Garden in the *Topica*, which is furthermore hardly the sort of thing to dedicate to the follower of a school which denied that rhetoric was a *techne*. It is therefore difficult to know whether he was an Epicurean at all, much less, to be sure, of the seriousness of his commitment. Cicero’s playful and allusive letter is a good example of the often ambiguous evidence used to reconstruct Roman Epicureanism.

If we are willing to move beyond speculative verdicts about Trebatius’ beliefs, however, this letter can do much to flesh out our understanding of the sect among Cicero’s contemporaries. For in this letter we see Cicero debating Epicureanism with an ambitious young equestrian in Gaul as a result of a boast (whether serious or ironic) by Pansa, a lifelong Epicurean and friend of Philodemus who was also one of Caesar’s trusted allies and a future consul. Add to this that Cicero discussed Lucretius with Quintus during the latter’s time in Gaul—approximately a year before *Fam. 7.12*—and this letter amounts to powerful evidence of the Garden’s wide-reaching social influence in the Late Republic. Debating the seriousness of Trebatius’ conversion is therefore something of a distraction; what matters is that 7.12 reflects the vibrant presence of Epicureanism in the Late Republic, in Italy and

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82 *Fam. 7.16.3* = SB 32 and 7.14 = SB 38, with the analysis of Griffin 1995: 331-2 and 332 n.31, respectively.

83 It is true that Philodemus writes about rhetoric and that he and certain other Epicureans found room for a limited *techne* of rhetoric (see Blank 1995), but Cicero’s *Topica* does not seem to appeal to this sensibility. As external evidence for Trebatius’ convictions Armstrong 2011: 119 n.56 cites Horace, *Sat.* 2.1, where Trebatius urges caution when writing satire in order to avoid resentment and ill will. An Epicurean reading of this advice is possible but hardly definitive; one does not have to be an Epicurean in order to counsel caution against making enemies. As such the passage seems too circumstantial to pin down Trebatius’ convictions definitively.

84 *Ad Q. Fr. 2.9* = SB 14, written Feb. 54.
beyond. And we find once again that this school infiltrated Cicero’s social life in surprising ways.

C. Philodemus, Siro, and Campanian Epicureanism

I offer here a few comments on our evidence for the remarkable interest in Epicureanism in Naples and Southern Italy in the Late Republic.\(^8^5\) Two Greek Epicureans, Philodemus and Siro, established an Epicurean community or school\(^8^6\) around Naples during Cicero’s lifetime.\(^8^7\) The exact date of Philodemus’ arrival in Rome is unclear, but Cicero could refer in 55 to his long-standing intimacy with L. Calpurnius Piso, whose Epicurean convictions were derided at length.\(^8^8\) In addition to his friendship with Piso, whose villa Philodemus seems to have used, he cultivated connections with a range of Roman aristocrats and poets. As I discussed in Chapter I (section iii.G), he dedicated treatises to Vergil and several of his friends (e.g. L. Varius Rufus, who imitated Philodemus’ *De Morte*), and

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\(^8^5\) I follow here the valuable survey in Sider 1997: 3-12 (on Philodemus’ life) and 12-24 (on Epicureanism in Naples). See also Gigante 1995 (though his militantly biographical readings of the epigrams are not persuasive). The literature on Philodemus as a philosopher is rapidly expanding. General overviews can be found in Asmis 1990, Gigante 1995; Tsouna 2007b, and Sedley 2009: 32-9; much of David Armstrong’s recent work offers helpful guidance on Philodeman scholarship. For Roman life and intellectual culture in Naples and Campania during this period more generally see D’Arms 1970: 39-72 (reprinted with additional essays in D’Arms 2003).

\(^8^6\) By “community or school” I do not intend to suggest that there was a Neapolitan Garden cloistered outside of society (i.e. as Epicurean communal life is often portrayed—e.g. Frischer 1982 or Nussbaum 1994: 117-20), but rather a loose group of Romans and Greek Epicureans who met occasionally to discuss philosophy, dine together, or celebrate Epicurus’ birthday. For a reconstruction along these lines of the Epicurean lifestyle, see Asmis 2004a.

\(^8^7\) They are linked together in an intriguing scrap of papyrus (*P*Her. 312; see Sider 1997: 22 for details) and by Cicero at *Fin.* 2.119. *Fam.* 6.11.2 recommends a certain “Sironem, nostrum amicum” to the Neapolitan businessman Vestorius; it is plausible, but not certain, that this man is in fact the Neapolitan Epicurean (Shackleton Bailey 1977: ii.390 presents this inference as fact).

\(^8^8\) *Pis.* 68-72 (for the date of the speech see Nisbet 1961: 199-202), where Piso is said to have misinterpreted Philodemus’ teachings in the basest of manners. Asconius supplies Philodemus’ name (Cicero says only “*est quidam Graecus qui cum isto vivit, vere ut dicam—sic enim cognovi—humanus, sed tam diu quam diu aut cum aliis est aut ipse secum*”), but a later reference to Philodemus’ polished poetry, the similarly positive evaluation of him elsewhere (e.g. *Fin.* 2.119), and our knowledge of his relationship with Piso (epigram 27 = Sider and the dedication of *On the Good King*) all point to Philodemus. For more on his relationship with Piso, see Sider 1997: 5-11 and Nisbet 1961: 183-8 (the skepticism of Allen and De Lacy 1939 has not found modern defenders).
Horace cites Philodemus’ sexual advice in *Sat.* 1.3. Siro, on the other hand, is a good deal more shadowy, but there is enough evidence to suggest that he was also an important philosophical influence in Italy. Beyond *P Herc.* 312 and *Fin.* 2.119, which I have already mentioned, Vergil’s (probably genuine) *Catalepton* 5 enacts his decision to take up study with Siro, and an extensive later ancient tradition describes Vergil and his associates as pupils of this Neapolitan Epicurean. All of this is to say that Philodemus and to a lesser extent Siro were well-connected with a range of Romans from poets to future consuls.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this information. First, as I suggested in Chapter I, the involvement of the Augustan poets with Philodemus and Siro, as well as their deep mastery of Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura*, amounts to powerful support for Cicero’s claim that “the Epicureans have taken over all of Italy.” He is no doubt being a little melodramatic here, but the influence of Neapolitan Epicureanism and its two charismatic Greek teachers during his lifetime did in fact inspire the next generation of Roman poets; and this is to say nothing of all the other Epicurean treatises in Latin floating around by Amafinius and his *aemuli* or the very early presence of Greeks like Alcius and Philiscus. Epicureanism, therefore, was a major player in the literary life of the Late Republic, a fact which does much to explain the hostility of Cicero’s literary polemics analyzed in the previous chapter. Second, D’Arms’ study of Romans living on the Bay of Naples has shown that a number of Epicurean aristocrats had villas in or around Naples, including several whom we have already met or will meet in the coming chapters.⁸⁹ There is even evidence for a Syrian freedman participating in Epicurean life in Naples.⁹⁰ It is of course true that

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⁸⁹ This includes L. Calpurnius Piso, M. Fabius Gallus, L. Papirius Paetus, L. Manlius Torquatus, and C. Vibius Pansa (see D’Arms 1970: 173-4, 179, 191-2, 189, 200-1, respectively). Cassius may have also owned a villa there, but this is not entirely clear (so D’Arms 1970: 58 n.102).

⁹⁰ A certain C. Stallius Hauranus (see Rigsby 2008). His charming Neapolitan funerary inscription, dated to the
Neapolitan villas were highly prized and many Romans had one (or more) in this region. Only a small number of these individuals were Epicureans, so we should not read too much into this Epicurean presence there. Still, in the following chapters we will catch glimpses into Cicero’s social life under Caesar’s dictatorship, when he moved about Campania dining with Epicureans like Atticus and L. Papirius Paetus while using Philodemus as a source for his philosophical works and “writing before dawn against the Epicureans.” This section has shown that Epicureanism was part of Cicero’s intellectual and social life. These scenes and the evidence for Campanian Epicureanism therefore offer an invitation to consider how his social interactions with his Greek and Roman Epicurean contemporaries may have influenced his sense of the school’s popularity, sharpened his literary objectives and polemical style, and provided occasions for philosophical debate.

IV. Prosopography of Late Republican Epicureans and Cicero’s “intellectual network”

I conclude this chapter by providing two figures that summarize my reconstruction of Roman Epicureanism. Figure I is a chart of all securely-attested Roman Epicureans, which I have separated into senators, knights, teachers and writers. In each entry I provide references to the chief evidence for positing an Epicurean commitment, list key bibliography which has appeared since Castner, and offer references to her Prosopography and the relevant Realencyclopaedie articles. I hope this chart will not only serve to support my larger arguments about Cicero’s interactions with his Epicurean contemporaries and literary rivals, but will also provide quick and convenient access to the most important evidence and recent

first century, leaves little doubt about his allegiance: “Gaius Stallius Hauranus watches over this abode, he from the joy-filled Epicurean chorus” (Stallius Gaius has sedes Hauranu tuetur/ex Epicureio gaudivigente choro).

91 I would like to acknowledge here my debt to the work of Benferhat, Castner and Momigliano.
A few clarifications are necessary. In light of the difficulties in the identification of philosophical commitments (e.g. the ambiguous case of Trebatius or the methodological excesses of De Witt), I have adopted a conservative approach to my reconstruction. I therefore include only well-documented and clear cases of serious Roman interest in the Garden. This means I have omitted a number of possible Roman Epicureans for whom the evidence is in some way ambiguous; interested readers can consult Castner or Benferhat for further information on these individuals. Another consequence of my conservative approach is that I have relied primarily on early testimony: Cicero’s letters above all, but also Philodemus’ dedications, Nepos’ Life of Atticus, and early imperial sources like Quintilian. Only occasionally have I used later sources (most notably for Epicurean writers and teachers), and in particular I have avoided pressing Plutarch for information. My rationale in doing so I hope to further the efforts to move beyond Castner’s Prosopography, thereby offering a more convenient and reliable guide to Roman Epicureanism. As we have seen, many of her conclusions have been and are increasingly being challenged, and continuing scholarly interest in Roman Epicureanism and work on the Herculaneum papyri have yielded new ideas and evidence. At the same time, this recent scholarship, including Benferhat’s important monograph, does not offer the useful reference format of Castner’s Prosopography, and efforts to integrate our evidence for Epicurean authors, poets, and teachers with discussions of more politically important Roman Epicureans have been limited. For these reasons there is a need for a reference work, and I hope these charts will be useful for a range of scholarly endeavors in Roman history, culture, literature, and philosophy.

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93 Most of these are grouped by Castner under the headings of “Epicurei incerti” or “Epicuri dubii” (the major exception is that I treat Memmius’ allegiance seriously, for reasons noted above). Griffin 1997b makes a good case for the Epicurean credentials of C. Matius, a friend of Cicero and Caesar, but her argument is ultimately too speculative to be used for my readings of Cicero’s interactions with his Epicurean acquaintances.

94 Although I do not reject his testimony as wholly fictitious, Plutarch’s chronological distance renders his evidence inferior to information gleaned from earlier sources. This distance and limited information can also lead to distortions and generalizing inferences. Take the case of P. Volumnius (see n.32), who is probably the Πόπλιος Βολούμνιος of Plutarch, Brutus 48. Cicero’s difficult and nuanced testimony about Volumnius’ philosophical background has been flattened into a much simpler gloss that he was a “philosophical man” (ἀνήρ φιλόσοφος; note this does not mean “a philosopher”—φιλόσοφος is used here adjectively). Plutarch may, of course, be entirely correct. But we have no reason to think so; more generally, the possibility that a vague generalization by Plutarch may not map onto the more complex reality of Republican intellectual culture should put us on guard about accepting his testimony at face value. This is just the tip of the iceberg: Plutarch is even more unreliable when discussing Cassius’ Epicurean convictions—see Chapter IV, n.9.
is that a minimally speculative reconstruction provides a more reliable foundation for reading Cicero’s interactions with his correspondents. This core of secure Roman Epicureans, in other words, is sufficient for my purposes.

The second figure is my attempt to map out graphically Cicero’s “intellectual network” of Roman and Greek Epicurean friends, teachers, and literary rivals. I have marked attested social relationships between Cicero, his Epicurean contemporaries, as well as their links with one another.\footnote{I cite only documented links; there would no doubt be more if we had more evidence. I make an exception for L. Saufeius: since he was studying with Phaedrus and Atticus in Athens, it seems reasonable to infer that this Epicurean die-hard would have had the chance to hear Zeno just as his friends and fellow-pupils did.} I have also included exempli gratia the Augustan poets and their associations with Philodemus, Siro and each other.\footnote{I confess that I am mostly a consumer of this information. I follow in particular Sider 1997: 12-24 and Armstrong 2004a; see also the references in Chapter I, section iii.G.} As I suggested in Chapter I, the prominence of Epicurean ideas in their poetry is powerful support for Cicero’s Tusculans narrative and depicts an Epicurean network outside of Cicero’s testimony; readers are invited to make up their own minds as to whether Vergil or Horace were serious Epicureans or just deeply influenced by the prominence of Epicurean ideas in the Late Republic.

One final issue deserves comment. It may be objected that my reconstruction of Roman Epicureanism is overly dependent on Cicero and that it should therefore come as no surprise that he appears at the center of my intellectual map of the movement. This is to a certain extent true: almost any discussion of the Late Republic leans heavily on his testimony. That said, three points can be made in defense to this objection. First, I have tried to use non-Ciceronian evidence to corroborate his testimony whenever this is possible, and I have furthermore included a number of Epicureans whom he does not mention (e.g. Egnatius, the Augustan poets, Hauranus). All of this is to say that Roman Epicureanism was not...
simply a product of Cicero’s imagination or his need to construct literary/philosophical rivals for his dialogues. Second, the fact that our evidence is biased towards his friends should not obscure the fact that even this single lens into Republican life yields an extremely diverse and varied cast of Roman adherents of the Garden. The sheer number and diversity of well-attested individuals is significant and should not be explained away. My third response is perhaps the most important for the larger goals of my thesis (if not for my account of Roman Epicureanism): it is in fact helpful that the evidence is biased towards Cicero. For the purpose of the reconstructions in this and the previous chapter has always been to provide a historical and sociological framework for interpreting Cicero’s philosophical works. Therefore the remarkable preservation of the letters and their insights on his relations with his Roman Epicurean contemporaries are precisely what is needed to advance the claims I make in the following chapters.
Figure I: Roman Epicureans, 155-43 B.C.\textsuperscript{98}

A. Roman Senators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Highest known Rank</th>
<th>Evidence for commitment\textsuperscript{99}</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Titus Albucius\textsuperscript{100}</td>
<td>Praetor c. 107\textsuperscript{101}</td>
<td>e.g. <em>Brut.</em> 131, <em>Fin.</em> 1.38-9; Varro, <em>Eum.</em> fr. 127 Astbury</td>
<td>RE 1.1330-31 (2); C 1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucius Calpurnius Piso\textsuperscript{102} Caesoninus</td>
<td>Consul 58</td>
<td>e.g. <em>In Pis.</em> 1.20, 42, 69; Philod., <em>Anth. Pal.</em> 11.44</td>
<td>RE 3.1387-90 (90); C 16-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaius Cassius Longinus\textsuperscript{103}</td>
<td>Praetor 44</td>
<td><em>Fam.</em> 15.16-19</td>
<td>RE 3.1727-36 (59); C 24-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucius Manlius Torquatus\textsuperscript{105}</td>
<td>Praetor 49</td>
<td><em>Fin.</em> 1-2</td>
<td>RE 4.1203-7 (80) C 40-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaius Memmius\textsuperscript{106}</td>
<td>Praetor 58</td>
<td>e.g. Lucretius, 1.24ff; <em>Fam.</em> 13.1</td>
<td>RE 15.610 (8); C 99-104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaius Velleius\textsuperscript{107}</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>ND</em> 1.15; <em>De Or.</em> 3.78</td>
<td>RE 82.637 (1); C 75-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaius Vibius Pansa\textsuperscript{108} Caetronianus</td>
<td>Consul 43</td>
<td><em>Fam.</em> 7.12, 15.19; Philod., <em>On Rhetoric</em> 4</td>
<td>RE 2\textsuperscript{nd} 8 a2.1953-65(16); C 80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{98} Further bibliography can be found in Castner 1988; Erler 1994: 374-80; and Benferhat 2005. In contrast to Figure II, this chart includes Epicureans who were not Cicero’s contemporaries. Italicized names indicate uncertain commitment.

\textsuperscript{99} All references are to works of Cicero unless otherwise noted.

\textsuperscript{100} Griffin 1989: 4; Gruen 1992: 257-8; Benferhat 2005: 66-8; Baraz 2012: 121-2 and n.62.

\textsuperscript{101} The date is uncertain: see Brennan 2000: ii.476-7.


\textsuperscript{104} Griffin 1996: 344, 339; Benferhat 2005: 272-3.

\textsuperscript{105} Benferhat 2005: 266-70; Armstrong 2011: 107-8, 110-1.


\textsuperscript{107} Dyck 2004: 5-6.

B. Roman Knights

Name: Lucius Papirius Paetus
Evidence for commitment: "Fam. 9.25, 9.20"
References: "RE 18.1072(69); C 43-4"

Name: Titus Pomponius Atticus
Evidence for commitment: "Att. 4.6.1, 14.20; Fin. 5.1.3; Leg. 1.21"
References: "RE 8.503-26; C 57-61"

Name: Lucius Saufeius
Evidence for commitment: "Att. 7.2.4, 15.4; Nepos, Atticus 12; IG 2.3879"
References: "RE 2nd 2, pt.1: 256-7 (5); C 65-7"

Gaius Trebatius Testa
Evidence for commitment: "Fam. 7.12"
References: "RE 2nd 6.2251-61(7); C 70-2"

C. Epicurean teachers and authors active in Italy

C1. Teachers of Epicureanism

Name: Alcius
Date: expelled from Rome in 154
Evidence: Athenaeus, 12.68; Aelian, 12.2
References: "RE –115; C –"

Name: Philiscus
Date: expelled from Rome in 154
Evidence: Athenaeus, 12.68; Aelian, 12.2
References: "RE 19.2.2383-4 (7); C –"

Name: Marcus Pompilius Andronicus
Date: b. fin. 2nd century
Evidence: Suetonius, Gram. 8
References: "RE 42.2322-23 (4); C56"

Name: Philodemus
Date: c.110 - ?
Evidence: Herculaneum Papyri; Pis. 68-71; Fin. 2.119
References: "RE 19.2.2443-82 (5); C –"

Name: Siro
Date: fl. c. 45
Evidence: Fin. 2.119; Vergil, Cata. 5; PHer. 312; Fam. 6.11 (?)
References: "RE 3 A1.353-5; C –"

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111 Münzer 1914 is still the most important discussion; Raubitschek 1949; Horsfall 1989: 80, 84; Canfora 2003: 44; Benferhat 2005: 169-70.
114 Or less likely in 173: see Benferhat 2005: 59-60.
115 Briefly discussed in the RE entry for Philiscus; see the following note.
116 Cf. Alcius: the two are typically discussed together, since our only sources for their existence, Athenaeus and Aelian, link them with one another.
118 The bibliography for Philodemus has grown rapidly in the last twenty years, and continues to do so. Important general treatments include: Rawson 1985: 294-7; Gigante 1983, 1995; Asmis 1990; Sider 1997; Benferhat 2005: 211-33; Sedley 2009: 32-9; Tsouna 2007b. See also the articles in: Armstrong et al 2004 and Fish and Sanders 2011. Several new editions of Philodemus’ works have recently been published or are on the horizon.
### C2. Latin Epicurean authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Title of Work</th>
<th>References</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gaius Amafinius</td>
<td>c. 120-70 (?)</td>
<td>Tusc. 4.6.7; Fam. 15.19.2</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>RE 1.1714; C 7-11</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Acad. Post. 1.2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rabirius</td>
<td>110-46 BC (?)</td>
<td>Acad. Post. 1.2.5</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>RE 1.23(1); C63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catius Insuber</td>
<td>d. 46</td>
<td>Fam. 15.16, 15.19; Com. ad Hor. Sat 2.4.1; Quint. Inst. 10.1.124</td>
<td>De Rerum Natura</td>
<td>RE 3.1792 (1); C 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egnatius</td>
<td>fl. c. 45</td>
<td>Macrobius, 6.5</td>
<td>De Rerum Natura</td>
<td>RE 5.1993-4(3); C 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Lucretius Carus</td>
<td>fl. early/mid</td>
<td>Ad Q. fr. 2.9;</td>
<td>De Rerum Natura</td>
<td>RE 13.1659-83(17); C36-7</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1st century</td>
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<td>Nepos, Atticus 12</td>
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#### D. Other

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stallius Hauranus</td>
<td>mid. 1st c. BC</td>
<td>CIL 10.2971</td>
<td>Syrian Freedman?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calpurnia Anthis</td>
<td>mid. 1st c. BC</td>
<td>CIL 6.14211</td>
<td>Freedwoman of L. Piso; Mother of Ikidion</td>
</tr>
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121 See the entry on Amafinius: Rabirius is known only through a reference in the Academica, where he is linked with Amafinius.
124 Like Philodemus, Lucretius has amassed an impressive amount of scholarship: Some primarily philosophically oriented treatments include: Boyancé 1963; Sedley 1998; Warren 2007. Historical discussions: Benferhat 2005: 80-98; Sedley 2009: 40-44. For Lucretius as poet, see e.g. Hardie 2009; Gillespie and Hardie 2007.
125 Rigsby 2008.
126 Armstrong 1993: 201 n.29.
Figure II: Cicero’s Epicurean Intellectual Network

Cicero’s Epicurean Friends, Acquaintances, and Literary Rivals

N.B. Italicized names signal uncertain commitment to Epicureanism or weak evidence. Names in bold indicate an author or a teacher of philosophy. Greek characters indicate a Greek Epicurean active in Republican Italy or connected to Cicero and other Romans.
Chapter III: Anti-Epicurean Polemics in the Letters:

A reading of *Ad Familiares* 7.12 and *Ad Atticum* 7.2

I. Introduction

The previous two chapters argued that Cicero’s dramatic narrative of an Epicurean take-over of Italy was in fact largely correct. Not only do we have sufficient evidence to verify the very early activities of Epicurean teachers, authors, and Roman adherents in the second century, but the abundant sources for the first century (documented especially by Cicero’s letters) reveal that the Garden continued to attract Romans from a wide range of social positions and backgrounds. Furthermore, Cicero and his Roman Epicurean contemporaries maintained close relations with one another as well as with no less than three generations of Greek scholarchs of the Athenian Garden; my map of Cicero’s “intellectual network” of Epicurean contemporaries illustrates these tight connections.

This and the following two chapters explore several philosophical debates preserved in his epistolary interactions with his Epicurean contemporaries; I provide readings of a number of letters to and from these correspondents which are particularly rich in anti-Epicurean themes and arguments. These readings aim to accomplish two related goals. First, I underline the sophistication of Cicero’s philosophical polemics in these letters and argue that they should be read as serious arguments, not just idle banter or displays of cultural capital. Second, I begin to build a larger claim that the letters reveal Cicero practicing for his published treatises: they allow us to see him trying out different arguments, translations, and polemical strategies in his continued efforts to combat the popularity of Epicureanism and Epicurean writers in Italy. Chapters IV-V will offer strong claims that Cicero’s correspondence with Cassius (*Fam.* 15.16-19) directly shaped and influenced his
critiques of Epicurean physics and ethics in several works of later that year; this present chapter, however, is content with the more modest and preliminary goal of establishing the general relevance of the letters for our understanding of Cicero’s published criticisms of the Garden. In other words, while there is no reason to think that the letters in this chapter had any direct influence on a particular argument or passage in a dialogue, the fact that Cicero had been penning sophisticated criticisms of Epicurus in his letters over the course of two decades justifies investigating the possibility that this epistolary practice offered significant opportunities to hone his skills as a philosopher and can thereby help us understand the range of sources and debates which informed his dialogues. Since the following chapters will examine letters written in the same period as extensive anti-Epicurean polemics of 45-44, I have chosen to focus here on two letters written in the 50s in order to show that Cicero’s explicit rejection of Epicurean philosophy in the works of the 40s was no new development but rather the intensification of a consistent and complete rejection of the Garden stretching back over the course of his entire adult life.¹

I begin this chapter with some methodological comments and situate my approach with a number of recent attempts to grapple with philosophical content in the letters. I then provide close readings of the anti-Epicurean polemics in letters to two of Cicero’s Roman Epicureans contemporaries, his young protégé C. Trebatius Testa and life-long friend Atticus. With each letter I endeavor to establish the seriousness of Cicero’s arguments through comparisons with Greek philosophers like Epictetus and Plutarch;² I thereafter turn

¹ I will therefore also put special emphasis on a number of early criticisms of Garden in De Republica and the unfinished De Legibus.
² I make no claim to offer a comprehensive study of ancient polemical practices or even specifically anti-Epicurean polemics. Additionally, while I do cite a few Classical and Hellenistic examples, I have for the most part chosen passages from later, complete sources whose context and anti-Epicurean arguments are clear. I suspect a more general analysis, which would include a discussion of the argumentative strategies of Plato,
to the dialogues of both the 50s and the 40s and argue that the debates in his correspondence can help us understand the arguments and key, recurring themes in his published works.

II. Reading Cicero’s letters philosophically

While there has been an explosion of interest in the letters from a number of historical, literary, and sociological perspectives, their philosophical content—be it in the form of learned allusions, technical arguments on physics or ethical reflections on politics—has generally been marginalized, downplayed or simply ignored. It is now a truism that while Shackleton Bailey’s magisterial commentaries on the letters are indispensable for prosopographical and philological issues, his treatment of philosophy leaves much to be desired.\(^3\) Furthermore, the dismissive and/or reductionist interpretations of the sincerity of the convictions of Roman Epicureans by Castner and others tends to make the letters appear uninteresting.\(^4\) For instead of a dynamic exchange of arguments between Cicero and his educated, committed Epicurean friends, the debates in these letter are interpreted as idle banter at a time when serious political discussion was impossible (i.e. under Caesar’s dictatorship), as socially-structured exchanges of cultural capital which aimed at networking and fashioning a political self-image, or as a convenient “code” for a discussion of real political issues. Finally, up until very recently, the primary use of the letters by historians of philosophy has been largely limited to establishing the dating or different versions of a treatise.\(^5\)

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\(^4\) See Chapter II, section ii and Chapter IV, section iii.
\(^5\) For the marginalization of the philosophical letters, see n.16 of the Introduction.
Thankfully efforts are now being made to correct this neglect. Of particular importance is Griffin’s groundbreaking article, “Philosophical badinage in Cicero's letters to his friends,” which assessed the degree of philosophical learning Cicero attributed to a range of his correspondents. Her discussion has underlined that the arguments in these letters reflected serious philosophical debates and began the important task of questioning not only dismissive and reductionist interpretations, but also the general disinterest in the philosophical content of the letters. That said, her readings focus squarely Cicero’s learned contemporaries; she only hints at the importance of these epistolary exchanges for our understanding of the *philosophica*. And while Griffin’s work has inspired a number of valuable discussions, the importance of what these letters can tell us about the philosophical payoff of his epistolary practice has remained largely unexplored.

The first real attempt to engage fully with the importance of the letters for our understanding of Cicero as a philosopher is Sean McConnell’s new monograph *Philosophical Life in Cicero’s Letters*. My introduction discussed briefly his analysis of how Cicero employed Academic, Stoic, and above all Platonic arguments to justify his political conduct (especially with respect to Caesar) in philosophical terms and to fashion a public image as a Roman Plato; my comments here discuss McConnell’s approach to reading the letters. I hasten to add that the following remarks are not intended to undermine

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6 E.g. in her final paragraph on p.346; at pp. 339-41 she suggests discussions with Varro may have influenced a passage in *De Fato*.
8 McConnell 2014. Less successful is Boes 1990, who has tried to read Cicero’s entire political career in light of philosophical discussions in the letters and dialogues. The generalizations of this work and its relentless attempts to see complete philosophical-political consistency in all aspects of Cicero’s life have been roundly criticized (e.g. Berry 1992; Griffin 1995: 327; Baraz 2012: 46 n.5; McConnell 2014: 2 n.4); as such, I do not engage with Boes’ claims in any detail.
9 Two points made in the introduction should be reemphasized: first, with the exception of a brief but insightful reading of Cicero’s correspondence with Cassius (pp. 19-26) McConnell has intentionally (p. 8 n.18) chosen to focus on non-Epicurean letters; my study of Cicero’s fundamental opposition to Epicureanism therefore helps complete a preliminary sketch of the roles which different philosophical schools played in Cicero’s
McConnell’s readings, which are generally persuasive; my aim is to clarify how my own approach to reading the letters philosophically supports and extends his analysis of non-Epicurean letters while simultaneously avoiding a number of methodological difficulties that his interpretations of philosophical content in the letters encounter. More specifically, the following discussion outlines why I am hesitant to make much use of the category or genre of the “philosophical letter” and prefer instead to speak more generally about “philosophical passages” or a letter’s “philosophical or polemical content.”

McConnell has chosen to read the letters firmly as self-standing works of philosophical literature. He explicitly distances himself from approaches which mine the letters for facts or dismiss them as jokes; instead, he argues that “some of [Cicero’s] letters are pieces of philosophical literature that stand alongside his recognized philosophical works as genuine components of his philosophical legacy and oeuvre.”10 This thesis requires a number of potentially contentious premises. First, his decision to interpret certain letters as independent works of philosophy requires a fairly strong assumption for the existence of special sub-genre of letter-writing, the “philosophical letter,” and furthermore requires that Cicero was consciously writing within this genre.11 Now, these claims may seem relatively unproblematic. After all, we possess a wide range of letters of philosophers (sometimes forged, sometimes authentic) which were often circulated along with their more technical correspondence. A second significant departure from McConnell is my goal to explain Cicero’s dialogues through an analysis of the letters; he has chosen to read the letters as self-standing philosophical documents (see the following two notes).

10 McConnell 2014: 4. Cf. 221: “The letters’ true philosophical value and significance lie in the fact that they are in their own right serious and sophisticated elements of Cicero’s philosophical practice located within this broader context.”

11 McConnell 2014: 27 (“… there is evidence that some of [Cicero’s] own letters are carefully constructed literary works in such recognizable philosophical traditions and formats [i.e. philosophical letters].”)
works. In particular, Seneca’s *Epistles* seem to have taken inspiration from Epicurus’ own prolific letter-writing; Epicurus himself exploited letters for a variety of purposes (as we will see shortly). There are, however, a number of complications to positing such a straightforward genre of philosophical letters. First, the vast majority of surviving letters of philosophers does not seem to be the sort of explicitly philosophical epistle McConnell is talking about, nor do they resemble Seneca’s highly stylized correspondence. Indeed, the majority of letters in these ancient collections are not particularly philosophical at all. It is not clear, for example, that a letter in which Epicurus requested some cheese or expressed his warm feelings for the *hetaera* Leontion were viewed or intended as a part of his “philosophical oeuvre” or engaged with a well-defined literary genre. Second, many forged letters of famous philosophers show a far greater interest in exploring biographical readings than providing sustained philosophical reflections of the sort we find in Seneca or in the overtly philosophical letters of Cicero. That said, some letters did of course have an

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12 These include letters of Aristotle, Plato, Heraclitus, and of course Epicurus himself: discussion in Inwood 2007: 136ff and McConnell 2014: 26-31. To these examples one can add the letters of Apollonius of Tyana and the Neoplatonist Iamblichus (for which see respectively Jones 2006 and Dillon 2009).

13 Inwood 2007: 136-41. He argues that Seneca’s references to Epicurus’ letters reflected an acknowledgment of the importance of the latter’s correspondence as epistolary models; as for Cicero, Inwood points to a number of passages which explicitly refer to Cicero’s correspondence (of special interest is Ep. 21, where Seneca claims that he will make Lucilius famous through his letters like Cicero did for Atticus) and argues that Seneca was involved in his own *aemulatio* with his great Latin philosophical predecessor. Griffin 1987: 136 adds that the letters seem to have become widely available during Seneca’s lifetime.

14 The majority of Usener’s fragments of Epicurean letters are in fact non-philosophical (fr. 104-191). Inwood 2007: 142 points out that such letters can be read as efforts to “cement the structure of the far-flung Epicurean intellectual community around the Aegean basin…” This seems right, but such letters do not map very well onto Seneca’s epistolary practice or the letters of Cicero which McConnell analyzes.

15 For example, the letters of pseudo-Heraclitus in the *Cynic Epistles* (text in Malherbe 1977) are largely concerned with exploring Heraclitus’ final disease and his impending death. While the language of these letters is expressed in appropriate Heraclitean philosophical vocabulary, these letters show far closer similarities to the interests of the biographies of ancient poets, which sought to explain the poet’s life through his works (on this see Lefkowitz 2012), than a mini-treatise letter of Seneca or the three epistolary doctrinal summaries in D.L. 10. To take another example, ps-Plato’s 7th letter (esp. 341C-E) reads more like an explanation of why Plato adopted a dialogue form than a formal discussion of philosophical ideas. With respect to non-philosophical letters of Epicurus, Gordon 2012: 80-8 (cf. Gordon 2013) shows how often they were forged or cited for their biographical, not philosophical, relevance: they seemed to offer “confidential self-disclosure” of Epicurus and his community (2012: 84-5). Thus a hostile critic might cite letters to Leontion in order to depict Epicurus as someone who shamelessly consort ed with prostitutes; such philosophical scandal-mongering is as old as
explicit philosophical purpose (I have in mind here the three letters of doctrinal summary in D.L. 10). However, these letters contain only the most basic epistolary features and two of them are in fact explicitly described as mnemonic aids,\(^\text{16}\) which suggests to me that they have more in common with the *Kuriai Doxai* than the vast majority of Cicero or Seneca’s letters. It is only Seneca’s letters, then, and perhaps the very specific epistle of advice to a king that show any sign of a self-conscious deployment of the letter as a philosophical genre.\(^\text{17}\) But once again only a handful of letters in Cicero’s correspondence provide parallels to Seneca’s highly-stylized epistolary practice, much less the narrow sub-genre of advising kings, and almost all of the anti-Epicurean letters that I will be analyzing would certainly not qualify. And as far as Seneca goes, while it seems highly plausible that he drew inspiration for the *Epistulae Morales* from the collections of Epicurus and Cicero in a general sense, the stronger claim that his letters are particularly characteristic or closely modeled on the epistolary-philosophical practice of either author seems to me to be somewhat overstated.\(^\text{18}\)

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\(^{16}\) Bare epistolary features: see Gordon 2012: 82-3 (“very rudimentary epistolary window-dressing); Inwood 2007: 142 (“not particularly epistolary”). Mnemonic aims: Epicurus explicitly describes his *Letter to Pythocles* as a helpful memory aid (ἵνα ῥαδιως μνημονεύῃς); cf. the preface of the *Letter to Herodotus* (only the *Letter to Menoeceus* seems intended for a wider audience). Even if we grant that internalizing Epicurean doctrine through such summaries was a valuable part of Epicurean ethical praxis (as in Philodemus’ *On Frankness of Speech*), did Epicurus intend these works “to stand alongside” his other treatises as real philosophical works of a special genre of letters? Maybe, maybe not.

\(^{17}\) See McConnell 2014: 195-220 for evidence of letters to kinds and an interesting reconstruction of Cicero’s aborted plans to write a letter of advice to Caesar modeled on the Aristotelian letters to Alexander.

\(^{18}\) E.g. Inwood 2007: 145 (“[T]he letters of Epicurus must have been a very close model indeed for the collection of Seneca’s letters as we have it now.”). The problem is that this strong claim is based on a small number specific features and parallels in certain letters at the cost of ignoring an significantly larger number of Epicurus’ letters which not do not seem at all characteristic of Seneca’s epistolary practice (for a more general worry about the value of classifications of ancient letters, see Gunderson 2007: 4, quoted in n.21). More specifically, Seneca was obviously not imitating the many pedestrian and entirely unphilosophical letters to Mys and Leontion or letters about members’ monetary contributions to the Garden. Furthermore, Epicurus’ business-like and often highly technical mnemonic summaries of doctrine in the more explicitly philosophical letters do not seem to me to be particularly characteristic of the majority of Seneca’s letters, especially those which make use of vivid personal anecdotes as launching points for philosophical inquiry. These dissimilarities and Epicurus’ more diverse use of the epistolary form would seem to warrant only the more limited conclusion
As such, Seneca’s clearly conscious use of the letter as a vehicle for philosophical discussion does not seem to offer much help in clarifying the “genre” of philosophical letters in Cicero’s time or his attempts to engage with such a tradition. Finally, in addition to the broad and unsystematic nature of our evidence for the letters of philosophers, there is another serious problem. Pseudo-Demetrius, the author of an ancient handbook of different kinds of letters (Τύποι Ἐπιστολικοί), does not include the philosophical letter as a specific form of epistolary practice; the author even cautions against turning a letter into a mini-treatise on a philosophical problem.\(^\text{19}\) Therefore not only does our surviving corpus of philosophical letters reflect a wide and unwieldy range of styles, topics, and goals; such letters are seemingly absent from ancient literary classifications. While I would not deny that philosophers sometimes used letters for various purposes, claiming that Cicero was consciously engaging with a tradition of philosophical letter-writing and intended such letters to “stand alongside” his philosophical works is something of an uphill battle.

Second, a number of McConnell’s bolder readings analyze a series of letters together as reinforcing philosophical documents and argue that Cicero promulgated a consistent self-justification of his political activity (in terms, for example, of the pseudo-Platonic epistles) intended for a wider readership (thus these letters fall into the category of “open” or “semi-open” letters written with the intention that they would be circulated beyond the addressee).\(^\text{20}\) Here too difficulties arise. It is not easy to identify any reliable criteria for reading one letter


as “philosophical” while treating philosophical comments in another letters as merely incidental—especially when Cicero’s references to arguments and sects can be so allusive. Similarly, the criteria for designating one letter as private and another as semi-public are far from clear, and to do so for an entire series of letters is even more difficult.21

This approach to reading the letters for their philosophical content therefore requires the acceptance of up to four potentially difficult premises: first, there was a special genre of the philosophical letter; second, Cicero deliberately constructed series of interlinked philosophical letters as self-standing works of philosophical literature; third, there is sufficient evidence to identify these special philosophical letters and their connections with each other; and fourth, these letters fall into the category of “open” or “semi-open” letters designed for a wider readership.22 Finally, McConnell’s choice to focus on non-Epicurean arguments faces another difficulty. In contrast to our fairly substantial evidence for Epicureanism and even more abundant examples of hostile critiques of the school, his efforts to decode Cicero’s epistolary discussions of the arguments of other Hellenistic philosophers (e.g. the Peripatetic Dichaearchus or the Stoic Zeno) require repeated reconstructions of their views in order for Cicero’s arguments to make sense.23 However convincing these reconstructions, a degree of uncertainty is inscribed into McConnell’s analysis before Cicero’s own arguments can be understood.

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21 For skepticism on the value of epistolary “taxonomies” see Gunderson 2007: 4 (“Categories, taxonomies, and ‘epistolary theory’—each of them a stand-in for literary analysis that replaces and displaces a specifically [sic] literary analysis—run the risk of doing more harm than good. Readings that attempt to taxonomize the letters with distinctions like public and private, formal and informal, and so forth run the risk of becoming non-readings: an imposed form is used to explain the content even as the content is used to determine the appropriate pigeon-hole into which to sort the letter.”).
22 I should emphasize that not all of his readings require the assumption of a wide readership or analyze series of letters together (e.g. his analysis of Fam, 9.22).
23 See respectively McConnell 2014: 115-60, 161-94; cf. his reconstruction of Cicero’s aborted letter of advice to Caesar, where it is necessary for him to first reconstruct a fragmentary Hellenistic tradition of writing philosophical letters to monarchs.
Again, I do not wish to suggest that these problems are insurmountable. McConnell is aware of the difficulties of his approach and has taken care to analyze letters which seem to meet his specific criteria. Still, I hope the worries discussed above provide sufficient reason to look for other ways of reading Cicero’s letters philosophically which do not require appeals to an unwieldy and unstable epistolary genre or make claims about his literary intentions in any given letter. My own approach can, I hope, avoid most of these difficulties while simultaneously allowing for broader conclusions about the sophistication of the philosophical content of the letters as well as their value in interpreting his published dialogues in way that still goes beyond old-fashioned practice of mining the letters for dates or reading habits.

My method of analyzing the philosophical passages in the letters focuses on Cicero’s general polemical strategies as well as the style and language in which his arguments are expressed. By comparing these arguments with similar refutations and the argumentative structures of published Greek criticisms of the Garden I hope to establish the philosophical credentials of the anti-Epicurean polemics in the letters. In other words, if his epistolary style can be shown to have been written in a way consistent with the style, dialectical sophistication, and general argumentative practice of professional Greek philosophers, we have good reason to consider how his anti-Epicurean epistolary operations may have over several decades sharpened his dialectical technique and informed relevant passages in the Philippica.

This approach requires a smaller number of assumptions and provides a number of benefits. First, and perhaps most importantly, my approach opens up a much wider range of philosophically-interesting letters. Instead of having to restrict my analysis to the very small
number of letters which meet McConnell’s strong criteria, my methodology allows even a passing paragraph in an otherwise non-philosophical letter to provide valuable evidence of Cicero practicing a high-level criticism outside his published works. Second, since my focus rests firmly on identifying ancient stylistic and argumentative parallels to specific passages in the letters, my readings do not require positing any special category or classification of a philosophical letter, nor is it necessary for me to make any claims as to whether a letter should be described as private or semi-public. That is, if I can establish the seriousness and sophistication of an epistolary argument, it is not essential to know whether Cicero had a wider audience in mind or whether he intended a particular letter to count as a “philosophical letter.” Building on this last point, my claims about the letters as “practice” do not require a strong commitment to intentionality: even if the anti-Epicurean sallies in the letters were not part of a deliberate attempt to practice for his treatises, it is still worth considering how years of writing sophisticated criticisms in his letters may help us to interpret similar discussions in his dialogues, even if the influence of these epistolary polemics was entirely unconscious.  

A few words on what I mean by “polemical strategies” are needed to clarify how I will attempt to establish the seriousness of Cicero’s epistolary criticisms of the Garden.  

While the overt hostility of centuries of ancient critics of Epicureanism is in many ways regrettable and threatens to obscure our understanding of the school, for my purposes these often one-sided criticisms are actually very useful. The abundance of anti-Epicurean polemics on a wide range of topics makes it fairly easy to identify the thrust and strategy of

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24 At a couple of points in the following chapters I will, however, make more speculative claims about the influence of Cassius’ response to Cicero’s anti-Epicurean criticisms, and I indulge in some brief speculations about Cicero’s own views at the end of this chapter. I have tried to clearly indicate these speculative leaps; and I hope that they can be separated from my more general claim that Cicero’s epistolary practice should be considered a relevant source for interpreting his dialogues.
Cicero’s arguments; one also typically finds close stylistic and linguistic parallels. As such, my readings will offer concrete ancient parallels in order to situate his arguments within a broader tradition; the following comments sketch in broad outline two common ancient argumentative strategies which he employs throughout his letters and philosophical works.25

The first polemical strategy can be called a “self-contradiction” argument. By this I mean an argument which takes two philosophical claims of a school and argues that these positions are logically incompatible with one another; one claim undermines the other in some way, either directly or because of some further implication of one of the claims.26 We might express this in the form of “P; but Q, which implies not-P; therefore P and Q are incoherent” (where P and Q are two distinct doctrines or positions). This is a sensible strategy: instead of trying to persuade an opponent of a premise which he or she would simply never accept (i.e. a Stoic trying to convince an Epicurean that virtue, not pleasure, is the highest good), the critic tries to undermine the internal coherency of his target’s own doctrines. Many ancient self-contradiction arguments therefore quote accurately passages from an opponent’s written works in order to make the criticism appear unbiased and more persuasive.27 This strategy clearly became a standard tactic; Plutarch’s treatise \textit{On Stoic

\textsuperscript{25} It is beyond the scope of this chapter to justify adequately the claim that these strategies map onto ancient philosophical or rhetorical terminology (though I rather suspect they do: see n.29); for the present purposes I am content to argue that the identification of a number of structural and linguistic commonalities can clarify Cicero’s arguments as well as their seriousness. I am unaware of a general study of ancient argumentative forms, but I am indebted a number of treatments of the strategies of specific authors: of particular value is Kechagia’s recent discussion (2011: 174-8) of Plutarch’s polemical strategies in \textit{Against Colotes} (she herself is building on ideas in Westman 1955). Cf. Burnyeat 1976: 47-8, 57-8 on ancient περιτροπή (“self-refutation”) arguments; Inwood 1990 on Cicero’s strategies in \textit{De Finibus} I-II; Long 2002: 54-7 on Epictetus’ use of “protreptic and elenctic” arguments; more general comments can be found in Owen 1983 and Kleve 1985. Note also that I avoid for the most part the question of the complex relationship between the theory and practice of rhetoric and philosophical dialectic.

\textsuperscript{26} An important variant to this type of argument is the “self-refutation argument.” That is, instead of arguing that two distinct doctrinal positions are incoherent, a critic argues that “starting out with p we deduce not-p and so conclude the original premise is false” (Burnyeat 1976: 48; cf. Kechagia 2012: 178 n.18).

\textsuperscript{27} The worry that these quotations could have been taken out of context is of course a real danger.
Contradictions (De Stoicorum Repugnantibus) is a telling example. In this rather tedious work Plutarch almost mechanically gives pairs of quotations from Stoic authors and then “exposes” one supposed self-contradiction after another; his anti-Epicurean tracts Against Colotes and That a pleasant life is impossible according to Epicurus employ similar methods. But this polemical strategy was clearly much older. Self-contradiction arguments had already been analyzed by Aristotle,28 and they played a role in the rhetorical tradition as early as the sophist Gorgias, whose works Helen and On Not Being employ a number of such arguments.29

One concrete example of a self-contradiction argument made by unnamed anti-Epicurean critics (preserved in Philodemus’ De Pietate)30 can clarify the structure of the strategy I am discussing here. In the early sections of the surviving portion of the treatise, Philodemus first reports and then defends his school against a number of related claims that the Epicurean account of the gods and their materialist physical theory are incoherent.31 The critics argue that since only atoms are eternal and since every compound is subject to

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29 E.g. at Helen 6ff Gorgias tries to absolve Helen of responsibility for causing the Trojan War. One imagined position tries to blame her while simultaneously positing the interference of the gods. Gorgias analyzes and demolishes this argument through self-contradiction: (1) Helen is responsible; (2) “she did what she did by the plans of the gods”; but (2) implies that Helen had no free choice, and this entails that she cannot be held responsible; therefore this charge against Helen is incoherent. For Gorgias’ philosophical/rhetorical arguments, see Mourelatos 1987 and Caston 2002. Such examples (and the attack on rhetoric in Plato’s Gorgias and Phaedrus) reveal how early rhetoric and philosophy crossed paths. These very early examples of self-refutation arguments and their later, almost mechanical deployment—on this latter point, in addition to Plutarch’s polemical practice, cf. the revealing phrase at Sex. Emp., Adv. Math. 7.391: “this sort of self-refutation” (τῆς τοιαύτης περιτροπῆς)—suggest that the argumentative structures I am discussing do in fact reflect real ancient distinctions.
30 The ascription to Philodemus is conjectural: the papyrus has preserved only a “phi” of the author’s name. That said, I will follow the convention of referring to the author as Philodemus (the major alternative is Phaedrus).
31 De Pietate 2.34, 5.131, 7.173 Obbink (all translations from this work are Obbink’s, sometimes slightly modified); Cicero himself offers a similar critique at ND 1.168. Long and Sedley 1987: i.145 well emphasize the difficulty.
dissolution—and here they cite Epicurus’ own words—Epicureans cannot logically continue to claim that gods are at the same time immortal and compounds. Unless the Epicureans can find a way to justify some sort of exception for the special atomic compounds characteristic of the gods or revise their claims about the perishability of all compounds, they simply have to give up their belief in god as an “immortal and blessed being.” This is actually a very good criticism and underlines the difficulty of the Epicurean attempt to provide atomistic explanations for our preconceptions (προλήψεις) about the gods and their immortality; the efforts by Philodemus and more modern commentators to provide a coherent answer to this criticism are all somewhat desperate.

The sophistication of these arguments, however, may be obscured by their overly hostile conclusions. “They [the critics] say that he [Epicurus] leaves the gods no place among bodies” (τὸ λέον ὡς ὁ ὕδρ’ ἐν τοῖς σώμασιν [καὶ τα]λε[ίπει τοῖς θεὀ]ς); “they say this to be the greatest proof that the person who conceives the divine as bodily abolishes the divine from existing entities” (τοῦ τὸ φασὶ μέγιστον ἀναι τεκμήριον τοῦ περιαμφ[είν τό] θεῖ o[ν] ἐκ τῶν [ὁν]τῶν τὸν ἐπ[ι]ν[οὀυν]κο[σματι]κῶν [εἶναι ].

These bombastic conclusions about Epicurean physics are often equally hyperbolic in ethical

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32 2.38-41: “… of bodies some are compounds, and others those of which compounds are formed” = Ep. ad Hdt. 40. Of course the critics may have had a more technical source for this quotation (see Obbink 1996: 288), but the language is in any case authentically Epicurean.
33 E.g. KD 1. This criticism is also central to the old and highly contested debate on the nature of Epicurean gods (are they ethical ideals created by our minds or physical compounds existing in the intermundia?): see the contrasting positions in Sedley 2011 and Konstan 2011 for discussion and further references.
34 Philodemus’ response involves postulating special resilient compounds which contain “less void”; see Chapter IV, n.131; Konstan 2011: 54-60 discusses a number of other possible explanations. It should be noted that even if characterizations of gods as immortal compounds can be shown to be incoherent, it does not follow that idealist interpretations of Epicurean theology are correct. The consequence is only that Epicurus made some bad claims about the gods (it is not completely clear why mental ideals of perfection could be immortal, either).
35 Context and similar language elsewhere in the treatise and in other authors seem to justify Obbink’s restorations.
matters (“Epicurus abolishes civil society and the laws,” etc.). Such conclusions may strike
the reader as hopelessly biased and unfair; I suspect that some of the hesitation to read the
anti-Epicurean polemics in the letters seriously is the result of Cicero’s sometimes
compressed and apparently unfair style of argumentation.\footnote{36} However, it is important to
realize that Cicero and other ancient critics were not trying to provide neutral historical
judgments for our doxographical edification; they were trying to refute the claims of a
competing school and as such presented their conclusions as forcefully as possible. Indeed, I
argued in Chapter I that anti-Epicurean polemics were all the more necessary for Cicero,
whose literary ambitions gave him pressing reasons to give no quarter to his Latin literary
rivals and their school. Second, the sheer ubiquity of self-contradiction arguments would
seem to suggest that few ancient readers would have been misled by hyperbolic hostile
conclusions.\footnote{37} Philodemus, for example, does not whine about the unnamed critic’s bias. He
instead tries to dissolve the contradiction and show how Epicurean doctrine is in fact
consistent; Chapter V will show that Cassius reacted similarly to Cicero’s own criticisms. A
sometimes violent or melodramatic style, then, is simply an accepted part of the practice of
ancient philosophy. Aggressively hostile conclusions are not necessarily indicative of weak
arguments; instead, we need ask what inconsistencies arise out of the different doctrines
which ancient critics used to “prove” their strongly stated conclusions.\footnote{38}

\footnote{36} A major exception to this would be Castner 1988, who actually accepts Cicero’s polemics at face value as
evidence of the inconsistency and superficial commitment of Roman Epicureans.
\footnote{37} Owen 1983 underlines a number of parallels between philosophical and rhetorical invective in the fourth
century. The rhetorical parallels for living refutation arguments in particular suggest that ancient readers would
have understood what was going on in exaggerated conclusions like “Epicurus abolishes the gods.”
\footnote{38} Religious rhetoric in the Reformation provides striking parallels. Lucien Febvre’s famous study of atheism in
the 16th century—or rather its historical and psychological possibility—showed how theologians would often
top off their polemical critiques with a charge of “atheism,” despite the fact that all parties quite clearly
subscribed to a monothestic Christian God (for a retrospective on Febvre’s work, see Wooten 1988; for his
relationship with the Annales school of history, see Burke 1991: 12-33). Thus the apparently nonsensical claim
that Martin Luther had attained “a perfection of atheism” (Febvre 1985: 142) was in fact—to use my
terminology—the bombastically-stated conclusion of a self-contradiction argument (the rationale seems to have
The second polemical strategy relevant to my readings of Cicero’s correspondence is what can be called a “living refutation” argument. This form of argument is closely related to self-contradiction arguments and can be viewed as a subset of or a variation on them; we will also see a number of passages where a self-contradiction argument is deployed as a part of a broader living refutation strategy. Both argumentative forms argue for the incoherence of a philosophical position. The distinguishing feature of living refutation arguments, however, is that instead of juxtaposing two doctrines a critic tries to identify inconsistencies between a philosophical claim—usually ethical—and the life and character of a philosopher who holds that position. Perhaps the most famous example of this strategy is the old argument that a Pyrrhonian skeptic is simply incapable of living and functioning in the world without holding any beliefs (the so-called apraxia argument); that skeptics nevertheless do so is proof that their “talk” (I hesitate to say doctrine) does not correspond with reality and are therefore useless as a guide on how to live one’s life.\(^{39}\)

More relevant for our purposes are the many living refutation arguments directed against Epicurus. Ancient opponents of the Garden hunted down evidence for any seemingly

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\(^{39}\) Sex. Emp., \textit{PH} 1.23-4 is clearly on the defensive and tries to rebut this charge; for modern discussion see Burnyeat 1997; Frede 1997; and Vogt 2010.
altruistic action performed by Epicurus in order to conclude that his life contradicted his philosophy. Thus the provisions made in his will to ensure the well-being of the children of his deceased associate Metrodorus, or Epicurus’ famous deathbed letter, which narrated how he was able to face his imminent death with equanimity and joy, are interpreted by a range of hostile ancient critics as proof that Epicurus lived more nobly than his hedonistic doctrines should have allowed: his life was better than his doctrines, the force of nature more powerful than his selfish sophisms.\textsuperscript{40} This argument is basically a stylized charge of philosophical hypocrisy. As such, it is an \textit{ad hominem} attack and may likewise disappoint modern readers. However, two points can be made in defense of the seriousness of this sort of argument. First, regardless of our feelings about the persuasiveness of such charges, they were clearly a well-accepted part of an ancient philosopher’s polemical arsenal; their presence in Cicero’s letters therefore reflects a professional level of technique and should be read no less seriously than similar arguments in his or other published philosophical works. Second, there may be some justification for an \textit{ad hominem} attack, at least with respect to the coherency of a school’s position on the ideal way of life. To be sure, when Plutarch attacks Chrysippus and other Stoics for advocating a life of political activity even though they personally lived lives of contemplation and leisure, this is simply a smear tactic and says little about the coherency of the Stoic position on politics.\textsuperscript{41} On the other hand, living refutations aimed at Epicurus can be a good deal more interesting. When critics cited Epicurus’ will, his care for Metrodorus’ children and his slave Mys, or his literary efforts to spread the truth of his

\textsuperscript{40} His will is preserved at D.L. 10.16ff (on which see Leiwo and Remes 1999 and Warren 2006: 162 n.2); his dying letter to Idomeneus at D.L. 10.22. Examples of anti-Epicurean living refutation arguments: \textit{Fin}. 2.96, 99; Epictetus, \textit{Dis}. 1.22 (his point is nicely summed up with the conclusion “αὐτὸς ἐξύγαδη κατηγοροῦσαν ἵνα τῶν σαυτοῦ δογμάτων.”), 2.23.21, 3.7.10; Plutarch, \textit{Non Posse} 1099E. For a balanced modern discussion of the coherence of Epicurus’ apparently altruistic post-mortem planning, see Warren 2006: 162-99.

\textsuperscript{41} Plutarch, \textit{St. Rep}. 1033E.
philosophy for the benefit of mankind, they are not just saying that Epicurus was a hypocrite.\footnote{My discussion here of this important issue is brief and schematic; see Chapter V for detailed analysis.} The claim is rather that he performed other-oriented actions which simply cannot be explained away as elaborate calculations of long-term self-interest; and yet his doctrines actually denied the possibility of such altruism. Epicurus’ character and his very human nature therefore show that his ethical doctrines are unlivable. From the perspective of a neutral observer who has not been decisively persuaded by the arguments of any school, the inability of Epicurus or his followers to live a life consistent with their doctrines may offer some ground for doubting the plausibility or at least practicality of their school’s ethical positions.\footnote{I owe this more charitable reading of \textit{ad hominem} attacks to Robert Solomon’s reading of Nietzsche’s polemical style (1996, esp. 189: “Instead of restricting the focus to mere thesis, antithesis and argument, the \textit{ad hominem} approach brings in the motives, the intentions, the circumstances and the context of those who have a stake in the outcome.”). Cf. Kechagia 2011: 176 and McConnell 2014: 31-2.} Finally, I think it is fair to say that Epicurus’ endorsement of a virtuous social life is not at first glance the most natural or intuitive position for a hedonism which aims at personal long-term pleasure and furthermore denies that humans have any natural sociability or disinterested affection for their friends and even children. From this perspective, it is an entirely fair question to ask why the very founder of Garden would take the effort to write a will in order to secure the tricky business of the transfer of his property to his metic successor—an action which was both time-consuming and concerned a time when Epicurus himself would quite literally no longer exist nor stood to profit in any way from this effort.\footnote{As a metic, Epicurus’ successor Hermarchus was ineligible to own property. Epicurus had to therefore arrange for two Athenians to act as legal guardians for the estate and included careful provisions for compulsory consultation of Hermarchus on issues relating to the Garden (see Leiwo and Remes 1999). Epicurus’ will, then, clearly involved serious effort and care over a time when he would not exist. The standard reply to this criticism is to assert that Epicurus made such provisions because they secured goodwill and friendship \textit{within his own lifetime} (Metrodorus’ children and Hermarchus, for example, would no doubt have appreciated his efforts).}

This argument, of course, could be expressed more abstractly in non-\textit{ad hominem} form (i.e. “how can Epicurean hedonism justify writing a will when post-mortem states of affairs are
irrelevant to the enjoyment of pleasure?”), and Epicureans could and did respond by offering alternative interpretations of supposed cases of altruism, but living refutation arguments can still contain potentially interesting points behind what may seem to be no more than personal slander.

My argument, then, is that the seriousness of Cicero’s anti-Epicurean arguments in his letters and their relevance for his later published works can be established through a comparison with the similar polemical strategies of other ancient critics of the Garden, and that this analysis can function without any special categories of philosophical letters or authorial intention. Furthermore, these argumentative parallels can also help to clarify Cicero’s sometimes compressed epistolary arguments (and can sometimes justify textual supplements for passages where Greek words have dropped out or the text has been otherwise corrupted).

III. Trebatius Testa, a living refutation of Epicurus (Fam. 7.12)

The first letter I will be examining is Cicero’s indignant letter about Trebatius Testa’s conversion to Epicureanism (for the background see Chapter II, section iii.B). My analysis here of this letter introduces a number of criticisms of Epicurean political and social theory which we will encounter throughout Cicero’s correspondence and published treatises. Future chapters discuss these critiques in greater detail; my reading in this section aims at the more preliminary goal of establishing the philosophical seriousness of his epistolary polemics and begins to build my case for interpreting anti-Epicurean argumentation in his correspondence as evidence of Cicero practicing his philosophical technique. This will also serve to cast
doubt on the reductionist and negative interpretations of Castner and others discussed in Chapter II.  

In April 54 Cicero had arranged for a promising young protégé, Gaius Trebatius Testa, to take up a minor command under Caesar in Gaul. However, Trebatius apparently did not keep up his end of their continued correspondence. When Caesar’s lieutenant, the future consul and committed Epicurean C. Vibius Pansa, boasted in a letter that Trebatius had been converted to Epicureanism, Cicero’s young friend received a stern rebuke:

mirabar quid esset quod tu mihi litteras mittere intermisisses: indicavit mihi Pansa meus Epicureum te esse factum. o castra praeclara! quid tu fecisses si te Tarentum et non Samarobrivam misisses? iam tum mihi non placebas cum idem [in]tuebare quod +Zeius+, familiaris meus. sed quonam modo ius civile defendes cum omnia tua causa facias, non civium? ubi porro illa erit formula fiduciae, “ut inter bonos bene agier oportet”? quis enim <bonus> est qui facit nihil nisi sua causa? quod ius statues communi dividendo cum commune nihil possit esse apud eos qui omnia voluptate sua metiantur? quo modo autem tibi placebit Iovem Lapidem iurare cum scias Iovem iratum esse nemini posse? quid fiet porro populo Ulubrano, si tu statueris πολιτεύεσθαι non oportere? qua re si plane a nobis deficis, moleste fero, sin Pansae adsentari commodum est, ignosco. modo scribe aliquando ad nos quid agas et a nobis quid fieri aut curari velis.

I was wondering why you had stopped sending me letters. Now my friend Pansa tells me that you have become an Epicurean. What a distinguished camp! What would you have done if I

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45 Cicero’s criticisms in this letter are commonly held to be puerile—e.g. Griffin 1995: 332 (“a series of rather crude jokes”); Armstrong 2011: 118 (“[Cicero’s] frequently facile deprecation of Epicureanism.”). Benferhat 2005: 174-8 is a notable exception.

46 The manuscripts read “zeus” (M) and “Seius” (GR); “Zeius” is Shackleton Bailey’s compromise. Velleius, a senator and the Epicurean speaker of De Natura Deorum I, has been suggested, but he was long dead and may have been meaningless to the younger Trebatius. Shackleton Bailey’s apparatus offers another, highly attractive suggestion: “Saufeius.” As noted in Chapter II, section iii.A, Saufeius was a committed Epicurean whom Cicero cited as an example par excellence of Epicureanism in a way that parallels his comment to Trebatius. Additionally, Saufeius’ name is somewhat uncommon, so it would not be surprising if the name suffered in transmission. However, G and R’s “Seius,” which might lend some additional evidence for the name Saufeius (at least more than “Zeus” or the made-up “Zeius”), is unfortunately unreliable: Shackleton Bailey 1977: 4-6 offers examples of the frequent attempts at correction by the scribes of G and R. Therefore, while emending to Saufeius would be very interesting, in that it suggests an ongoing philosophical debate between Cicero and his longtime-Epicurean friend which sometimes played out in their mutual friendships, the emendation is really just a good guess and cannot be pressed as evidence.
had sent you to Tarentum instead of Samarobriva? I was unhappy with you even in the days when you were maintaining the same position as my friend Zeus+. But how will you defend civil law when you do everything for your own self-interest and not for the benefit of your fellow citizens? And what becomes of the trust formula “in accordance with honest practice between honest men”? For who is a good man who does nothing except for his own interest? What rule will you lay down for division of communal goods, seeing that nothing can be communal among those who measure all things by their own pleasure? How will you think it proper to swear by Jupiter Stone when you know that Jupiter can’t get angry with anybody? And what is to become of the people of Ulubrae if you decide that it is not fitting to take part in public affairs? Well, if you are really forsaking us, I’m vexed. But if it is merely convenient to humor Pansa, I forgive you. Only write to me at long last, and tell me what you are doing and what you want me to do or see to on your behalf.

(Ad Familiares 7.12 = SB 35, Feb. 53)

With the exception of the first and last sentences, the entirety of the letter is an extended critique on Epicurean political and ethical theory. The initial and concluding sentences in ancient letters are, of course, extremely important; Chapter II, section iii.B discussed in what sense this letter can be used as evidence for Trebatius’ convictions or the popularity of the school at Rome.

To return to the argument, Cicero seizes on his friend’s supposed conversion as an opportunity to launch into his philosophical mode. This tactic is characteristic of his epistolary practice more generally: he often picks up on a correspondent’s off-hand comment and uses it as an occasion to try out a philosophical argument or criticism. The arguments in this letter are compressed. Cicero makes a number of charges with short, pointed

47 Shackleton Bailey 2001: 208 n.1 glosses Tarentum as “notorious centre of luxury and pleasure.” Cicero therefore wonders what the decadent Greek city would have done to Trebatius had he been sent there instead of Gaul.
48 E.g. Att. 7.2 (discussed in the following section); Fam. 15.16 (using Catius’ Epicurean translations; see Chapter I, section iii.D); McConnell 2014: 161-194 analyzes how in Fam. 9.22 Cicero seized on his friend Paetus’ use of an obscene word (mentula) as a chance to outline his thoughts on the differences between Academic and Stoic positions on frankness of speech (libertas loquendi), especially with respect to proper conduct under Caesar’s dictatorship.
rhetorical questions; his general strategy is to explain why Trebatius’ activities and social position contradict the ethical tenets of his new Epicurean commitments. These supposed contradictions range from questions as to why he would bother with his patronage of the insignificant town of Ulubrae to how he could swear an oath without blatant dishonesty. The most consistent theme to these criticisms is, however, the complex of charges which allege that Trebatius’ expertise in and practice of civil law are inconsistent with his Epicurean beliefs. To make these points Cicero deploys a number of clever puns on legal terminology which refer simultaneously to Roman legal procedures and Epicurean political ideas.

Cicero, in other words, has tailored his living refutation argument to Trebatius’ life and profession. The goal of his critique is to show that it is impossible for Trebatius to be a Roman jurist and patron while at the same time claiming to live in accordance with Epicurean hedonism.

It is worth examining a few of these rapid questions in more detail. Cicero asks Trebatius how it is possible to swear an oath to Jupiter when he knows that Jupiter is incapable of becoming angry. Here Cicero alludes to the key Epicurean doctrine that “that which is blessed and immortal [i.e. a god] is neither troubled nor causes trouble for another.” In other words, when Trebatius takes an oath he knows that Jupiter will not take vengeance if the oath is broken or reward Trebatius if it is kept. An Epicurean god does not

49 Cf. Shackleton Bailey 2001: i.208-9 n.3 (“In this passage Cicero facetiously sets out to prove that Epicurean dogmas are incompatible with the vocabulary of Roman civil law.”). Cicero’s critique is more complicated than this simple conclusion. As I have just noted, the critique moves beyond civil law to question the coherency of Trebatius’ more general social role as a patron (cf. also the more general worries about oaths). And while the letter is filled with humorous touches, this does not mean that Cicero’s criticisms are wholly or even primarily “facetious.”

50 For example, he uses *communis* to describe both the process of arbitrating claims about jointly held property and as evidence that Epicurean egoism eliminates the possibility of anything being really *communis*. Shackleton Bailey (ad loc.) provides helpful commentary on the legal language and procedures (the philosophical content of the passage is, however, largely ignored).

51 *KD* 1.
care either way. As a result, the oath is pointless—or, on a less charitable interpretation, it reflects no more than an opportunistic deception for his own benefit or a desire to avoid rocking the boat with his shocking religious beliefs. Cicero’s criticism is not completely unfair. Epicurus undertook the daunting burden of providing hedonistic interpretations for a range of traditional social functions and activities; to do so he offered a number of interesting and sophisticated arguments for the instrumental value of the virtues and the establishment of a government based on a social contract for mutual protection. But his justifications for the importance of participation in other traditional aspects of ancient social life are much more tendentious; this is especially the case with religious practice. The Epicurean position that worship amounted to contemplation of the ideal happiness of the gods (which also serves as an aspirational goal for our own happiness) does not seem to be sufficient to explain why Epicurus, for example, felt it helpful to be initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries. After all, it seems very implausible that these rituals reflected Epicurean conceptions of divinity or the school’s views on death; what did he gain other than the socially convenient appearance of traditional piety? Returning to Trebatius’ oaths, it seems similarly difficult for him to explain why he should swear or keep an oath, or even what an oath would mean given the indifference of the gods. Nor is it clear how an oath amounted to some form of contemplation of the happiness of the gods. At best, Trebatius’ oaths (and Epicurus’ initiation) are convenient lies designed to avoid causing trouble; at worst, the position is

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52 Epicurean politics is discussed more fully in Chapter II, section ii; Chapter V, sections iii-v analyzes the school’s account of virtue and its relationship with political activity.
53 For Epicurus’ initiation see Philodemus, De Pietate 558-9; cf. 808-10 and passim. Philodemus clearly approves; see nn.63-65 for the religious activities of Atticus, Saufeius, and Cassius.
54 Obbink 1996: 425-6 tries to justify oaths (“For an Epicurean the swearing of an oath exhibits or even creates a disposition… in one’s soul to fulfill it—a disposition which according to Epicurean theology is closely connected, if not coextensive, with the gods by which one swears.”), but this seems rather desperate and results in an oath that is so far removed from traditional practice as to verge on a deception.
simply confused and Trebatius must either give up his Epicurean convictions or Roman religious practices.

The most consistent criticism in this letter, however, reflects a more general worry about the social consequences of Epicurean hedonism. Cicero introduces the issues programmatically early in his critique: “How will you defend civil law when you do everything for your own self-interest (omnia tua causa facias)\(^{55}\) and nothing for the benefit of your fellow citizens?” He then proceeds to ask how Trebatius could offer authoritative legal interpretations of legal formula about honorable business practices or impartially adjudicate shared goods given his egoistic motives, and he further queries why his younger friend would be a patron. This last supposed contradiction is underlined with a reference to the notorious Epicurean advice to stay out of politics (πολιτεύεσθαι non oportere): what, in other words, could Trebatius possibly gain from his support of an insignificant Italian town that would compensate him for his lost time and money? Each of Cicero’s questions, then, tries to expose tensions in the Epicurean system while presenting Trebatius as a living refutation of his doctrines. We will see this general strategy of questioning the ability of Epicurean ethical theory to justify or ensure virtuous conduct voiced again and again.

A few ancient parallels to the anti-Epicurean arguments in *Fam.* 7.12 will support my reading of the seriousness of their argument. A short essay against Epicurus in Epictetus’ *Discourses* (3.7) is particularly relevant. Epictetus’ auditor Arrian has presented this essay as the record of a conversation between the Stoic philosopher and a visiting imperial official, a

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\(^{55}\) The language is repeated throughout the letter: “omnia tua causa facias”; “facit nihil nisi sua causa”; “omnia voluptate sua metiuntur.” Cf. his characterization of Piso (and Epicureanism) at Sest. 23 (eosdemque Epicureans praeclare dicere aiebat [Piso] sapientis omnia sua causa facere) and Pis. 68 (audistis… dici philosophos Epicureos omnis res… voluptate mentiri). Compare also the language of his later dialogues: e.g. ND 113: ventre metiri; Fin. 2.56, 5.93: voluptate metiri. See below for parallels to the language of *De Republica* and *De Legibus.*
certain Maximus who is described as the διορθώτης and κρίτης τῶν Ἑλλήνων; he can plausibly be identified with an official of the same name whom Pliny says had been sent to Greece ad ordinandum statum liberarum civitatum.\(^{56}\) Regardless of the historicity of Maximus or the record of the conversation, Epictetus’ self-contradiction arguments are directed at an Epicurean character and thus reflect a broader living-refutation strategy—the same general structure as Cicero’s attempts to undermine Trebatius’ convictions in Fam. 7.12. Epictetus’ discourse begins with attacks on the Epicurean accounts of pleasure and justice. He then switches tactics, and in a charming passage he asks his interlocutor to imagine what a city of Epicureans would look like:

τὸν θεόν σοι, ἐπινοεῖς Ἑπικουρείων πόλιν; “ἐγὼ οὐ γαμῶ.” “οὐδὲ ἐγὼ· οὐ γὰρ γαμητέον.” ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ παιδοποιητέον, ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ πολιτευτέον. τί οὖν γένηται; πόθεν οἱ πολῖται; τίς αὐτοῖς παιδεύεται; τίς ἐφήβαρχος, τίς γυμνασίαρχος; τί δὲ καὶ παιδεύσει αὐτούς; ἀλλ’ οἱ Λακεδαιμόνιοι ἐπαιδεύοντο ἢ Αθηναῖοι; λάβε μοι νέον, ἀγαγε κατὰ τὰ δόγματά σου. πονηρά ἐστι τὰ δόγματα, ἀνατρεπτικά πόλεως, λυμαντικὰ ὅικων... ἀφες ταῦτ’, ἀνθρώπε.

My God, can you imagine a city of Epicureans? “I do not marry,” says one. Another: “nor do I, for one should not marry.” And nor should one bear children or take part in politics! What, then, will happen in such a city? Where will the citizens come from? Who will educate them? Who will be the leader of the ephebes, who the gymnasiarch? And what will they even teach them? What the Spartans or Athenians were taught? Go ahead and raise a young man according to your doctrines. Your doctrines are wicked, revolutionary for the city, destructive to individual households.... Cast aside these doctrines, man. (Epictetus, Diss. 3.7.19-21)

By echoing basic Epicurean principles—notably the famous advice to stay out of politics

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(οὐδὲ πολιτευτέον ὧτι πολιτεύεσθαι = fr. 8 Us.), which Cicero also refers to in *Fam.* 7.12, and Epicurean doubts about the value of marriage—Epicetetus tries to depict how various social relations would fall apart if Epicurean citizens lived out the consequences of their doctrines of hedonistic self-interest. As I have just suggested, these individual contradictions are components of a larger living refutation argument enacted in Epictetus’ dialogue with the visiting Epicurean official, whose (imagined or real) public activity is presented as inconsistent with his doctrines. Epictetus, like Cicero, employs a series of short, rhetorical questions which demand justifications for the various social activities relevant to the circumstances of the interlocutor/reader (e.g. “Who will be the gymnasiarch?”; cf. Cicero’s “How will you swear legal oaths or be the patron of your hometown?”). Epictetus also imitates or quotes Epicurean doctrines (cf. the unnamed critics in Philodemus; Cicero slips into Greek to do so). Finally, like Cicero’s criticisms of Trebatius, the rhetorical charge to Epictetus’ argument might appear to modern readers as one-sided or dialectically uninteresting. But I think it is once again an entirely fair question to ask how Epicureanism can value the advantages of a peaceful society and at the same time adopt a cautious and skeptical stance about taking part in the administration of that society or even the propagation of the human race. In neither of these passages, of course, does the Epicurean get the

57 For Epicurean politics, see Chapter II, section ii; for the Epicurean position on sex and marriage, see Brown 1985, Nussbaum 1989, and Brennan 1996.
58 For another parallel, see *Adv. Col.* 1127A, where Plutarch argues that Epicureans are opportunistic freeloaders who praise society but do not make any effort to support it. Brown 2009: 181-2 argues that Epicurus would have responded to such criticisms by conceding that the sage would produce children or actively engage in politics to maintain a secure society if there was a pressing need which necessitated a recalculation of the normally limited hedonistic benefits of such actions (cf. Seneca, *De Otio* 3.2). For Cicero’s sophisticated criticism in *De Republica* of this defense (at least with respect to political activity in emergencies), see Chapter II, n.43.
chance to reply—a fact which makes the Epicurean spokesman L. Manlius Torquatus’ response to Cicero’s criticisms in *De Finibus* I all the more unique and exciting. ⁵⁹

These comments should suffice to offer initial support for my claim that Cicero’s arguments in *Fam.* 7.12 are fully in line with a venerable tradition of ancient polemics; in this letter we see Cicero practicing philosophy in much the same way Epictetus or Plutarch went about attacking Epicureanism. Now that this letter’s philosophical credentials have been established, I turn to analyze a number of argumentative and linguistic parallels in the *philosophica*. The wide-ranging criticisms of Epicureanism in *De Natura Deorum* I provide a number of such parallels. Like Cicero in his letter to Trebatius, the Academic Cotta barrages his Epicurean interlocutor, Velleius, with a range of pointed criticisms. A passage from near the end of Cotta’s speech provides an instructive comparison with the arguments in *Fam.* 7.12:

"*at etiam de sanctitate, de pietate adversus deos libros scripsit Epicurus.*” *at quo modo in his loquitur? ut T. Cornuncanium aut P. Scaevolam pontifices maximos te audire dicas, non eum qui sustulerit omnem funditus religionem… quid est enim cur deos ab hominibus colendos dicas, cum dei non modo homines non colant, sed omnino nihil curent, nihil agant?… quae porro pietas ei debitur, a quo nihil acceperis…? est enim pietas iustitia adversum deos; cum quibus quid potest nobis esse iuris, cum homini nulla cum deo sit communitas?*

“But Epicurus himself wrote books on holiness and piety.” But how does he speak in these books? You’d think you’re listening to the high priests T. Coruncanius or P. Scaevola,⁶⁰ not the man who completely destroyed all religion… For what is the reason for your claim that men must worship the gods when the gods not only do not care about men, but actually do and care about nothing at all? … Furthermore, why is piety owed to someone who has given you nothing? … For piety is justice towards the gods; but how can justice exist between the gods and ourselves if there is no community between gods and men? (DND 1.115-7)

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⁵⁹ See Chapter V, section iv.
⁶⁰ On these individuals see Pease 1955: i.508 and Dyck 2003: 195-6.
Cicero’s varied use of interrogative pronouns and particles to introduce his rhetorical questions is expressed in virtually the same language as *Fam.* 7.12 (*quo modo… quid est enim cur… quae porro… quid potest… ~ sed quonam modo… ubi porro… quis enim… quod… quo modo autem… quid fiet porro…*).\(^{61}\) Both texts use these questions to highlight tensions or contradictions in the Epicurean system. Indeed, some of the charges are very similar. The thrust of Cotta’s criticism is to show that even if Epicurus encouraged traditional forms of piety,\(^{62}\) his position was nevertheless inconsistent because the indifference and impassivity of god undermines the very notion of worship; in *Fam.* 7.12 Cicero claims that Epicurean oaths become nonsensical given this same indifference.

One final passage of Cotta’s speech merits discussion. A little earlier Cotta had been arguing that Epicurus was actually an atheist, his theology a sham. Nevertheless, Cotta admitted that a number of his Epicurean contemporaries did in fact believe in the gods and continued to worship them, despite the school’s incoherent position: “I myself know Epicureans who venerate all the little statues of the gods…” (*novi ego Epicureos omnia sigilla venerantes*) (*ND* 1.85). Might Cotta’s emphatic (*novi ego*) comment actually reflect Cicero’s disdain for the religious activities of his network of Roman Epicurean friends and Greek teachers? After all, he would have had plenty of opportunities to see Epicurean piety in action: an inscription on the base of a herm in the Eleusinion dedicated to the Epicurean scholarch Phaedrus by his student, Cicero’s co-pupil L. Saufeius, has survived;\(^{63}\) Atticus seems to have been particularly enthusiastic about a shrine to the nymph Amalthea on one his

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61 Cicero sometimes avoids variation while retaining the general argumentative structure of *Fam.* 7.12: e.g. *ND* 1.1 (*si vera sententia [of Epicureans] est, quae potest esse pietas, quae sanctitas, quae religio?*); cf. 1.107-8 on Epicurean physics (*quae autem… aut unde… nam quid est quod… quid quod… quid quod… quid quod etiam…*).


63 See Raubitschek 1949.
Cassius held a priesthood which he would later advertise on his coinage; and Cicero made use of *De Pietate* for Velleius’ defense of Epicurean theology and so would have had the chance to read about all those oaths and sacrifices and initiations of Epicurus and his distinguished associates. While it is certainly delightful to imagine Cicero frowning over the course of his life at the absurdities of his friends’ sham religious practices, what is more important (and significantly less speculative) is that Cotta’s remark is a variation of the living refutation argument which Cicero had employed against Trebatius in the previous decade.

Chapter V will examine the prominent role of living refutation arguments against a number of Cicero’s other Roman Epicurean contemporaries in his letters and dialogues; I therefore limit myself here to citing one such passage to show that the structure of his criticism of Trebatius’ “conversion” was deployed again and again in his later dialogues. After extended criticisms of the coherency of the Epicurean account of virtue, Marcus tries in *De Finibus* II to compel the Epicurean spokesperson Torquatus to admit that he cannot fulfill his Roman social roles without blatant deception (cf. the critique of Trebatius’ patronage and juridical interests):

Soon you will take up office. You will have to announce what principles you will observe in administering the law… As you step up to the podium, would any reward be great enough to induce you to declare that your sole aim in office will be pleasure, and that your whole life has been dedicated to pleasure alone? … Indeed it is the Peripatetics and Stoics whose

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64 At *Att.* 1.13.1 = SB 13 Cicero imagines Atticus sacrificing at the shrine’s altar, while at 1.16.18 = SB 16 Cicero appears to humor his friend and requests poems or stories about Amalthea (see also *Leg.* 2.7, *Att.* 2.7.5 = SB 27, 2.20.2 = SB 40); cf. Shackleton Bailey 1965-70: i.301, Dyck 2004: 264, and Moore 1906 (the most comprehensive account). Atticus’ enthusiasm for the shrine apparently died off; references to it disappear after the first two books of the *Ad Atticum*. Perhaps the shrine had only recently been constructed or renovated at the time of these letters?

65 See Armstrong 2011: 112 n.30 for details.

66 See Chapter IV, n.109 for Cicero’s use of *De Pietate* in *De Natura Deorum*. It is worth adding that the Epicurean Philonides was a *theorodokos* at Delphi—see Gera 1999: 77 n.7 for details—and we know of an Epicurean priest in Apamea during the Empire (see Smith 1996).
vocabulary is on your lips in the court-room and the Senate: ‘duty,’ ‘fairness,’ ‘worthiness,’
‘integrity,’ ‘rectitude,’ ‘honor,’ ‘the dignity of office,’ ‘the dignity of the Roman people,’
‘risk everything for our country,’ ‘die for your native land.’ When you utter these phrases,
we dupes gasp in admiration. Meanwhile, you are laughing to yourself.

*(De Finibus, 2.74-6, trans. R. Woolf)*

This passage and the examples from *De Natura Deorum* are more expansive than Cicero’s
arguments in *Fam. 7.12*, of course, but the general polemical strategy, the language and style,
and even some of the individual charges are all very similar.

I want to reemphasize that by citing these parallels I do not mean to suggest that *Fam.*
7.12 had any direct influence on any particular dialogue. My claim is more modest: Cicero’s
letter to Trebatius reveals that he had been composing in his correspondence brief
philosophical sallies against the Garden far earlier than the comprehensive polemics of 45-
44. The parallels between the argumentative strategy in 7.12 and later dialogues therefore
invite us to consider the possibility that his correspondence offered him the opportunity to
practice his arguments and hone his polemical technique. The other letters in this and the
following chapters will continue to return to and build upon this hypothesis.

**IV. The foundation of political philosophy in *Ad Atticum 7.2***

My next example is, on the face of it, a most unlikely occasion for a philosophical
discussion. In a longish reply to Atticus, written in 50 (a few years after *Fam. 7.12*), Cicero
breezes through a number of topics, ranging from inquiries about the health of Atticus and

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67 *Cf. Fin. 2.62:* “And did pleasure lead you, a man worthy in every way of your ancestors, to snatch the
consulship away from P. Sulla while still a young man?”; and 2.69: “Believe me, Torquatus, you will be unable
to defend these positions if you take a long hard look at your thoughts and values.”
Tiro to Cicero’s travel plans and his hope for a triumph. After a mention of their mutual nephew, Cicero shifts from family to philosophy:

filiola tua te delectari laetor et probari tibi φυσικὴν esse τὴν <στοργὴν τὴν>68 πρὸς τὰ τέκνα. etenim si haec non est, nulla potest homini esse ad hominem naturae adiunctio; qua sublata vitae societas tollitur. ‘bene eveniat!’ inquit Carneades spurse sed tamen prudentius quam Lucius noster et Patron qui, cum omnia ad se referant, <nec> quicquam alterius causa fieri putent et cum ea re bonum virum oportere esse dicant ne malum habeat non quo<d> id natura rectum sit, non intellegunt se de callido homine loqui, non de bono viro. sed haec, opinor, sunt in iis libris quos tu laudando animos mihi addidisti.

I am happy that your little daughter brings you delight and you accept that there is a natural bond of affection towards our children. For if this did not exist, there can be no natural association of man to man; and if this is removed, then all society is abolished. “Let’s hope for the best!” says Carneades—foully—but nevertheless more prudently than our friends Lucius and Patro, who do not understand that they are speaking of a clever man, not a good man, since they refer all things to themselves, do not think that anything should be done for the sake of another, and say that it is fitting to be a good man only in order to avoid trouble—not because it is right by nature. But all of this can be found in those books which you have encouraged me by praising.

(Ad Atticum 7.2 = SB 125, Nov. 25, 50 B.C.)

Some unpacking of this passage is needed.69 Atticus had apparently made a comment about the delight he felt for his young daughter; Cicero has once again seized on what was probably no more than passing remark and interpreted Atticus’ comment as an implicit agreement that humans have a certain natural social impulse to love their offspring. Cicero uses this “admission”70 to embark on a philosophical attack against those who deny such a bond.

68 The sense of the supplement is secure, as parallels cited below will show.
69 This passage has not received very much attention. It has sometimes been mentioned in passing or footnoted: e.g. Lévy 1992: 387 n.35; Leonhardt 1999: 199.
70 In contrast, Shackleton Bailey 1965-70: iii.286 and Benferhat 2005: 106 n.74 read the passage literally and interpret Atticus as actually agreeing to the social bonding doctrine. Atticus’ personal stance is not particularly important to my analysis here, but this interpretation nevertheless deserves some comment. Since, as we will see, Epicurean doctrine suggests an outright rejection of this principle, Shackleton Bailey 1965-70: i.8 n.5 concluded on the basis of this and other passages that Atticus was an intellectual dilettante without any serious
While he passes by Carneades’ skeptical shrug with only a brief remark of distaste, his real targets are his friend Lucius and a certain Patro.

We are lucky to possess plentiful evidence for both individuals. As we saw in Chapter II, Patro was a Greek Epicurean philosopher who succeeded Phaedrus as scholarch of the Athenian Garden and later requested help from Atticus and Cicero in dealing with Memmius, the dedicatee of Lucretius, over a now-unclear property dispute involving the Garden. In “noster Lucius,” some scholars have seen a reference to Lucius Manlius Torquatus, the Epicurean spokesman in De Finibus I-II. However, this is almost certainly incorrect; the Lucius of this letter is in fact L. Saufeius, a Roman equestrian of zealous Epicurean inclinations whom we met in Chapter II, section iii.A. For Cicero’s previous letter mentions that Saufeius was with him in Athens, and that Cicero had entrusted a letter to him for Atticus. Cicero’s use of the familiar nostro is also consistent with his references to Saufeius in other letters.

philosophical commitment, while Benferhat, Castner and others have portrayed him as an “eclectic” (other discussions reach diverse conclusions: for Leslie 1950 Atticus’ convictions reflect a specifically “Roman” Epicureanism, while Perlwitz 1992: 90-7 sees Epicureanism as ultimately “überflüssig” to our understanding of Atticus’ life and career; Lindsay 1998 is non-committal). This is not the time to embark on a defense of Atticus—something sorely needed but beyond the scope of my discussion here—so I limit myself to one comment. The whole doctrinal problem evaporates altogether if we read the argument as a sophisticated joke: he seizes on a passing, non-philosophical comment by Atticus, playfully interprets this as evidence that his long-time Epicurean friend has come to his senses and abandoned his school, and then offers a demolition of the Epicurean position (further examples at Chapter II, n.69). However, even if Atticus were a philosophical lightweight, he clearly had real connections with Greek and Roman Epicureans, so Cicero’s interactions with him on the subject would still be of value to my study. A third line of defense would be to argue that there is in fact evidence for “Epicurean oikeiōsis” (on oikeiōsis see nn.76-82) something which Vander Waerdt 1988 has argued was part of Epicurean philosophy from at least time of Epicurus’ successor, Hermarchus. However, the evidence for such claims is weak in terms of both chronology and there are also doubts about the reliability of Porphyry, whence our report about Hermarchus comes (cf. the healthy skepticism of Roskam 2007: 76-9).

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71 See Chapter II, section iii.A.
74 The language of the previous letter is unambiguous (Attr. 7.1 = SB 124): “I gave L. Saufeius a letter for you, and for nobody else, because even though I did not have time enough for writing I was unwilling that so close a friend of yours (hominem tibi tam familiarem) should join you without a letter from me. But at the rate philosophers walk (ut philosophi ambulant) I imagine this will reach you first.”
75 E.g. nostrum Saufeium (Attr. 6.9 = SB 123); Saufeium nostrum (6.1.10 = 115); this latter reference perhaps pokes fun of Saufeius’ Epicurean egoism, in that Cicero alleges Saufeius will be even closer to him now that he
Cicero’s use of these old Greek and Roman Epicurean acquaintances is revealing. As examples of philosophers who deny the existence of a natural bonds of affection, he puts forward two of his own contemporaries, men with whom he debated philosophy while studying in Athens and with whom, it seems, he continued to debate decades later. Equally interesting is the fact that he puts a leisured equestrian like Saufeius on the same level as a leading Greek Epicurean—a choice which says much for his Roman friend’s learning and convictions. More will be said in my conclusion on the possibility that philosophical passages in the letters may shed some light on actual debates between Cicero and his Roman friends; for the moment, let us turn to the argument of this letter.

As one would expect of Epicureans, Lucius and Patro are depicted as philosophical egoists: they are concerned only with their own welfare and act as good men (boni viri) only to avoid encountering some personal misfortune, not due to any sort of abstract moral principle (bonum virum oportere esse dicant ne malum habeat non quo id natura rectum sit). For such people there is no natural bond towards their children or to anyone else. Cicero bombastically declares that the denial of such social bonds leads to the overthrow of society (qua sublata vitae societas tollitur). I hope the preceding sections have made clear that Cicero’s criticism in Att. 7.2 is another example of a living refutation argument. Atticus’ love for his daughter is a refutation of the Epicurean denial of such a bond; Cicero uses this denial to launch into a self-contradiction argument proper and claims that without a natural social impulse an Epicurean society would fall apart.

has inherited his brother’s estate which Cicero helped build: “qua re adiunges Saufeium nostrum, hominem semper amantem mei, nunc credo eo magis quod debet etiam fratris Appi amorem erga me cum reliqua hereditate crevisse.” On the importance of expressions of familiarity in the letters, White 2010: 67-76.
At this point it may be helpful to bring in some other texts to illustrate how this seemingly off-hand jab at Atticus in fact reflects real philosophical issues. The existence of natural bonds of affection between human beings was an important topic of discussion in Hellenistic ethics; the affection felt for one’s children was one particularly paradigmatic case of this wider social impulse. Although there is some evidence that the origins of this appeal to human sociability to ground ethics and society lie in the early Peripatos and with Theophrastus in particular, it was the Stoics who elaborated this claim and incorporated it into their theory of oikeiōsis, which offered a developmental account of a rational being’s gradually increasing awareness of his natural “affinity” or “attachment” to himself and those around him. This developmental account depended on two independent claims about human nature: first, human beings are naturally endowed with an egoistic drive toward self-love and self-preservation (“personal oikeiōsis”); second, there is also a natural social impulse toward affection toward one’s children and family (“social oikeiōsis”). The upshot

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76 The summary of the Stoic Cato in Fin. 3.62 is clear on this point: “Again, the Stoics think that it is important to understand that it is by nature that children are loved by their parents; from this beginning we [Stoics] trace the creation of the communal association of the human race” (pertinere autem ad rem arbitrantur intellegi natura fieri ut liberi a parentibus amentu; a quo initio profectam communem humani generis societatem persequimur).

77 The evidence is found in Porphyry, De Abst. 2.20ff, 3.25ff. For the question as to whether the Stoics fused the Theophrastean “social oikeiōsis” with their own “personal oikeiōsis” (for the personal/social terminology, see n.80), see the discussion between Brink 1955: 140; Görgemanns 1983: 182-7; and Inwood 1983: 193-9 (references to earlier literature can be found at Brink 1955: 123-4 and Görgemanns 1983: 166-8).

78 In addition to the works cited in the last note, classic treatment is Pembroke 1971; more recent studies include Annas 1993: 262-75; Schofield 1995; Donini and Inwood 1999: 677-82; and the comprehensive treatment in Bees 2004. Wright 1995 offers some interesting parallels with modern psychological research and notions of human rights (cf. Bees 2004: 313-20).

79 Annas 1993: 275 (cf. Vogt 2008: 102, 201) is emphatic on the “two-source” nature of oikeiosis and argues forcefully against attempts to reduce either claim to a development and refinement of the other; Plutarch, St. Rep. 1038B is particularly clear on this point.

80 Inwood 1983 adopts the terminology “personal oikeiōsis” to refer the natural impulse toward self-love, and “social oikeiosis” to refer to our attachment to others; this distinction has been widely followed. Bees 2004: 258 n.177 argues that “personal” is imprecise because plants and animal also possess a natural drive for self-preservation, but they are not “persons”; he therefore suggest the term “individual oikeiōsis.” This criticism seems fair, but I will continue to use the personal/social distinction and leave it to specialists in Stoic philosophy to decide whether this slightly more precise terminology is worth adopting.
of this doctrine is that we are naturally predisposed to seek out our own personal good and the mutual good of all rational animals, beginning with our children. Now, the existence of these natural impulses required justification, which was often provided by citing infant and animal behavior, and further argumentation is required to ground justice and human society on the basis of these aspects of human nature. The brief shot at Atticus’ inconsistent Epicureanism in Att. 7.2 does not, of course, discuss this theory in any detail or provide this doctrinal background; Cicero assumes that Atticus will understand this context (which again says much about the education of his Epicurean correspondent). Indeed, Cicero is not trying to defend the theory directly: instead, his self-contradiction argument claims that the Garden cannot explain society or its ethical doctrines while simultaneously denying the existence of natural human social tendencies. Thus Cicero’s compressed claim that φυσικὴν esse τὴν <στοργὴν τὴν> πρὸς τὰ τέκνα reflects a central debate in Hellenistic philosophy and even employs Stoic vocabulary to do so.

Plutarch’s short treatise On Affection for Offspring provides a helpful parallel to Cicero’s criticism, one which simultaneously illustrates the wide appeal and continued relevance of this sort of argument and offers additional insight into the level of sophistication of the philosophical joke in Att. 7.2. Plutarch is discussing the value of using animal

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81 Schofield 1995 offers a particularly cogent analysis of how different Stoic approaches: sometimes their arguments made appeals to cosmic nature and reason (pace Annas 1993: 159-79, who unpersuasively tries to minimize this “theological” approach), while others focused on providing more empirical support about human and animal behavior (i.e. infant behavior—the “cradle argument”—on which see Brunschwig 1986).

82 E.g. SVF iii.731 = D.L. 7.120: “φασὶ [the Stoics] δὲ καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὰ τέκνα φιλοστοργίαν φυσικὴν εἶναι αὐτοῖς .”

83 For Plutarch as a Platonist and Academic, see Dillon 1977: 184-230; Swain 1997; Karamanolis 2006: 85-126. On his “practical ethics,” see Van Hoof 2010; see Westman 1955 and Kechagia 2012 for an analysis of Plutarch as a philosophical critic in Adv. Col.; for his social class and activities, see Jones 1971 (who shows how a good deal of Plutarch’s ethical advice reflected the realities of Greek landed aristocrats and their dealings with their home cities and Rome). As with Cicero, prosopographical evidence for Plutarch’s teachers survives: see Jones 1966.
behavior for understanding human ethical obligations. While he acknowledges that animals have a rudimentary and imperfect sense of love for their offspring, he believes that Nature took greater efforts with human beings:

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\text{ἀνθρώποι δὲ, λογικοὶ καὶ πολιτικοὶ ζῷοι, ἐπὶ δίκην καὶ νόμον εἰσάγονα παρέσχε ἡ φύσις τὰ ἔγγονα χάριν καὶ ἀγάπησιν, ἀκολουθοῦσαν ταῖς πρώταις ἄρχαις· αὕται δὲ ἦσαν ἐν ταῖς τῶν σωμάτων κατασκευαῖς.}
\]

As for man, a rational and social animal, nature has, by introducing justice and law and the worship of the gods and the founding of cities and kindliness, provided noble and beautiful and bountiful seeds of these things in the joy and love we have for our children, feelings which accompany our first beginnings; and these [impulses] existed in the very constitution of our bodies.  

\textit{(De Amore Prolis 495C)}

This natural love of offspring acts as a ‘seed’ of virtue that guides humans toward care for not only their families but also for their community and their respect for justice. Now, as Att. 7.2 suggests, the great critics of this theory in Antiquity were the Epicureans. For an Epicurean, pleasure is the good and all other aspects of human life can only be instrumentally valuable in the acquisition of it. Not even justice is a good in itself; it is good only in so far as a just society is necessary to avoid being harmed.\textsuperscript{84} Unsurprisingly, Plutarch does not miss the chance to attack Epicurus on his denial of a natural social impulse:

\textsuperscript{84} \textit{KD} 33. Cicero notes some heterodoxy among Epicureans on the issue of friendship. Some argued that friendship was a good in itself, or at least developed into one after instrumental beginnings (\textit{Fin.} 1.69). It is worth flagging that I am not aware of similar passages in Epictetus, Plutarch or Seneca where multiple Epicurean positions are discussed. Only Philodemus and a stray passage in Diogenes Laertius (10.26), as far as I can tell, discuss such inter-school disputes (on rhetoric: see Sedley 1989 and Blank 1995). It is worth entertaining the possibility that Cicero’s network of Epicurean friends may have left him better informed about the school than other hostile critics.
They allege that human nature alone does not have an instinct to love one’s offspring and does not know how to love without gain. In the theatres the man who says, “For who among men loves his fellow man for pay?” is applauded. And yet according to Epicurus, a father loves his son for pay, a mother her child, children their parents. (De Amore Prolis 495A)

Like Cicero, Plutarch holds that a natural social impulse is necessary for any organized society, and pans the Epicureans for their purely instrumental evaluation of other people, which cannot account, it is alleged, for the continued existence of a stable community or the rule of law. Epictetus similarly argues that an egoistic social theory is incoherent:

Epicurean pleasure presupposes a stable society; a φυσικὴ κοινωνία is a necessary prerequisite of this; the Epicureans deny the existence of such a bond; therefore, their discussions of government and politics are incoherent. Epictetus’ conclusion is essentially Cicero’s in Att. 7.2: “And so Epicurus, who wishes to abolish the natural association of men with one another, uses the doctrine which he is abolishing” (οὐτῶς καὶ Ἐπίκουρος, ὅταν ἀναιρεῖν θέλῃ τὴν φυσικὴν κοινωνίαν ἀνθρώπους πρὸς ἄλληλους, αὐτῷ τῷ ἀναιρουμένῳ συγχρῆται ~ Att. 7.2: etenim si haec [sc. φυσικὰς στοργὰς] non est, nulla potest homini esse ad hominem naturae adiunctio; qua sublata vitae societas tollitur). We

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85 This passage is part of a long-winded rhetorical question; I have isolated the relevant clause and translated it in the indicative.
86 A verse from an unknown author (Kock, Com. Att. Frag. iii. p.450).
87 Plutarch elsewhere (Adv. Col. 1125C) declares that Epicureans “overthrow the state and abolish the laws” because divine providence and the appropriate piety towards it, which Epicureans would deny, are fundamental parts of a just, lawful society.
88 Epictetus, Diss. 2.20.6. At 1.23 he claims that Epicurus advised against children because he knew that once they were born it would be impossible for their parents not to love them (οὐκέτα ἢμῖν ἔστι μὴ στέργειν).
see in these three authors, then, the same sorts of polemical questions aimed at undermining Epicurean ethics and the consistency of the lives of the school’s adherents and founder. 89 I have already noted several instances of Cicero’s use of appropriate technical Greek vocabulary, but it is worth adding that the verb tollere, employed by him to express dramatically the self-destructive consequences of Epicurean social beliefs, corresponds to ἀναιρεῖν, which is used in similar contexts. Philodemus, for example, in the course of his defense of Epicurean religious practice uses the verb seven times when reporting charges of unnamed opponents, each alleging that Epicurus “abolishes” the gods, cultic practice, oaths, etc.; this language once again finds further parallels in Epictetus and Plutarch. 90

I conclude that the anti-Epicurean arguments of Att. 7.2 should be read (like the letter to Trebatius) as reflecting the style, vocabulary, and polemical strategies of a variety of Greek philosophers. I now turn to examine a number of passages in Cicero’s dialogues to explore how these letters can help interpret recurring language and arguments in these works. I begin with his first philosophical treatise, De Republica, which seems to have been published around 54, a few years before Att. 7.2. 91 The assumption of a φυσικὴ στοργὴ is

89 Marc. Aur., Med. 6.44 provides another interesting parallel. Marcus entertains for a moment the Epicurean claim that the gods do not care for men. He nevertheless concludes that human sociability is sufficient to justify Stoic ethics: “Yet if [the gods] do not make plans for any one of us in particular, I can still plan for myself and examine my own advantage (τοῦ συμφέροντος = Cicero’s utilitas). And the advantage of each thing is what is in accord with its own make-up and its own nature; and my nature is rational and social (η δὲ ἐμὴ φύσις λογική καὶ πολιτική). My city and my country, as I am Antoninus, is Rome; as a man, it is the world. Therefore, only the things which are beneficial to these communities are good for me” (trans. Grube, slightly modified). Marcus more generally lays great stress on human sociality as a guide to ethical action: see the index verborum in Dalfen 1987, s.v. κοινωνία, κοινωνικός, πολιτικός, φιλόστοργος. For discussion see Hadot 1998: 210-22 and Gill 2013: xxxvi-xliv (both scholars also persuasively defend Marcus against charges of eclecticism).

90 See Obbink 1996: s.v. ἀναιρεῖν; cf. e.g. Epictetus, Diss. 2.20.6; Plutarch, Adv. Col. 1125C.

91 On this work see e.g. Sharples 1986; Ferrary 1995; Zetzel 1995; Zetzel 1996; Asmis 2001; the essays in Powell and North 2001; Asmis 2004b; Asmis 2005; Asmis 2008; Atkins 2013: 47-154; Zetzel 2013; the following notes provide further references. On Dicaearchus as one of Cicero’s sources for this work, see McConnell 2014: 158-9 (who confirms a hypothesis voiced by Frede 1989).
in fact one of the most fundamental assumptions of the entire work and is used to explain the
formation of governments and society while simultaneously providing a foundation for
political philosophy.\textsuperscript{92} The fragmentary preface opens with an attack on Epicurean
abstention from politics.\textsuperscript{93} As in his letter to Atticus, Cicero underlines his preference for an
assumption of human sociality in contrast to the self-interested position of the Epicureans: “I
make this one assertion, that nature has bestowed upon the race of men such a great necessity
for virtue and such a great love for defending the common safety that this force [i.e. our
human nature] conquered all the enticements of pleasure and idleness” (\textit{unum hoc definio,
tantam esse necessitatatem virtutis generi hominum a natura tantumque amorem ad
communem salutem defendendam datum, ut ea vis omnia blandimenta voluptatis otique
vicerit}…).\textsuperscript{94} It is no surprise, then, that Scipio’s definition of “\textit{res publica}” depends upon
this same crucial assumption: “The first cause of coming together is not so much weakness as
a certain natural association of men (so to speak); for man is not a solitary or lonely
wandering being…” (\textit{eius autem prima causa coeundi est non tam inbecillitas quam
naturalis quaedam hominum quasi congregatio; non est enim singulare nec solivagum genus
hoc}).\textsuperscript{95} It is noteworthy that here Scipio departs from the speculative anthropology of
Polybius, whom Cicero used as a source for his discussion of chronology and constitutional

\textsuperscript{92} Asmis 2008 is a forceful statement of this point; cf. Benferhat 2005: 276; for human sociability in the works
of 45-4 (especially \textit{De Finibus}), see Leonhardt 1999: 197-204 and my discussion below. In contrast, Connolly
2007: 87-8, 91-3, 166-8 insists on finding contradictions in Cicero’s appeals to human nature: see n.108 below.
\textsuperscript{93} At 1.10-11 Epicurean politics is attacked; at 1.12 clarifies that his preceding discussion aimed at undermining
their general wariness about political participation. On the preface and Epicurean polemics in this work, see
\textsuperscript{94} \textit{Rep}. 1.2. Zetzel 1995: 98 glosses \textit{amor} as \textit{amor virtutis}, but I am inclined to read \textit{amor} as a reference to the
natural social impulse employed by Scipio later in the work (cf. Cato’s terminology at \textit{Fin}. 3.62).
\textsuperscript{95} \textit{Rep}. 1.39 (cf. in particular \textit{Off}. 1.11-2). On Cicero’s definition, see Kohns 1974 and 1976; Schofield 1995;
Asmis 2005: 400ff. See also Zetzel 1995: 127-30. Zetzel 2013: 189 stresses that the rejection weakness as the
motive for society is a response to Glaucoun’s challenge in Book II of Plato’s \textit{Republic}. This is certainly true,
but Scipio’s arguments for a natural social impulse are also fully applicable against the Garden’s utility-based
justifications for society and government.
theory in *De Republica*. Like the Epicureans, Polybius justified early society and the concept of justice based on self-interest, human weakness, and fear. Cicero has therefore made Scipio part ways with one of the dialogue’s sources precisely when that source veered toward the unwelcome Epicurean conclusions about human nature which he attacked in *Att. 7.2.*

The unfinished *De Legibus*, which appears to have been worked on during or soon after *De Republica*, offers further material for comparison with the anti-Epicurean polemics of *Att. 7.2.* The argument of Book I uses human nature to ground a largely Stoic theory of justice and natural law; once again Cicero characteristically sidelines his foils the Epicureans near the beginning of the treatise. When Marcus gets the dialogical Atticus to concede the existence of divine providence (1.21), he uses this admission to claim that the gods endowed us with reason and a social nature in order to encourage communal life. Nevertheless, Marcus cannot resist making a number of further attacks on the Epicurean position. He first questions how Epicurean ethics could really justify its prohibitions against stealing. His conclusion here may in fact be the passage he had in mind in *Att. 7.2* (“But all of this can

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96 This has frequently been noted: e.g. Lintott 1997: 81-5 and Asmis 2005: 379. Walbank 1972 draws a number of parallels (and contrasts) between Book VI of Polybius and Cicero’s treatment of the Roman mixed constitution. See now Atkins 2013: 93-119.
98 Cf. my discussion of Howe 1951 in Chapter I, section iii.B, where I show that this initial and pointed exclusion of Epicureans from debate is paralleled not only in the preface to the *De Republica* but also in *De Oratore*.
99 *Leg.* 1.22ff; Cicero programmatically stresses the importance of *coniunctio hominum* and our *naturalis societas* as early as 1.16. On the role of human nature in this dialogue, see Schofield 1995; cf. Annas 2013: 212-9 and Girardet 1989 (who offer interesting comparisons with the positions of Plato and Aristotle, respectively). It is also worth mentioning that at 1.39 Atticus’ concession also includes a belief that “everything which is correct and morally good must be chosen for its own sake” (*omnia recta atque honesta per se expetenda*), a concession which Cicero claims he can expect from any adherent of the Platonic/Peripatetic/Stoic schools—i.e. the Antiochean syncretic history of philosophy which is also seen in the *Academica Post.* and the preface of *Tusculans* IV (see Chapter I, n.1), where it is likewise deployed to sideline Epicureans. The importance of this additional assumption about the *honestum* is discussed in Chapter V.
100 This is the suggestion of Shackleton Bailey 1965-70: iii.287.
be found in those books which you have encouraged me by praising.”): “As for those who are not moved by moral goodness itself—as we good men are—but by a certain [calculation of] utility and profit, they are clever men, not good men” (Leg. 1.41: *tum autem, qui non ipso honesto movemur ut boni viri simus, sed utilitate aliqua atque fructu, callidi sumus, non boni* ~ Att. 7.2: *cum omnia ad se referant... non intellegunt se de callido homine loqui, non de bono vire*). The attack continues:

But if justice is obedience to the written laws and institutions of the people, and if, as those same men say [i.e. Epicureans], all things must be measured according to their utility (*utilitate omnia metienda*), then he will ignore or break the laws if he is able to do so and thinks that he will gain an advantage. It follows that justice does not exist at all if it does not exist by nature, and that justice which is based on utility is itself torn apart by utility (*propter utilitatem constituitur utilitate illa convellitur*). (*De Legibus* 1.42)

This self-contradiction argument against Epicurus’ instrumentalist account of justice then runs into a lacuna, but when the text resumes Marcus is arguing that the virtues are necessary prerequisites for the maintenance of a stable society. They are explained as natural outgrowths of our sociability; the Epicurean alternative “abolishes” any association between men and gods:

*nam haec nascuntur ex eo quia natura propensi sumus ad diligendos homines, quod fundamentum iuris. neque solum in homines obsequia, sed etiam in deos caerimoniae religionesque tolluntur, quas non metu sed ea coniunctione, quae est homini cum deo, conservandas puto.*

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101 Cf. *Fin.* 2.60 (also against the Epicureans): “For it is clear that unless fairness, trust and justice depart from nature, and if all things are referred to their utility, no good man can be found” (*perspicuum enim, nisi aequitas fides iustitia proficiscantur a natura, et si omnia haec ad utilitatem referantur, virum bonum non posse reperiri*). Cicero then adds that “these matters have been sufficiently discussed by Laelius in my *De Republica.*” This latter comment reveals that he consciously remembered his efforts in the previous decade to attack Epicureanism on this point, a fact which says much about the centrality of this issue in his mind.

102 I follow the emendation of “*et ea quae*” for the MSS’ *aeaequae* and *eaequae*; see Dyck: 2004: 187 (the emendation is also adopted by Powell in his OCT).
For the virtues grow from that which is the foundation of justice, since we are by nature inclined toward loving others. Otherwise, not only consideration for other men but even the rites and worship of the gods are abolished, for I think these should be maintained not out of fear but as a result of that bond which joins man to god. (De Legibus 1.43)

Cicero’s reference in Att. 7.2 to his own philosophical works, then, seems well-founded: the arguments and language in that letter reflect a central debate in Hellenistic philosophy and resonate with his criticisms and polemical strategies in his dialogues of that period.

Furthermore, this comment reveals that he was at least in this letter consciously producing a philosophical attack that was brief but nevertheless serious enough to be compared with one of his published treatises. Finally and no less importantly, these letters and works from the 50s demonstrate decisively that Cicero’s opposition to the Garden spanned his literary career and structured his presentation of key issues in political philosophy.

Human sociality was not just an interest of the 50s, however; the repeated and consistently positive deployment of this claim to justify social relations invites a few further comments. In the case of De Finibus III-V—which follow the complete rejection of Epicurean ethics in the first two books—human sociality plays a central role. Both Cato’s Stoic and Piso’s Antiochean speeches argue that a natural social impulse grounds ethical action; while Marcus presses both of their accounts on a variety of points, this crucial doctrine goes unchallenged. De Amicitia, while it is not concerned with love of one’s children, similarly analyzes friendship in terms of the purely other-oriented concern which

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103 For the Cicero’s criticism of Epicurean egoism in his later works, see Leonhardt 1999: 197-204 (who also rightly emphasizes the importance of oikeiósis and makes some limited use of the letters); cf. Maso 2008: 227-40.

104 Cato: 3.62; Piso: 5.65-6. Book IV is a refutation of Cato’s position (but note Marcus’ acceptance of social bonds at 4.16); for Marcus’ veiled criticisms of Piso in the fifth book, see Annas 2001: 143 n.54; 144 n.57; 147 n.61; 148 n.65; 150 n.70 (she thus rebuts Leonhardt 1999, who is inclined to read Piso’s speech as indicative of Cicero’s views). At 2.45 Cicero makes a brief attack on the Epicurean denial of social bonds; cf. ND 1.64.
characterizes social oikeiōsis. It is in De Officiis, however, that social bonds return in full force. Once again he places a programmatic statement of the foundational role of a φυσικὴ στοιχεῖα at the beginning of the work, and his arguments and language are saturated with references to the societas hominum and the societas vitae. Indeed, some of these passages employ anti-Epicurean overturning arguments expressed in language nearly identical to Att. 7.2. This repeated appeal to human nature to ground political philosophy, then, is a consistent part of the philosophica from the first to final work. It is furthermore a remarkably distinguished cast of characters who make use of social oikeiōsis: Scipio, Laelius, Cato, and Cicero (in both his prefaces and in his roles as Marcus) all argue for this doctrine.

And, as we have seen, this assumption is assumed by Cicero in his living refutation of Atticus and is explicitly compared to the positions in his philosophical works. So far as I can tell, this assumption goes unchallenged in the philosophica.

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105 Since I do not discuss De Amicitia in any detail elsewhere, I note here a few examples of anti-Epicurean passages which resonate with the themes analyzed in this and the following chapters. With respect to social oikeiōsis, Laelius claims that human sociability is the basis of friendship (19): “It seems clear to me, then, that we were born in such a way that there is a certain natural association between us (inter omnis esset societas quaedam) which becomes greater with our proximity to each other.” The Epicurean position is therefore soon criticized in a long passage (26-32) where utility is rejected as an explanation for real friendship—esp. section 27: “Therefore it seems to me that friendship has arisen more from nature than from need… or from the calculation of how much utility the relationship would yield (quam cognitione quantum illa res utilitatis esset habitura);” cf. 23, 51 (atque etiam mihi quidem videntur, qui utilitatis causa fingunt amicitias, amabilissimum nodum amicitiae tollere), 53. At 13.46 Laelius contemptuously rejects the Epicurean explanation of seeking friendships for “security” (quae est enim ista securitas?). Finally, note the rejection of the Epicurean denial of the immortality of the soul at 4.13 (Laelius’ claim here should not, however, be read as historical evidence for Epicureanism in the second century, as Castner 1988: 9-10 and Benferhat 2005: 62 n.25 suggest).

106 1.12: Eademque natura vi rationis hominem conciliat homini et ad orationis et ad vitae societatem ingeneratque inprimis praecipuum quendam amorem in eos, qui procreati sunt impellitque, ut hominum coetus et celebrationes et esse et a se obiri velit ob easque causas studeat parare ea, quae curationem et ad victum, nec sibi soli, sed coniugi, liberis, ceterisque quos caros habeat tuerique debat, quae cura essuscitat etiam animos et maiores ad rem gerendam facit.

107 E.g. Off. 3.21: nam principio tollit convictum humanum et societatem – Att. 7.2: vitae societatis tollitur.

108 Connolly 2007 claims that Cicero’s appeals to human nature to ground human society are deeply contradictory. For example, she argues (pp. 87-7; cf. 103) that “[t]he gap between impulse and action… is symptomatic of his larger failure to reconcile the natural impulse toward political association with other natural drives, such as self-preservation, allegiance to family, and the desire for glory…. Rather than take these examples of evidence of Cicero’s philosophical limitations, we should consider that the contradictions in the text emerge out of a deep, unresolved conflict in his thinking. On the one hand, he cherishes the philosophy-
What, if anything, can this tell us about the contentious problem of Cicero’s own views? As noted above, I have tried to avoid burdening my argument with assumptions about authorial intent: regardless of whether he intentionally used his correspondence as practice or engaged consciously with a tradition of writing “philosophical letters,” the parallels between his epistolary polemics and the style and arguments of his published works can help explain their sources and inspiration. Nevertheless, I will indulge in some brief speculation (which, I think, is separable from my main argument), for there is good reason to speculate. As Malcolm Schofield has noted, Cicero’s “voice” is one of the distinguishing features of his literary works: while Plato lurks in the background of the *Apology* (34A) and avoids in his dialogues anything like a clear authorial statement, Cicero speaks in ostensibly his own voice in a number of prefaces and as a character in several rhetorical and philosophical works. In a sense he has invited his readers to consider his own views. At the same time, assuming that a character in a dialogue (whether of Cicero or Plato) reflects the speaker’s historical views is obviously highly speculative, as is an assumption that he “identifies” with the arguments of Scipio. A notorious passage in *De Natura Deorum* sums up the problem: near the beginning of the work Cicero chastises his readers for wanting to know what he really thought; and yet at the end of the work he weighs in and says the Stoic driven desire to ground the republic in a natural order; but this is a troubled awareness, since it casts nature, the source of human impulse, as deficient, thus starkly underscoring the nature of virtuous life as a painful struggle.” This critique is unpersuasive, and it is difficult to understand how she could cite *De Officiis* as evidence of such “contradictions.” Cicero’s explicit purpose in Book III is to prove that one’s personal good never actually conflicts with the common good; cf. his defense of *gloria* in Book II as an instrumental good for helping one’s *societas* (see McConnell 2014: 202-3 for an overview of Cicero’s defense of “true glory”). More generally Connolly omits discussion of the Stoic/Peripatetic background to *De Officiis* (Panaetius is mentioned only briefly on p.169) as well as a number of explicit Stoic attempts to resolve competing claims to one’s country and parents (see e.g. the Stobaean extracts of Hierocles in Konstan and Ramelli 2007: 64-96). As far as her claim that the question of “why are some citizens more naturally virtuous than others” is “perhaps unanswerable” (91), see Graver’s analysis (2012) of the Stoic explanation for “moral perversion”: the Stoics apparently thought an answer could be given, and their answer is worth discussing.

position is more probable than the Epicurean.\textsuperscript{110} Cicero, then, asks us to consider his own views, and elsewhere warns us against doing so.

Can any headway be made? At the end of an article Margaret Graver has suggested a promising and appropriately cautious approach. She identifies a series of recurring philosophical themes that run throughout Cicero’s philosophical works, including his Academic skepticism; his interest in the synthetic approach of Antiochus to find common ground between the Stoics, Plato, and his followers; his emphasis on the social necessity of virtue and political involvement; his appreciation for Plato’s ideas and literary form, and desire to emulate them; and his own experience in politics and political motivations.\textsuperscript{111}

I am sympathetic to this nuanced approach and would like to add one more relevant factor to this list of important themes relevant to gauging Cicero’s sympathies: his opposition to Epicureanism. As we have seen and will continue to see, his hostility to the Garden spans his entire career, and we can see him defending a number of anti-Epicurean positions in his dialogues and correspondence. The ambiguity of \textit{De Natura Deorum}, discussed above, is a good example of the benefits of my suggestion: while Cicero offers no firm positive verdict on theology, his rejection of the Epicurean position is as decisive as can be hoped for from an Academic (i.e. the claim that Velleius’ speech is not “probable”). And again in the third book of \textit{De Officiis}, Cicero concedes that he often vacillates between the Stoic insistence on

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{ND} 1.5.10 “But those who ask what I think on each issue are more curious than is necessary. For we must seek not so much the weight of authority as of reason in disputation” (\textit{qui autem requirunt quid quaque de re ipsi sentiamus, curiosius id faciunt quam necesse est; non enim tam auctoritatis in disputando quam rationis momenta quaerenda sunt}). This is balanced by Marcus’ conclusion (3.40.95) that “Cotta’s argument seemed more true than Velleius’, but Balbus’ argument seemed to be closer to a resemblance of truth” (\textit{Velleio Cottae disputatio verior, mihi Balbi ad veritatis similitudinem videretur esse propensior}). This ambiguity is well exploited by Fox 2007: 3-6 in his anti-authoritarian reading of Cicero.

\textsuperscript{111} Graver 2012: 129-30. For another sensitive approach to Cicero’s views, see Atkins 2013: 14-26, 33-46. In contrast, Leonhardt 1999 compares the length of speeches to gauge Cicero’s sympathies; he also emphasizes the importance of the fact that there is no separate refutation of Piso in \textit{Fin.} 5. For criticism of his approach, see Graver 2000 (for an argument against his claim that Piso’s speech goes largely unchallenged, see the comments of Annas 2001, cited in n.104 above).
virtue as the sole good and the Antiochean/Peripatetic willingness to give some limited value to external goods. But he once again leaves no doubt about his views on the Epicurean position:

… sic ego a te postulo, mi Cicero, ut mihi concedas, si potes, nihil praeter id, quod honestum sit, propter se esse expetendum. sin hoc non licet per Cratippum, at illud certe dabis, quod honestum sit, id esse maxime propter se expetendum. mihi utrumvis satis est et tum hoc, tum illud probabilius videtur nec praeterea quicquam probabile.

… so I ask you, my dear Cicero [=Marcus Jr.], to concede to me, if you can, that there is nothing which is to be sought for its own sake except for moral goodness. But if Cratippus will not allow you that assumption, you will certainly grant this, that what is morally good is the thing most worth seeking for its own sake. Either one is sufficient for me; now one view, then the other seems more probable to me, but there is no other position at all probable.

(De Officiis 3.33)\textsuperscript{112}

For those brave and noble souls who do not wish to declare that authors are dead or give up when confronted with the *aporia* of the dialogue-form, I suggest that Cicero’s opposition to the Garden may offer ammunition for their quest to pin down his beliefs.

My discussion of the letters to Trebatius and Atticus aimed at three goals. First, I claimed that these letters show how philosophy was intertwined with the debates which Cicero had with his extensive network of Epicurean friends. In the letter to Atticus, we see Epicurean politics being debated among an “old boys” club of leisured equestrians with connections to “ivy-league” Epicureans like Phaedrus and Patro; in the letter to Trebatius, we

\textsuperscript{112} Cratippus is Marcus Jr.’s Peripatetic teacher (whom Cicero helped gain Roman citizenship)—see *Off*. 1.1—and so represents a contrast to the Stoic/Panaetian approach of the dialogue. The claim that “there is no other position at all probable” is meant to include, of course, alternative views like Cyrenaics, but there is little doubt that he has Epicurus in mind: the work closes with an attack on Epicurus, who is said to carry on the Cyrenaic hedonistic torch (3.116-19), and his anti-Epicurean redeployment of the Ring of Gyges story (3.38-9; see Chapter V, n.146).
catch a glimpse of an even wider group of philosophically-interested, politically-ambitious Romans on the very borders of the Republic discussing the Garden and reading Lucretius. These two letters, then, illustrate how Cicero’s opposition to Epicureanism was not just a matter of literary rivalry or philosophical disagreement but spilled over into his personal and epistolary relationships with his Roman and Greek Epicurean contemporaries. Second, I argued that even if these brief epistolary polemics show elements of playfulness and irony to them, the arguments grapple with real issues, are expressed in appropriate technical language, and were written with sufficient sophistication that they would not have raised an eyebrow if they were encountered in a work by Epictetus or Plutarch. Finally, I have introduced a larger claim which I will endeavor to support in the following two chapters: Cicero’s epistolary interactions provided him with an opportunity to practice and hone his anti-Epicurean polemics.
Chapter IV: Epicureanism in Ad Familiares 15.16-19, Part I:

Cassius and Cicero on dining and εἰδωλα (Fam. 15.18 and 15.17)

I. General Introduction to Fam. 15.16-19

In Chapter III, philosophical passages in Cicero’s correspondence with Atticus and Trebatius Testa were analyzed alongside arguments about politics and human nature in Cicero’s dialogues. I argued that these letters reveal Cicero thinking about philosophical ideas and sharing them with his Roman friends, and that the form and level of sophistication of his argumentation in these letters compare favorably with the polemical strategies and arguments of contemporary and later Greek philosophers. More specifically, I argued that the critiques of Epicurean social and political theory in these letters can help identify several key recurrent arguments and assumptions in the philosophica, notably his continuous use of the Stoic and Peripatetic doctrine of social oikeiosis throughout the 50s and 40s. More speculatively, I advanced two further claims: first, these epistolary exchanges, which powerfully illustrate the tightly interconnected network of Cicero’s Roman Epicurean friends such as Atticus, Pansa, Saufeius, and Trebatius, as well as their Greek teachers and acquaintances, shaped and inspired his published criticisms of Epicureanism; second, these letters reveal Cicero practicing his argumentative technique.

This and the following chapter reinforce and broaden my claims about the centrality of Cicero’s opposition to Epicureanism with a close reading of Ad Familiares 15.16-9, a series of letters written between December 46 and January 45 to Gaius Cassius Longinus (15.16-18), along with his response to Cicero (15.19). In these letters, written at a time when both correspondents were deeply anxious over the outcome of Caesar’s efforts to consolidate
his position and suppress the resistance of Pompey’s sons in Spain. Cicero and Cassius express their feelings of helplessness and foreboding. This unease may well remind us of Cicero’s conflicted mind before Pharsalus, when he had debated whether to join Pompey or to remain in Italy. At the close of 45, however, there is no substantive decision for either man to make: they are playing a waiting game in Italy. They have no news of the contest in Spain but repeatedly press each other for information. They deliberate apprehensively on who will be their “master.”

Presumably these letters, like many others in the Ad Familiares, were selected by their ancient editor(s) for their juicy political content: in them we see two famous Romans at a critical point in Republican history. However, despite the apparent lack of interest in philosophical and literary matters on the part of the ancient compilers of our corpus of letters, one striking feature about this exchange—and a feature that is critical for the goals of this chapter—is the correspondents’ repeated attempts to interpret, critique and justify each other’s political activity through philosophical principles. As Peter Brunt has shown in his analysis of Cicero’s thoughts on the eve of the Civil War, philosophy helped Cicero make sense of his officium to Pompey and the Republic, and clarified his possible courses of action. In Fam. 15.16-19, the correspondence does not present a decision-making process

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1 By this time Republican forces in Africa under Cato and Metellus Scipio had been defeated; both had taken their own lives. For a helpful analysis of Caesar’s campaign in Spain against Pompey’s sons, see Lowe 2002.
2 See Brunt 1986 for a particularly sensitive reading of Cicero’s correspondence at this time.
3 Cassius uses the term dominus to refer to both Caesar and Pompeius (15.19.4); Cicero says “pudet enim servire” (15.18.1); cf. his remarks to L. Papirius Paetus and Varro, discussed in section iii.
4 On the Ad Familiares’ focus on ‘big events’ and ‘big names,’ and for a discussion on our evidence for the editing of the correspondence, see White 2010: 31-62 (cf. Beard 2002).
5 Brunt 1986. Cicero sometimes uses the Academic method of arguing “in utramque partem” (on the importance of this type of argument for his teacher Philo, see Brittain 2001: passim) to analyze the efficacy of his possible political courses of action in his correspondence with Atticus: see Leonhardt 1995 and Baraz 2012: 44-95. The former sees continuity in Cicero’s practice; the latter argues for a developmental reading in which he only truly deliberates philosophically near the end of his life.
but rather a reflection of the correspondents’ reactions to their respective situations. Even if it was no longer possible to chart an independent course of action, philosophy still structured Cicero’s—and, as we shall see, Cassius’—attitude toward and interpretation of the political situation.

We find more than general philosophical reflections in this epistolary exchange, however. Many of the same arguments that we examined in the letters to Atticus and Trebatius are present here: a rejection of Epicurean social and political theory; the claim that there is a contradiction between traditional Roman ideals of selfless service to the fatherland and the egocentric goals of Epicurean hedonism; a related, rather backhanded, compliment that Cassius’ honorable life and actions prove that he is ‘better’ than his hedonistic philosophy; an attack on the Latin style of the Catius Insuber; and a sharp critique of the Epicurean theory of thought and imagination. As with the content of letters examined in Chapter III, all of these elements find close parallels in Cicero’s *philosophica*.

Whereas in the last chapter I was content to argue in very general terms that the letters can help explain the development of the dialogues and the prominence of certain themes and arguments in them, this and the following chapter analyze several close linguistic and argumentative parallels between *Fam.* 15.16-19, *De Finibus*, *De Natura Deorum*, and Lucretius, Book IV. I will argue that *Fam.* 15.16-19 provides evidence for the stronger claim that the philosophical exchanges in his correspondence provided Cicero with opportunities to practice and hone his argumentative technique against dissenting critics; I further claim that we can see the results of this practice reflected in the dialogues.

So much could be claimed on the basis of the evidence of these letters, even had Cassius’ reply not survived. Its survival, however, provides a unique and valuable
opportunity to see how and with what degree of sophistication a philosophically-inclined Roman responded to Cicero’s incessant philosophical heckling. This response is remarkable for several reasons. Conceding the inferiority of Catius and Amafinius’ Latin translations and dodging a damning attack on Epicurean physics, Cassius rejects Cicero’s critique of the Garden’s social and political theory. He offers a sound instrumentalist interpretation of virtue, stressing that Cicero’s attempt to undermine the compatibility of pleasure and justice is misguided. Like Lucretius, Philodemus and other Epicureans, he makes his case by explaining some of Epicurus’ central claims about virtue and pleasure, and he buttresses his argument with a citation of Epicurus’ Kuria Doxa V in Greek. He seems, as far as our surviving correspondence reveals, to win the argument. This letter therefore helps us escape the bias of Cicero by providing external evidence for what it might mean for a Roman to consider himself an Epicurean in the Late Republic and helps us understand what the other side of Cicero’s exchanges with his Epicurean correspondents might have looked like. Of course, it would be a mistake to suppose that we are being offered privileged access into Cassius’ heart of hearts, or that his Epicureanism provides the key to understanding his political and private life. As we have

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7 My discussion of Cassius’ Epicurean convictions may also be useful for the issue of philosophical allegiance more generally. Outside of Cicero’s letters and Marcus Aurelius’ Meditations (I assume that this work was written for personal use; for Marcus’ aims in writing and an overview of recent scholarship on this issue, see Gill 2013: xiii-lxiv), it is difficult to find first-person reflections on philosophy which were not intended for publication—for example, it is significantly more difficult to use Seneca’s stylized letters in their published form as evidence of the sort of reflections we see in Cicero and Cassius’ letters, or in the Meditations (but perhaps not impossible: see Griffin 1992).
learned from recent studies of Republican epistolography, the letters are not transparent documents: they advance and manage the political and personal concerns of their writers and are structured by rhetorical elaboration and by complex rituals of politeness which are often difficult for modern readers to decode. Nevertheless, the fact that Cicero treats Cassius as an Epicurean and Cassius sees fit to defend his beliefs and the actions of his friend Pansa in terms of Epicurean doctrine is sufficient to show that he felt comfortable enough both being treated as an Epicurean and responding as one.

Unlike the more obscure letters from the last chapter, *Fam.* 15.16-19 has enjoyed several recent, if brief, treatments. The majority of the discussion has focused on Cassius’ response, his personal philosophical commitment, and his knowledge of Epicureanism, rather than on this exchange’s value for our understanding of the genesis of Cicero’s philosophical work—the ultimate aim of this chapter and thesis. These views will be addressed in more detail in the course of this and the following chapter; at this point, however, a brief overview of scholarly attempts to grapple with these letters will help us see

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8 See especially Hall 2009 and White 2010. For skepticism about the value of the letters as evidence, see Gunderson 2007 and Lintott 2008.

9 It should be noted that Plutarch, *Brutt* 36-7, 39 and *Caesar*, 66 also records Cassius’ Epicurean inclinations—the only other source in Antiquity to do so. But it has long been realized that his account (or his source’s; observe his use of λέγεται below) is theatrical and biased. We find Cassius lapsing from his Epicureanism as omens and the pronouncements of seers pile up before his defeat and death at Philippi. Particularly telling is the account of the Caesar’s assassination (*Caesar* 66): “It is in fact reported (λέγεται) that, before the attack, Cassius looked at the statue of Pompey and appealed silently to it, although he was no stranger to the doctrines of Epicurus (τῶν Ἐπικούρου λόγων).” But, it seems, when the terrible deed was now at hand, the moment of truth (καιρός) replaced his former reasonings with inspiration and emotion (ἐνθυσίασμον ... καὶ πάθος αντί τῶν προτέρων λογισμῶν).” This sensationalism, characteristic of Plutarch’s disdain for Epicurean ‘impiety’ and the dangers of biographical tradition (cf. Lefkowitz 2012) has no place in my conservative reconstruction of Roman Epicureanism, and will therefore be omitted. *Fam.* 15.19, as we shall see, is sufficient evidence for Cassius’ allegiance. For more detailed criticism of Plutarch’s interpretation, see Castner 1988: 29-31 with further bibliography; cf. Armstrong 2012: 111. Sedley 1997: 41 n.6 wishes to reject the lapse from Epicureanism while maintaining that Plutarch still offers some evidence, however thin, that Cassius was an Epicurean.

what is at stake and underline the need for a more comprehensive analysis. Castner has advanced a characteristically minimalist interpretation of *Fam.* 15.16-19. She argues that Cassius’ Epicureanism was superficial and completely divorced from his political activities; Cicero’s philosophical critiques are interpreted as empty banter at a time when serious political discussion and action were impossible.\(^{11}\) Maria Dettenhofer is similarly reductive, but argues that philosophy is in fact connected to the political situation: in her analysis, philosophical references serve as a “code” and allow the correspondents’ to assess the other’s political sympathies (Epicureanism stands for Caesar in Dettenhofer’s schema).\(^{12}\) More recently, scholars of Ciceronian epistolography have been inclined to read the philosophical content as a reflection of two Romans “self-consciously parad[ing their] philosophical and literary culture” as they network and exchange news and perspectives.\(^{13}\) On such interpretations, philosophy is at best a metaphor for political discussion; at worst, a flourish of cultural capital at a time when real political deliberation is impossible due to Caesar’s dictatorship.

Other recent critics have been more positive in their interpretation of Cassius’ response. Griffin has offered the first sensitive analysis of both Cicero’s argument in 15.17 and the strength of Cassius’ reply. She has rightly underlined the surprising depth of Cassius’ philosophical knowledge and concludes that not only did he effectively counter Cicero’s criticism, he basically caught the latter making a rather poor argument in choosing

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\(^{12}\) Dettenhofer 1990; cf. Boes 1990: 59-63, who, however, rightly takes the philosophical content more seriously.

\(^{13}\) White 2010: 55; this is also his general stance with literary allusions in the *Ad Familiarres*. Cf. Lintott 2008: 324 (who is, however, mostly descriptive). For similar reductionist interpretations of other Roman Epicureans, see Rawson 1985: 59 (on Piso); Shackleton Bailey 1965: iii.8 n.7 (on Atticus), all discussed in Chapter II, section ii.
Pansa as his example. Armstrong and McConnell have more recently expanded on her analysis and have argued forcefully against the dismissive and negative verdicts which the exchange has endured. In contrast, Benferhat has focused less on the arguments and more on the question of philosophical allegiance, rebutting various reductive readings and arguing that Cassius was in fact a committed Epicurean, but adding that his marked emphasis on virtue amounts to “a synthesis of Epicureanism and Stoicism,” a combination and attitude which is distinctively “Roman.” Finally, although it moves beyond the content of Fam. 15.16-19, it has been claimed that Cassius’ assassination of Caesar was prompted by his Epicurean convictions.

To summarize, the most recent treatments of Fam. 15.16-19 have been inclined to take Cassius’s defense of Epicureanism seriously, but there is still a good amount of disagreement as to what exactly this seriousness means. At the same time, some scholars of Republican history and literary culture are still inclined to dismiss the philosophical content of the letters as idle humor. Furthermore, the focus has been firmly on Cassius’ philosophical convictions, not Cicero’s criticisms. This means that portions of the letters to which Cassius did not respond—especially the material in 15.16 and 15.18—have been underexplored and continue to be written off as jokes. Most importantly, there has been no sustained analysis of how the debates in these letters can explain the shape and nature of Cicero’s philosophica. In particular the critique of the Epicurean explanation of mental

14 Griffin 1995: 342-6, esp. 343: “Cicero cannot make this point [about Pansa], and… he leaves himself open to the reply that Cassius will make.”
17 Sedley 1997.
18 McConnell’s valuable analysis of the letters (pp. 19-26) is the closest to my own, though as I noted earlier, he is not concerned, as I am, with tracing the influence of this exchange on passages in Cicero’s published works.
impressions and its parallels in Lucretius and *De Natura Deorum* have been very much neglected and can, I argue, offer valuable insights into Cicero’s practice as a philosopher as well as his more informal sources of inspiration. Finally, given the unique preservation of Cassius’ reply—our only example of one of Cicero’s Epicurean foils fighting back—this exchange deserves a thorough and detailed treatment, far more than it has received to date. In this and the following chapter, then, I offer a close reading of *Fam.* 15.16-19 and a comprehensive interpretation of the philosophical content of these letters.

I aim to accomplish three related goals with my reading of this exchange, which map onto three themes explored in previous chapters. First, I argue that we can see in these letters more than banter or idle jokes; on the contrary, we find serious reflections on the current political situation and the correspondents’ mutual unease about it. In previous chapters I argued that Cicero’s opposition to Epicureanism was motivated by his literary rivalry with the early Epicurean writers of Latin like Catius and Amafinius; and that he powerfully disagreed with their claims about politics and society. *Fam.* 15.18 reveals a further aspect of this opposition: his disagreements with Roman Epicureans structured his analysis of his political situation under Caesar as well as his self-analysis of his conduct at the time. Drawing comparisons to other, better-known passages where Cicero judges himself by the principles and ideals set forth in *De Republica*, I argue that in *Fam.* 15.18 he analogously analyzes his personal and political situation in terms of his philosophical convictions—here in terms of his opposition to the Garden. Second, I claim that both Cassius and Cicero are arguing more seriously and effectively than commentators have realized and offer my own interpretation of the critique of Epicurean politics in 15.17 and the school’s explanation for vision and thought in 15.16. My interpretation of letters sets the stage for my third and final
goal, which is the most crucial for the central claims of my thesis: I will identify and analyze a series of close parallels in form and philosophical content between these letters and the dialogues. More specifically, I argue that Cicero used these letters as an opportunity to practice his criticisms of the Garden and to gauge their effectiveness on his Roman Epicurean friends. I further claim that he incorporated and responded to Cassius’ defense in *De Finibus*; similarly, Cicero’s critique of the Epicurean account of mental impressions in 15.16 reveals his engagement with Catius and Lucretius, and we can trace the results of this engagement in *De Natura Deorum*.

To sum up, these letters provide a unique opportunity to explore the full range of themes I have been analyzing in the preceding chapters. We see evidence for Cicero’s ongoing engagement with his contemporary Roman Epicureans; how this engagement shaped his literary agendas as well as his criticisms in his *philosophica*; and how Epicureanism structured Cicero’s political self-presentation and anxieties about his life under Caesar’s dictatorship.

II. Preliminary Remarks:

**Cicero and Cassius before the Ides of March; the order and dating of *Fam. 15.16-19***

Before turning to the letters themselves, a few words on the correspondents’ relationship with one another will help contextualize their exchange in early 45. Cicero’s encounters with Cassius became more frequent and intimate after the assassination of Caesar; we find references to meetings with Cassius and Brutus,19 and a number of letters survive which chronicle, among other matters, his efforts to support the cause of the Liberators

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19 E.g. *Att. 15.11* = SB 389, written in 44. On this letter and Cicero’s characterizations of Brutus and Cassius (more favorable to the former), see the analysis of Hutchinson 1998: 131-7.
against Antonius. But Cicero’s relationship with Cassius existed well before Fam. 15.16-19; our collection of Ad Familiares, in fact, preserves two earlier letters, stretching back as far as October 51. Since the letters we will be examining in this chapter predate their extensive cooperation and shared objective of resisting Antonius, it is worth discussing briefly the correspondents’ earlier, more distant relationship, lest we project their later association back into Caesar’s dictatorship. This distance will in fact become important in section iii.

Fam. 15.14 (SB 106), written in 51 when Cicero was governor of Cilicia, is characteristic of the somewhat cool relations between the two men. The ostensible occasion for the letter is to congratulate Cassius for his success in battle against the Parthians near Antioch; he had been in control of Syria as proquaestor after the disastrous defeat of Crassus at Carrhae in 53. It is worth emphasizing Cassius’ military experience and expertise. Although Brutus is nowadays typically considered the more important partner—no doubt due in part to his illustrious ancestry and Cicero’s closer literary and political ties with him—in other respects Cassius was the senior partner and a highly respected commander.

20 Cicero to Cassius: Fam. 12.1 (SB 327), 12.2 (SB 344), 12.3 (SB 345), 12.4 (SB 363), 12.5 (SB 365), 12.7 (SB 367), 12.6 (SB 376), 12.8 (SB 416), 12.9 (SB 421), 12.10 (SB 425). Cassius to Cicero: 12.11 (SB 366), 12.12 (SB 387).

21 15.14 (SB 106), 15.15 (SB 174).

22 On Cassius’ command, see Broughton 1952: 242. Plutarch records some of Cassius’ military advice to Crassus before Carrhae—which was ignored—in the Life of Crassus 18, 21, 22; cf. Dio 40.12ff, 28.2-3. For some general comments on this event and Cicero’s epistolary preoccupations at the time, see Hutchinson 1998: 86-94.

23 Which are themselves perhaps less close than we might think: cf. Att. 6.3.7 = SB 117, where Cicero says that he has never received a letter from Brutus “in which there was not something arrogant and uncivil” (non inesset adrogans et ἀκοινονόητον aliquid), and there are the strained relations over Brutus’ business dealings in Cyprus. On their relationship see Gildenhard 2007: 94 n.22 and Hall 2009: 4 n.7, who provide further references.

24 On Cassius’ later military campaigns in the East and the tendency of some ancient historians to refer to “Cassius and Brutus” in that order, see the survey in Rawson 1991. Armstrong 2012: 112 n.31 well reminds us that Syme 1958: 557 n.7 explained Tacitus’ ordering of the names as ‘Cassius and Brutus’ as an attempt to “silently correct a modern myth.” Even earlier, Syme 1939: 203-5 gave Cassius (and L. Calpurnius Piso) a highly sympathetic treatment, to the detriment of Brutus. More generally, his brief but sound references to Roman Epicureans were decades ahead of his time (e.g. 1939: 57, 135-6).
to 15.14, there is an ulterior motive to Cicero’s fulsome language, as is often the case in his correspondence.\(^{25}\) It gradually emerges that he is really asking Cassius to prevent any prolongation of Cicero’s tenure as governor of Cilicia, an event that he dreads will keep him away from Rome for even longer.\(^{26}\) Thus, interspersed with the congratulations for Cassius’ military achievements are a variety of expressions of affection and familiarity designed to win his cooperation and goodwill.\(^{27}\) A modern reader might be inclined to interpret these comments as evidence of a close and amicable relationship, but here as elsewhere our intuitions are unreliable. As Jon Hall has decisively demonstrated in his study of the linguistic conventions of politeness in Republican epistolography, Cicero’s effusions are more reflective of his desire to bridge a somewhat distant relationship—a strategy that Hall has called “affiliative politeness.”\(^{28}\) Far from indicating a close friendship, Cicero “tries to cultivate their amicitia using relatively formal language and polite routines.”\(^{29}\) Cassius’ language, on the other hand, shows signs of a certain stiffness, and as we will see, he was

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\(^{25}\) Another example of this practice can be found in the famous letter describing his campaign for the consulate (\(\text{Att. 1.1} = \text{SB 10}\)). Lintott 2008: 4-8 convincingly argues that Cicero’s elaborate account of his campaigning aimed at justifying his recent refusal to provide forensic service to Atticus’ uncle, the irascible Q. Caecilius; cf. Hall 2009: 111-14. In his reading of Fam. 15.14, however, it seems to me that Hall (p. 55) underplays the centrality of Cicero’s request to Cassius, which is demonstrated by similar requests to other correspondents at the time.

\(^{26}\) 15.14.5: “Strain every nerve to prevent any prolongation of my present office” (\(\text{ut omnes tuos nervos in eo contendas ne quid mihi ad hanc provinciam… temporis prorogetur}\)). The Lex Pompeia de Provinciis demanded that outgoing magistrates wait five years before taking up provincial governorships: as a result, there was a shortage of candidates and Cicero was obliged to take up this position, which was “contrary to my wishes and quite unexpected” (Fam. 3.2.1). On the law and its political motivations, see Gruen 1995 (=1974): 457-60 and Steel 2012: on centrality of the theme of Cicero’s governorship of Cilicia in Book 15 of the Ad Familiares, see White 2010: 54-5.

\(^{27}\) E.g. “Fond of you as I have long been, I should have liked to see you after so considerable an interlude… I should have liked to see a further strengthening of our friendship, which has been fostered on both sides by substantial services but interrupted, as to daily contact, by lengthy periods of separation…. as a boy you drew towards me, and on my side I always believed that I should be proud of you. You also defended me in my darkest days” (\(\text{… quem iam diu facio, tanto intervallo viderem… ut amicita nostra, quae summis officiis ab uroque culta est sed longis intervallis temporum interruptam consuetudinem habuit, confirmaretur vehementius…. tu puer me appetisti, ego autem semper ornamento te mihi fore duxi; fuisti etiam praesido tristissimis meis temporibus…}\)).

\(^{28}\) On affiliative politeness, see Hall 2009: 13-14 and the detailed discussion at 29-77.

\(^{29}\) Hall 2009: 68, summarizing his more detailed discussion of Fam. 15.14 at 52-6; cf. 71: “Cicero judges that a degree of restraint and formality is appropriate,” and White 2010: 28.
somewhat less than vigilant in replying to the Cicero’s letters. Indeed, this formality is at times striking. While Cicero indulges in full titles and highly conventionalized expressions of greetings early in their surviving correspondence, he becomes increasingly informal, a courtesy which Cassius does not at all reciprocate. It is not that the latter is rude in his letters; he simply prefers to keep some amount of distance.

All of this is to say that Cicero at the time of writing 15.16-18 was not on the same intimate terms with Cassius as he was with Atticus, Trebatius, or that Epicurean stalwart, L. Saufeius. This exchange, then, offers an example of two influential but not especially close Romans trying to deal with the uncertainty over Caesar’s campaigns against the remaining Republican forces. Their references to philosophy in Fam. 15.16-19 as a means of coping with and analyzing their situation, then, suggest that such discussions were not merely the intellectual pastimes of Cicero and his former school-mates who studied with him in Athens; philosophy played a role in his relations with a much wider circle of Republican aristocrats.

Before turning to Fam. 15.16-19, a note on the dating and order of the letters is necessary, along with an explanation for the order of their presentation in this chapter. First, the manuscripts do not appear to preserve the letters in their chronological order. This is not the only time this happens in the Ad Familiares and is not overly surprising. It seems as though the ancient editors, after they included Cicero’s letter to Cassius on the prolongation

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30 Initial formality: “M. Cicero Imp. S.D. C. Cassio Pro Q.” (15.14). Seven years later Cicero is content with “Cicero Cassio S.” (12.1 = SB 327). Cassius prefers more formal greetings: particularly striking is the exchange at the beginning of 43: “Cicero Cassio S.” (12.5 = SB 365) contrasts sharply with the response “C. Cassius Pro Cos. S.D. M. Ciceroni,” along with the stiff “S.v.b.e.e.q.v.” (“If you are well, I am well. My army and I are well”)—note that Cicero used the same expression (in the plural) in a formal letter to the senate (“M. Tullius M.F. Cicero Pro Sos. S. D. Cos. Pr. Tr. Pl. Senatui: S.v.v.b.e.e.q.v.” = 15.2 = SB 105). This language is not trivial: on the importance of introductory formulas in letters and their implications for intimacy, see White 2010: 67-76.

31 After all, Cassius makes some efforts at strengthening their familiarity through amicable joking: see Hutchinson 1998: 177 and my analysis of Fam. 15.19 in Chapter V, section iii.

32 This distance does not seem to have changed by 47 (see Fam. 15.15).
of his term in Cilicia, appended additional letters between the two men. In this process the final letters in the series became jumbled.\textsuperscript{33} It is not strictly necessary for the purposes of this paper to defend or reject the MSS order: Cassius replied to all of them at once, and each of Cicero’s letters makes sense on its own terms. Nevertheless, their relative dating can be reconstructed on the basis of the internal evidence in the letters:

**Summary of the relative order and dating of *Ad Familiares* 15.16-19:** \textsuperscript{34}

- 15.18 = SB 213, late Dec. 46
- 15.17 = SB 214, early Jan. 45
- 15.16 = SB 215, early Jan. 45
- 15.19 = SB 216, early Jan. 45 (= response of Cassius)

For the sake of the clarity of my argument, I will depart from both the manuscript and the probable chronological order and analyze the series in the following order: 15.18, 15.16, 15.17, 15.19—i.e. switching the position of the second and third letter. My justification for doing so is that Cassius’ response focuses primarily on Cicero’s arguments in the *second letter* (15.17) and avoids grappling with the more technical critique presented in the third letter (15.16). Therefore, instead of presenting the criticism of the second letter and delaying Cassius’ response, it seems sensible to treat the second letter and the response together (15.17, 15.19). At the same time, the general philosophical reflections of the first letter (15.18) and the technical criticisms of the third letter (15.16) can be effectively analyzed as

\textsuperscript{33} Cf. White 2010: 51-6 on letters in a series, with further discussion and examples of this sort of editorial interference; cf. the more general comments of Shackleton Bailey 1977: 20-26.

\textsuperscript{34} The correct order can be found already in Tyrrell and Purser 1904-13, followed by Shackleton Bailey 1977. We are lucky that Cicero was so impatient for Cassius to respond; his annoyed comments allow us to ascertain the relative ordering. It is clear that the first letter in the MSS order is in fact the last chronologically: 15.16 opens with the complaint that there has been no answer to *two earlier letters*: “I think you must be a trifle ashamed of yourself now. Here comes a third letter down upon you before you have produced so much as a sheet or a line!” (*puto te iam suppudere quem haec tertia epistola ante oppressit quam tu scidam aut litteram*). In 15.17 Cicero “apologizes” for sending a “second short letter” (*alteras iam habebis has brevis*) and expresses his growing annoyance at Cassius’ couriers. 15.18 is in fact very short and makes no mention of any earlier letters.
self-standing sections. This rearrangement does mean that certain features of the letters will be elided. For example, Cicero’s growing impatience with Cassius’ lack of response—dramatized first as a complaint about his couriers, then expanded into a more direct criticism of Cassius himself—is obscured. Nevertheless, given the goals of this chapter, I believe that this rearrangement does not offer any significant harm to our understanding of the exchange and will in fact make my discussion more coherent.

III. “Tua quidem in culina, mea molesta est”: philosophy and politics in Fam. 15.18

This brief letter to Cassius sets the tone for later letters by introducing several themes which will run through the entire series: Cicero’s complaints about the couriers, his misgivings about the political situation, Caesar’s military activities, and Cassius’ Epicureanism. More generally, we find in this letter an excellent introduction to the role of philosophy in the complex blend of humor, seriousness, and political networking which characterizes Fam. 15.16-19 and the Ad Familiares more generally. Cicero, then at Rome, writes to Cassius, then at Brundisium:

M. Cicero S.D. C. Cassio

longior epistula mihi fuisset nisi eo ipso tempore petita esset a me cum iam iretur ad te, longior autem si φλύαρον aliquem habuissem; nam σπουδάζειν sine periculo vix possumus. ‘ridere igitur’ inquies ‘possimus?’ non mehercule facillime, verum tamen aliam aberrationem a molestiis nullam habemus. ‘ubi igitur’ inquies ‘philosophia?’ tua quidem in culina, mea molesta est; pudet enim servire. itaque facio me alias res agere ne convicium Platonis audiam. de Hispania nihil adhuc certi, nihil omnino novi. te abesse mea causa moleste fero, tua gaudeo. sed flagitat tabellarius: valebis igitur meque, ut a puero fecisti, amabis.
M. Cicero to C. Cassius greetings.

This letter would have been longer, if I had not been asked for it just as your letter carrier was leaving for you—longer, anyhow, if I had had any trifle to relate; for we are scarcely able to be serious without danger. “Can we then joke?” you will ask. Not very easily, but we have no other means of diversion from our troubles. “Where then is philosophy?” Yours is in the kitchen, mine vexes me—for I am ashamed to be a slave. And so I pretend to be otherwise occupied lest I hear the reproach of Plato. Concerning Spain, nothing is certain yet—no news at all in fact. I am sorry for my own sake that you are away but glad for yours. But the courier is getting impatient. So keep well and be fond of me, as you have been from a boy.

(Fam. 15.18 = SB 213, late Dec. 46)

After expressing his annoyance at the tabellarius, Cicero expresses his anxiety about the current situation. He has no news of Caesar’s progress in Spain and underlines his political impotency. My analysis in this section will focus on Cicero’s answer to the imagined question about the comforts of philosophy. His answer contrasts his troubling convictions with Cassius’ purported culinary philosophy—a clear reference to Epicureanism, in line with hostile stereotypes found in Cicero and many other contemporary authors, both earlier and later.36

35 On letter-carriers and the logistics of conducting correspondence, see White 2010: 11-15. For the references to couriers as evidence for the order of this correspondence, see the previous note.

36 This hostile and uncharitable stereotype no doubt springs in part from some of Epicurus’ more bombastic statements: “The origin… of every good lies in the pleasure of the stomach” (ἀρχὴ...πάντως ἄγαθον ἐν τῇ γαστρὰ...ἡ δονή = fr. 409 Us.); cf. the equally notorious KD 10. The gastronomic charge was already made by Chrysippus (SVF 3.709) and a surprising number of chefs in Greek Comedy name, quote, or allude to Epicurus or Epicurean language (see Gordon 2012: 14-37). For this stereotype in Cicero, see Fam. 9.20.1, 9.25.2 (discussed below); In Pis. 66, 68-9; ND 1.113 (Pease 1955 provides further parallels ad loc.). Other contemporary authors: Horace, Sat. 2.4 (mocking Catius Insuber; see Chapter I, section iii.C for the identification); Varro, Men. Sat. fr. 127 Astbury (mocking T. Albucius for his eating habits). At Men. Sat. fr. 315, however, the tone is more respectful to the founder and contemptuous of Roman adherents: “And this is the difference between Epicurus and our [=Roman] debauchees, for whom the measure of life is the kitchen” (et hoc interesse inter Epicurum et ganeones nostros quibus modulus est vitae culina); cf. fr. 243. As an example of this stereotype in later authors, we may quote a delightful anecdote at Athenaeus, 7.298 D-E: “A certain Epicurean who was dining with us said, ‘The Helen of dishes has arrived; therefore I shall be her Paris...’” For this passage and an analysis of such negative stereotypes, see Gordon 2012 and 2013; for Athenaeus’ gastronomic moralizing, see Stoneman 2000. It is worth adding that this charge need not be taken as purely fictive polemic. Despite the attempt of some scholars to characterize Epicureanism as “a kind of asceticism” (e.g. Erler and Schofield 1999: 643), the
This short letter and its Epicurean stereotype present us with several interpretive problems. How seriously should we take the reference to Epicureanism and to Cicero’s own philosophical beliefs, and how seriously his gloomy talk of servitude? Furthermore, is there any substantial relationship between the political discussion and allusion to the correspondents’ respective philosophical convictions? At first glance, Cicero’s deployment of an anti-Epicurean culinary stereotype and, as we will see in the next section, his amusing attack on Epicurean physics in 15.16 may seem to suggest that there is not much of interest in these letters. And so most scholars have taken a minimalist view. Castner is, as I noted above, typically dismissive, and furthermore claims that the lack of philosophical discussion in other surviving letters to and from Cassius suggests that such references were neither normal nor relevant to the political situation. Writing from a similar perspective, school fully allowed for the enjoyment of luxuries, as long as improper desires and attachments to them were avoided. That is, if one avoids forming false beliefs about these “unnecessary but natural pleasures”; does not waste time, money and energy seeking them; and realizes that the highest pleasure is in fact freedom from pain, then there is no reason to reject luxuries as legitimate (kinetic) pleasures. See Woolf 2009 on Epicurus’ attitude; Philodemus’ *On Household Management* fully allows for the use of wealth for such purposes (on this text see Asmis 2004a and now the edition of Tsouna 2012). Therefore it would not be surprising to find Epicureans who were born into great wealth indulging in fine dining, especially with friends and in moderation; cf. Philodemus’s charming dinner invitation to L. Piso (epigram 27 Sider) and its delightful reference to moderated luxury. It may even be the case that anti-Epicurean polemic was so fierce on this issue precisely because many aristocratic Epicureans did in fact dine well—and with the blessing of their philosophy. Indeed, Cicero’s own testimony in the letters to Paetus (discussed later in this section) certainly suggests that his Epicurean friends knew how to host a good dinner party—and with moderation (cf. Nepos, *Vita Attici* 14 and again Philodemus’ epigram). And from this sliver of verisimilitude it is only a few steps away to polemical distortions of Epicurean dietary excess.

37 Cicero “is writing about Epicureanism [in this and the following letters] because he has nothing else to write about, his participation in politics having been cut off” (1988: 31).

38 This claim is particularly difficult to sustain. It should be emphasized once again that Cicero’s letters were not selected for their philosophical interest: such passages seem to made the editorial cut when they were part of more explicitly political letters or if they could shed light on the character of famous Republican aristocrats. This selection bias should make us cautious about drawing conclusions from the lack of further philosophical discussion between the two correspondents. However, even if we were to turn to numbers, 23% of Cicero’s letters to Cassius discuss philosophy, and a full 33% of Cassius’ letters to Cicero. This is a very large number—philosophical passages in the *Ad Atticum* or the *Ad Familiares* as a whole do not appear at this frequency (cf. White 2010: 54, and, on literature in the letters more generally, 89-116)—so large, in fact, that it is far more likely just an accident of a small sample size. What matters, in short, is the content of the philosophical passages, not their quantity.
scholars of Republican epistolography have seen here a joke, a celebration of *paideia*, and nothing more.\(^\text{39}\)

To some degree my disagreement with these interpretations will depend on my analysis of the other letters of this series. Nevertheless, a careful reading of 15.18 will cast doubt on such reductionist interpretations of the role of philosophy in this exchange. To be clear: there is no need to deny that there is a humorous element in this letter or the others, nor would I claim that Cicero is making a powerful philosophical point with his use of a well-worn culinary stereotype. Still, these factors do not warrant the blanket conclusion that there is nothing interesting—politically or philosophically—in 15.18. I will therefore attempt to treat this letter (and the following letters) seriously as well as humorously. Doing so reveals that Cicero’s references to Epicureanism offer important evidence for our assessment of his self-presentation and his anxieties under Caesar’s dictatorship.\(^\text{40}\) In the process of making these claims, I also hope that my emphasis on Cicero’s Epicurean preoccupations at this time will enrich and extend recent work on his turn to philosophy as an act of political resistance against Caesar.\(^\text{41}\)

The problem with a minimalist interpretation of 15.18 is that philosophy is in fact rejected as another type of *aberratio*. Unlike joking, which however difficult, seems to provide some relief, thinking about philosophy only troubles Cicero more deeply (*mea

\(^{39}\) White 2010: 55; cf. Lintott 2008: 324. This view may be summed up by Cicero’s description of a dinner with Caesar: “There was nothing serious in our discussion, but a lot of literary talk” (*σπουδαίον οὐδὲν in sermone, φιλόλογα μulta = Att. 13.52.2 = SB 353, Jan. 45). I address the reductionist claims of Dettenhofer 1990 in several notes in this and the following chapter. Gordon 2012: 130 dismisses 15.18 in passing.

\(^{40}\) Cf. now McConnell 2014: 19-23, who anticipates my argument on a number of points and is to my knowledge the only modern discussion which views this letter as more than a joke. I believe, however, that an analysis of the letter in light of parallels with other letters to Varro and L. Papirius Paetus can enrich our understanding of Cicero’s language of slavery, Epicurean dining proclivities, and feelings of unease under Caesar.

\(^{41}\) See especially Gildenhard 2007; Baraz 2012.
molestā est). The implication is that philosophy will not provide a diversion from the troubled times (aberrationem a molestiis); on the contrary, it adds to his vexation. He then explains (enim) his epigrammatic point: his philosophical convictions make him ashamed of his political ‘servitude’ (pudet enim servire) at a time of crisis, and he has to keep himself occupied with other things lest he imagine the disapproval of his revered Plato. In other words, far from being insignificant or unrelated to the political situation, Cicero presents his political inactivity as a failure in light of his philosophical convictions.

What are these Platonic convictions? Cicero does not spell out his reasons, which is perhaps unsurprising in such a short letter. Following Shackleton Bailey, McConnell cites a number of Platonic passages where slavery is described as worse than death or which rail against the evil of tyranny. He adds that Cicero’s attempts “to pretend to be occupied” to avoid hearing these reproaches reflect his unease with the ethical advice of Antiochus of Ascalon to enjoy a life of intellectual contemplation when more active engagement is impossible. However, this appeal to Antiochus seems somewhat arbitrary, and it furthermore does not answer why Cicero felt his servitude to be so shameful. I think that there is a simpler and more plausible reading of the passage: Cicero represents his enforced idleness and empty preoccupations as a failure to live up to the paramount importance of active citizenship and an unflinching desire to protect the patria. I argued in Chapter III that

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42 Cicero’s esteem for Plato: e.g. Att. 4.16.3 = SB 89: “That god, our Plato” (ille deus noster Plato); Leg. 2.14, 3.1 and esp. 1.15 (“Atticus” speaking): “…that Plato of yours, whom you admire, whom you place before all others, whom you cherish most of all” (Platonem illum tuum, quem tu admiraris, quem omnibus anteponis, quem maxime diligis); see also TD 1.39, 1.24 and Chapter V, n.146 for Cicero’s redeployment of the ring of Gyges story against Epicureans in De Officiis. For Cicero’s engagement with Plato more generally, see the helpful discussion in Long 1995a; there is also much relevant material in Atkins 2013 and McConnell 2014.


44 McConnell 2014: 23 (“Cicero is pretending to be occupied on other pursuits that Antiochus argued could alleviate one’s ills in adverse times, namely intellectual activities…. He does this so that he is not reproached for failing to act in accordance with his professed philosophical beliefs—he pretends he is not interested in politics and has chosen a noble and not a dishonorable path, but his feelings of shame feed the annoying suspicion that he has failed to act properly given the situation.”).
the dialogical Marcus and a cast of distinguished speakers like Scipio and Cato had consistently championed throughout the dialogues and letters such patriotism as the natural ethical consequence of human sociability and natural justice. This view can be summarized in a passage from the ninth Platonic letter, of which Cicero was much enamored: “But since, as Plato has admirably written, we are not born for ourselves alone, but our country claims a part of our being… [and] since men, too, have been born for the sake of men, so that they may be able mutually to help each other…” (sed quoniam, ut praecclare scriptum est a Platone, non nobis solum nati sumus ortusque nostri partem patria vindicat… homines autem hominum causa esse generatos, ut ipsi inter se aliis alii prodesse possent…).

Indeed, Cicero sometimes exhorts himself in letters to live up to the selfless political ideals expressed in his own Republic; he seems to be doing so in 15.18. If this interpretation is right, then his current political impotency and subservience to Caesar reveal to him how badly he is

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45 E.g. Rep. 1.10 and Off. 1.12. In the Somnium Scipionis (6.13), we are actually told there is a special place reserved in heaven for those who have fought for their fatherland! Cicero’s strong emphasis on our duty to our patria has been interpreted as more insistent than other Stoic, Academic, and Aristotelian philosophers and therefore as characteristic of his own ideas: see Atkins 1990; Brunt 2012: 187 (both with respect to the description and ordering of the virtues in De Officis). But the Stoic Hierocles ap. Stobaeus, Anth. 3.39.34 extols our duty to our fatherland in no uncertain terms; cf. Seneca, De Otio 3.2, where political activity is presented as the default option.

46 Off. 1.22, a close rendering of [Pl.], Ep. 9.358A. Cicero offers a close paraphrase at Fin. 2.45 and Off. 1.12; cf. Mur. 83: M. Cato, qui mihi non tibi, sed patriae natus esse <videris>. Cicero’s penchant for this passage has long been recognized (Madvig 1876: 222-3 can already cite earlier scholars); Dyck 1996: 113 adds a more general parallel at Clu. 43.

47 This intriguing passage is worth quoting (Att. 8.11 = SB 161, Feb. 49): “I therefore spend all my time reflecting on the essential greatness of this man [in Cicero’s Republic]… Do you remember the standard which I want my ideal statesman to apply to all his actions? This is what Scipio says in Book V, I think: ‘Just as a fair voyage is the object of a good pilot… so our statesman’s object is the happiness of his countrymen…. This is the work I would have him accomplish, the greatest and noblest in human society’” (consumo igitur omne tempus considerans quanta vis sit illius viri quem nostris libris satis diligenter, ut tibi quidem videmur, expressimus. tenesne igitur moderatorem illum rei publicae quo referre velimus omnia? nam sic quintum, ut opinor, in libro loquitur Scipio, ut enim gubernatori cursus secundus… sic huic moderatori rei publicae beata civita vitam proposita est… huius enim operis maximi inter homines atque optimi illum esse perfecerem volo); cf. Att. 2.3.4 = SB 23. On passages where Cicero judges himself by the standards of his philosophical and literary works, see White 2010: 104-15, esp. 109-10; Baraz 2012: Ch. 2. I hope my claims about Cicero’s use of Epicureanism in these letters provide further insight into this intriguing practice.
living up to these principles of active effort on the behalf of the Republic. Philosophy, it seems, clarifies Cicero’s analysis of his marginalization under Caesar.

It would be hasty, however, to draw firm conclusions from this brief letter. In particular, two questions require further discussion. First, what exactly is Cicero getting at with the somewhat barbed reference to Epicureanism? Second, to what degree are we really justified in reading *Fam.* 15.18 as indicative of Cicero’s thoughts, or at least claiming that his self-representation in this letter is significantly consistent with the positions he expresses elsewhere? To answer these questions, it will be helpful to supplement my analysis with other examples from his correspondence at the time. The self-reproach of 15.18 finds, in fact, very close parallels in two letters to L. Papirius Paetus written earlier that year. Paetus was a long-time equestrian friend, a man of culture and learning, and a committed Epicurean living a life of leisure in Naples. The letters we will be analyzing (*Fam.* 9.20 = SB 193; 9.26 = SB 197) were written in August and November 46, respectively—the latter just a month before the approximate date of 15.18.

At the time of these letters Cicero’s political and personal situation was largely the same as it was at the end of 46; this period has been analyzed in recent treatments of his political and literary activities. He had little independent authority and his forensic

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48 Cicero’s letters to Paetus have received a sensitive analysis in Hutchinson 1998: 191-9 and Leach 1999; cf. Gildenhard 2007: 42-5 and Baraz 2012: 61-2 (I have not had access to Demmel 1962). I extend their analysis by focusing on the Epicurean themes in the letters to Cassius.

49 Long-time friend: *Att.* 1.20.7 = SB 20, written in May 60 (L. Papirius Paetus, vir bonus amatorque noster; Cicero goes on to commend Paetus’ negotia to Atticus); villa: D’Arms 1970: 58, 191-2. D’Arms’ claim, however, that Paetus was “probably an eclectic” is not supported by any evidence and cannot explain the consistent Epicurean allusions in the letters to Paetus. Furthermore, Cicero’s use of “tuus” in a letter describing a mutual Epicurean friend, M. Fabius Gallus, is particularly revealing: “cum tuis combibonibus Epicuriis” (*Fam.* 9.25).

activities were largely limited to making pleas for the restitution of exiled Pompeians.  

What informal influence he had was likewise employed to secure support for his vanquished friends and associates. As a result, he found himself spending an increasing amount of time with prominent Caesarians, whom he asked to intercede with Caesar on behalf of his friends.  

Other letters tell us that he was providing “master classes” in oratory to and dining with Caesarians such as Hirtius and Dolabella. He sums up his situation to Varro several months before his correspondence with Paetus and Cassius, in May of 46, stressing, as he would do later that year, his feelings of servitude: “And so I go dining every night with our present masters. What am I to do? One must serve the times” (itique non desino apud istos qui nunc dominantur cenitare. quid faciam? tempori serviendum est = Fam. 9.7.2 = SB 178).

With this background in mind, let us now turn to the two letters to Paetus and analyze their parallels with 15.18. The first letter was written approximately a month before 15.18 (Fam. 9.26 = SB 197, Nov. 46). Cicero begins by telling Paetus he is writing the letter while at a dinner party with some Epicurean friends. After a description of his leisurely

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51 E.g. the Pro Marcello, delivered in September or October (on the date, see Marinone 2004: 192 and Dyer 1990).
52 At Fam. 6.12 = SB 226 (Sept. 46) he updates his friend, the former tribune and proconsul Ampius Balbus, an exiled Pompeian, on efforts to effect his recall: “Nevertheless, our chief support [in this matter] is Pansa… [who is] anxious to be on good terms with me, since he stands high with Caesar in authority no less than charm”; earlier in the letter he stresses his cultivation of the Caesarians Hirtius, Balbus, Oppius and Matius. In Fam. 6.7 = SB 237 (c. Dec. 46), Aulus Caecina, a Pompeian and Etruscan expert (fragments of his work are found in Seneca, NQ. 2.31-49), son of the A. Caecina defended by Cicero in 69, requests help in smoothing over Caesar’s displeasure at certain comments in a work on oratory which were interpreted as sympathetic to the Pompeian cause. Cicero’s response promises support (Fam. 6.5 = SB 239, c. Jan. 45). It is worth emphasizing that this exchange with Caecina occurred at the same time as Fam. 15.16-19.
53 9.16.7 = SB 190: “Hirtius and Dolabella are my pupils in oratory, but my masters in dining” (Hirtium ego et Dolabellam dicendi discipulos habeo, cenandi magistros); cf. 9.18.1 = SB 191. Hirtius was the dedicatee of De Fato (see Gildenhard 2007: 83-5); he has sometimes been thought to be an Epicurean, but on insufficient grounds—see Chapter II, section ii.
54 On Cicero’s correspondence with Varro at this time, see Leach 1999: 165-8.
55 I examine 9.26 first, due to its chronological proximity to 15.18 and the striking similarity of themes.
activities, Cicero imagines a dialogue with Paetus, much as he did in 15.18: “Are you surprised that our servitude is so cheerful? What then am I to do?” (miraris tam exhilaratam esse servitutem nostram? quid ergo faciam?). Then “Paetus” exhorts him to focus on literary pursuits instead: “You tell me to spend my life in literary work” (vivas, inquis, in litteris). But literary pursuits have their limit, Cicero tells us in a passage with possible Epicurean connotations (sed est earum etiam non satis sed quidnam modus), and proceeds to emphasize how little pleasure he takes even in eating—in contrast, that is, to Paetus’ Epicurean inclinations: “When I’m done with [my literary pursuits], since I care little about dinner—the one problem [i.e. dining] you posed for the philosopher Dio—I really do not see anything better to do with the time before I go to bed” (a quibus cum discessi, etsi minimum mihi est in cena—quod tu unum ζήτημα Dioni philosopho posuisti—tamen, quid potius faciam, priusquam me dormitum conferam, non reperio). After some deprecatory comments about a boorish friend and a gesture toward Epicurean cosmology, Cicero sums up his situation: “And so it goes. Every day a little bit of reading or writing. Then, since something is due to my friends, I dine with them.”

56 The present tense of the verb may well indicate that Paetus made this suggestion in a letter to Cicero (with Cassius the tense is future). This passage is particularly important for Baraz 2012.
57 The use of modus in the context of limiting desire finds, in fact, a surprising number of parallels in discussions of Epicurean ethics and in poetry inspired by Epicurean ideas. E.g. Cicero, Fin. 1.45: “No bound or limit of empty desires, however, is able to be discovered” (inanum autem cupiditatum nec modus ullus nec finis inveniri potest); the same ideas can be found in Horace, Sat. 1.2.106ff; Vergil, Buc. 2.68, 10.28 (all on the madness of love and indebted to Lucretius Book IV); cf. Varro, Men. Sat. fr. 315 Astbury (modulus). For an Epicurean reading of the Bucolics which well stresses the vocabulary of ‘limits’ of desire, see now Davis 2013, esp. 141-62. The further Epicurean allusions in this letter may offer some support for this interpretation, but I would not press this point. The Epicureans were not the only philosophers who wanted to teach us that we should limit our desires.
58 Cicero imagines his friend Volumnius Eutrapelus expecting a discourse on the infinity of worlds from Paetus (ille baro te putabat quaesitum unum caelum esset an innumerabilia), a proper Epicurean theme (e.g. Epicurus, Ep. ad Hdt. 45, 74; Lucretius, 2.1048-1089; on this doctrine, see the introductory comments in Taub 2009: 115-8).
The stereotype in 15.18 (*tua quidem in culina, mea molesta est; pudet enim servire*) can be seen as an epigrammatic distillation of the more expansive themes of the letter to Paetus. The concise cliché in 15.18 is expanded and brackets the beginning and the end of the letter to Paetus: in between a veneer of cheerfulness and leisure are feelings of servitude and the limited success of his literary diversions. The effect is to contrast his own feelings with those of his two Epicurean correspondents. The parallels between these letters suggest that Cicero may be doing something more than riffing on an Epicurean gastronomical stereotype: he is emphasizing that his philosophy does not allow him to sit out the fate of his country with good cheer as easily an Epicurean could.\(^{59}\) Indeed, some of his many Epicurean friends—not least Atticus and Paetus—seem to have done just that.

Cicero’s amply documented commitment to political activity and his unease at his leisurely “servitude” may be well contrasted with a passage in Lucretius from Book V, an important source for Epicurean political ideas: “so that it is indeed much better to obey in peace than to desire to hold the world in fee and to rule kingdoms” (*ut satius multo iam sit parere quietum quam regere imperio res velle et regna tenere* = 5.1127-8). Of course, Cicero would not subscribe to this contrast: for him, selfless effort on behalf of the *patria*, not the vain pursuit of glory and power, is the alternative to quiet obedience.\(^{60}\) Still, Lucretius’ willingness to entertain the possibility of “obeying in peace” underlines how radically different from Cicero’s political and philosophical convictions Epicurean attitudes toward public participation were. Now, let me be clear on this point: Epicureanism was fully willing to support political activity if it was taken up for the proper hedonistic reasons; but at

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\(^{59}\) Cf. Hutchinson 1998: 196 and Leach 1999: 153 (though the parallels to 15.18 are omitted).

\(^{60}\) For evidence, see the references in nn.45-7. Vergil, *Aen.* 6.851 (*tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento*) is often read as a characteristic inversion of Lucretius (Conington 1863: ii.526 can already cite earlier scholars).
the same time, the school underlined the dangers of politics—quietism was a fully acceptable alternative. This nuanced flexibility is not at all characteristic of Cicero’s philosophica: quietism is never seriously presented as a full-fledged, legitimate alternative to politics; and the works of 45 and 44 are justified as second-best efforts to find a way to do politics when real political activity had been made impossible.

One final passage will solidify this interpretation and underline the importance of Cicero’s use of Epicurus as a foil. In another letter to Paetus, written a few months earlier (Fam. 9.20 = SB 193, written August, 46), Cicero characteristically begins with a light-hearted description of his recent dining activities but suddenly becomes serious. Unlike in the other letters, where joking and writing and dining are put forward as possible distractions, Cicero makes no attempt to avoid the reproach of his principles: “I have dropped my concern for public affairs, all preoccupation with what to say in the Senate, all study of briefs, and flung myself into the camp of my old enemy Epicurus” (nunc omnem nostram de re publica curam, cogitationem de dicenda in senatu sententia, commentationem causarum abieicimus, in Epicuri nos adversarii nostri castra coniecimus). The stylistic power of this passage, with its forceful verbs and the artful position of “nos”—Cicero has linguistically “thrown” his pronoun into Epicurus’ castra—has been well-analyzed by Hutchinson. Unlike the allusive language in 15.18 and 9.26, Cicero explicitly juxtaposes his principles and former life of active participation with his current lazy afternoons with Epicurean friends; the military

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61 See Chapter II, section ii.
62 Hutchinson 1998: 195. Cicero closes the letter with another powerful sententia: “As for my country, I have already mourned her longer and more deeply than any mother ever mourned her only son” (patriam eluxi iam et gravius et diutius, quam ulla mater unicum filium). I add that Cicero presents a similar idea with equal force at Off. 3.1 (written in late 44 during his opposition to M. Antonius): “nam et a re publica forensibusque negotiosis armis impius vique prohibiti otium persequimur et ob eam causam urbe relicta rura peragrantes saepe soli sumus.” On the connection between the philosophical ideas in De Officiis, the Philippics, and Cicero’s political situation at the time, see Long 1995b and Griffin 2011.
metaphor employed here (as elsewhere) ironically underlines that Cicero’s “desertion” of his principles amounts to joining the *castra* of his self-absorbed, idle friends, whose philosophy Cicero had and would continue to criticize.\(^{63}\) To his great horror, he claims that his life had become an Epicurean cliché.

Cicero’s characterization of Epicurus as his “enemy” is obviously quite germane to the anti-Epicurean themes my thesis is exploring. In the present context, however, I simply wish to focus on way he uses philosophical themes to make sense of the political situation. I believe these parallels are sufficient to justify the claim that his self-presentation in these letters consistently uses Epicureanism as a foil and a negative standard against which he judged his own conduct. At the same time, I suggest that his invocation of Epicurus in these letters reflects more than a tactical maneuver of self-presentation and can offer insight into his anxieties under the dictatorship. Hutchinson addresses this issue in his discussion of the correspondence with Paetus: he believes that the emphatic literary style of these passages “have self-presentation more than self-expression in view. And yet the phrasing does not allow the gravity of the underlying event to escape the reader. It is more plausible to see Cicero as aiming at a heroic gaiety: he lets the tragedy be felt, but can rise above it in jest.”\(^{64}\)

This verdict, which gives fair weight to the complex mixture of humor, seriousness, and despair in these letters, seems applicable to the similar combination in *Fam.* 15.18. But perhaps we can do more to help dissolve Hutchinson’s qualified binary of self-presentation

\(^{63}\) Other military metaphors for a conversion to the Garden: *Fam.* 7.12: “indicavit mihi Pansa meus Epicureum te esse factum: *o castra praecelara*”\(^{64}\) *Fam.* 15.16: “…ex qua αἰγάλητι ἰδρυτοῖς ἀρματισ δεικτος sis…”

\(^{64}\) 1998: 196. In an analysis of another letter to Paetus from this period (*Fam.* 9.18.1-2 = SB 199, 26 July), Gildenhard 2007: 43 similarly concludes “the tone of the letter is light-hearted. But several touches make it possible to discern profound bitterness behind the jocular veneer.” Leach 1999: 157 prefers to speak of Cicero’s “multiple views of the self” as a result of coping with the complexity of his situation. It will become clear that at least on some points I see a great deal of consistency in Cicero’s self-presentation in these letters.
vs. self-expression. Here is where the earlier discussion of Cicero’s cool relationship with Cassius may provide some assistance.

I argue that we can see in the letters to Paetus and Cassius a consistent self-representation to two very different Roman Epicureans over the course of several months. Cicero’s long-standing intimacy with Paetus is well-documented, and he is not trying to “feel out” Paetus’ political stance as he is with the more distant Cassius. Further, Cassius is a prominent Roman commander and senator, Paetus an apparently apolitical equestrian of leisure. But despite these marked social and personal differences, Cicero’s analysis of his own situation is essentially the same. He expresses his distaste at the political situation, emphasizing to both Cassius and Paetus his feelings of servitude and impotence (pu.det enim servire ~ servitutem nostram); this feeling of disgust is underlined in both letters by contrasting Cicero’s political ideals and the culinary stereotype of the Garden, with intimations of its readiness to lapse into cheerful apolitical hedonism. If self-presentation is Cicero’s aim, then he is remarkably consistent and successful in accomplishing this goal with very different individuals at different times. Indeed, even if we were to concede that this stable self-representation was nevertheless an artfully constructed façade, it would still be notable as evidence of a coherent strategy of explaining his conduct to his peers.

Furthermore, the intensity and style of these passages need not, I think, lead us to postulate artificiality. Given Cicero’s principles and the lofty ideals of the Scipio in his Republic—and perhaps also because of some of his very human emotional vulnerabilities—he had good

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65 These parallels seem to problematize Dettenhofer’s reductionist reading of Epicurean references as political code: it is hard to imagine that Cicero feels the need to tease out the apolitical Paetus’ political sympathies.

66 As noted above, this reference to servitude also finds expression in a letter to Varro: Fam. 9.7.2 = SB 178. Note that there is no Epicurean reference here; instead, we find grim reflections and tentative hope in their literary and philosophical works. Here as elsewhere Cicero tailors his message to the knowledge and interests of his reader. But this by no means suggests that what he is saying is necessarily fictive or insincere.
reason to be melodramatic in light of the uncertain political situation and his marginalized, “slavish” role in Rome. We should not be surprised if the great orator was able to find stylistically powerful ways to express himself.

We may doubt, of course, whether these philosophical references provide a complete and accurate analysis of Cicero’s personal feelings and convictions. As every reader of the letters discovers, he twists and turns, saying different things at different times. But again, the consistency of his self-presentation in diverse circumstances justifies us in identifying his philosophical convictions—here embodied by a firm opposition to Epicureanism—as evidence for our understanding of what sorts of issues and arguments Cicero was thinking about at this crucial period of Roman history.67 Philosophy, then, amounts to more than idle talk or a parade of Greek learning. Cicero’s opposition to Epicureanism structures the ways in which he represents and thinks about himself, his actions, and the Republic.68 This opposition is therefore a relevant factor for historical analysis.69

IV. Mental images in Fam. 15.16 and De Rerum Natura IV

Physics takes the center stage in 15.16. The bulk of the letter consists in a critique of Epicurus’ materialist explanation of imagination and thought, some disparaging remarks on the poor Latin translations of Catius Insuber, and a challenge for Cassius to defend Epicurean physics and his school more generally. Once again this critique has been either ignored or

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67 On the multiple, sometimes contradictory cogitations in the letters, see the sensitive comments of Brunt 1986: 12-3 and his sensible conclusion: “All that can be done is to analyse what Cicero tells us and to try to determine on this basis what considerations ultimately had most influence in his conscious thinking.”

68 To what degree this analysis also applies to Cassius is a question which will be addressed in Chapter V, section iii.

69 With this analysis I hope to have broadened discussions on the role of philosophy as a tool for political analysis—previous discussions have been focused on Cicero’s self-citations of his Republic (see the references in n. 47) and his practice of argument in utramque partem (see n.5). My claim is that Cicero’s anti-Epicurean stance provides another axis for our analysis of the way philosophy structured his deliberations.
dismissed as “random,” “ironic,” or as a straightforward “joke.” On the rare occasion the argument has been taken seriously, it has been used in the service of Quellenforschung to identify positions ultimately deriving from the Academic skeptic Carneades, not as an opportunity to trace the development of Cicero’s philosophical works. The analysis of the culinary stereotypes of 15.18 has shown that the boundary between seriousness and humor is not always clear, and Cicero deserves to be treated as more than a source. I therefore contend that the argument in 15.16 warrants a thorough analysis.

A. *Fam.* 15.16: initial observations

I offer the text and translation of letter in full for the sake of reference, but my analysis will focus on what I have marked as section [b]:

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70 Castner 1988: 30 (“…obviously Cicero has here introduced the Epicurean theory of vision as a randomly-chosen and philosophically unimportant point of departure for a joke, not as a teaching which particularly offended him, like the doctrine of pleasure”); Lintott 2008: 324 (“joke”); Bailey 1947: iii.1269 (“Cicero’s ironical statement…”) nevertheless realizes that Cicero is making an actual argument, but does not pursue the strength of the claim or its parallels in *De Natura Deorum*. The letter is omitted by Gordon 2012: 129-32 and given a couple of sentences in McConnell 2014: 24. Griffin 1995: 332 n.31 suggests that we can see Cicero referencing the Epicurean theory of vision in a passing comment to Trebatius Testa (*Fam.* 7.14 = SB 38, May/June 53: “si nostri oblitus es, dabo operam ut istuc veniam ante quam plane ex animo tuo effluo”; she cites Quint., *Ins. Or.* 10.2.15 in support), but she does not analyze Cicero’s actual argument in 15.16. Maso 2008: 63 refers to the letter only in passing.

71 Kleve 1978: 67, followed by Asmis 1984: 119 n.2. It is indeed possible that Carneades was the ultimate source for the arguments in question; Cicero was happy to use Carneadean arguments elsewhere (e.g. his arguments for and against justice in *De Rep.*, and the *Carneadea Divisio* in *De Finibus*—see Zetzl 1996 for the former and Algra 1997 for the latter. Indeed, Kleve’s argument would be much strengthened by a discussion of these passages). Nevertheless, there is no compelling evidence to support this claim (see Furley’s comments in the discussion portion of the paper). Furthermore, Kleve’s larger goal is to identify Lucretius’ engagement with Stoic and Academic arguments in *De Rerum Natura*. This will sit poorly with those who are inclined to see Lucretius as following Epicurus’ *On Nature* fairly closely, even if one does not accept the particularly strong version of this thesis made by Sedley 1998a. In any case, regardless of the source, Cicero’s criticism and its parallels with Lucretius deserve to be analyzed in terms of what they can tell us about the genesis of his philosophical works and their relationship with Epicureanism in Republican Italy. Additionally, there is real philosophical interest in examining Cicero’s critique—other surviving critiques of Epicurean perception focus their wrath on the school’s explanation of the five senses, not mental thoughts or dreams (see n.122).

72 This also holds true for the commentaries (Bailey, Shackleton Bailey, and Pease; Rouse and Smith add that Laminus had already noticed these passages in 1515 A.D.).

73 The final section of the letter, in which Cicero exhorts Cassius to abandon his Epicurean beliefs, will be discussed in the following chapter in connection with *Fam.* 15.17.
[a] puto te iam suppudere, quem haec tertia iam epistula ante oppressit, quam tu scidam aut litteram; sed non urgeo; longiores enim spectabo vel potius exigam. ego, si semper haberem, cui darem, vel ternas in hora darem;

[b] fit enim nescio qui ut quasi coram adesse videare cum scribo aliquid ad te, neque id κατ᾿ εἰδωλων φαντασίας, ut dicunt tui amici novi, qui putant etiam διανοητικὰς φαντασίας spectris Catianis excitari—nam, ne te fugiat, Catius Insuber Ἔπικουρειος, qui nuper est mortuus, quae ille Gargettius et iam ante Democritus εἰδωλᾶς, hic spectra nominat. his autem spectris etiam si oculi possunt feriri, quod <pup>ulis ipsa occurrit, animus qui possit ego non video: doceas tu me oportebit cum salvus veneris. in mane potestate sit spectrum tuum, ut, simul ac mihi collitum sit de te cogitare, illud occurrat? neque solum de te, qui mihi haeres in medullis, sed si insulam Britanniam coepero cogitare, eius εἰδωλον mihi advolabit ad pectus?

[c] sed haec posterius; tempto enim te, quo animo accipias: si enim stomachabere et moleste feres, plura dicemus postulabimusque, ex qua αἰτέστει ‘vi hominibus armatis’ deiectus sis, in eam restituares. in hoc interdicto non solet addi ‘in hoc anno’; quare, si iam biennium aut triennium est, cum virtuti nuntium remisisti delenitus illecebris voluptatis, in integro res nobis erit: quamquam quicum loquor? cum uno fortissimo viro qui, posteaquam forum attigisti, nihil fecisti nisi plenissimum amplissimae dignitatis. in ista ipsa αἰτέστε me tuo ne plus nervorum sit, quam ego putaram, si modo eam tu probas. "qui d tibi in mentem venit?" inqui etiones. quia nihil habebam alium, quod scriberem; de re publica enim nihil scribere possum, nec enim, quod sentio, libet scribere.

[a] I think you must be a little ashamed of yourself now. Here comes a third letter down upon you before you have produced so much as a sheet or a line! However, I am not pressing you. I shall expect a longer letter, or rather I shall require one. As for me, if I always had a letter-carrier, I would dispatch them three an hour.

[b] I don’t know how it happens, but when I write something to you, you seem to be right here in front of me—and this isn’t because of the appearances of εἰδωλα, as your new friends assert, who think that mental impressions are also put into motion by Catian ‘spectra’. For, lest you miss this point, Catius Insuber the Epicurean, who died recently, called ‘spectra’ what the Gargettian74 and already before him Democritus called εἰδωλα. However, even if it

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74 A reference to Epicurus’ deme (see D.L. 10.1; Statius, Silvae 2.2.113).
were possible for the eyes to be struck by these *spectra* (because they themselves run into the pupils), I do not see how the mind is able [to be struck by these εἰδωλα]. You will have to teach me when you arrive safely. Is it the case that your *spectrum* is in my power, so that it meets up with me as soon as it pleases me to think of you? And not only of you, who cling to my very marrow, but if I start to think of the island of Britain, will its εἰδωλον fly into my heart?

[c] But all of this later. For I am testing you to see how you take it. For if you are troubled and upset, I will continue to file a claim for your restitution to that philosophical school from which you have been ousted by “violence, force of arms.” In this formula they don’t usually add “during the current year,” so that if it is now two or three years since you were seduced by the enticements of Pleasure into serving notice of divorce to Virtue, the offer will still be good. “What made you think of all this?” you will say. It’s because I have nothing else to write. For I can write nothing about the Republic. For I don’t want to write what I feel.

(Ad Familiares 15.16 = SB 215, Jan. 45)

Cicero begins, reiterating the pattern of his previous two letters, by scolding Cassius for his lack of response. With characteristic charm Cicero uses this quotidian request for letters and his fondness for writing to Cassius as an opportunity to launch into a technical assault on Epicurean physics. The act of composing the letter conjures up an image of Cassius in Cicero’s mind, but he claims he does not understand how this could happen according to Epicurean physics.

Chapter I, section iii.D discussed at length the importance of criticism of Catius’ translations, along with the significance of Cassius’ independent knowledge of Amafinius (in 15.19), whom Cicero does not mention in our correspondence. There I argued that the works

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75 For a similar example of Cicero’s ability to transform an apparently off-hand comment into an occasion for a philosophical discussion, see Att. 7.2 (discussed in Chapter III, section iv); Fam. 9.22 = SB 189, on which see McConnell 2014: 148–79; Cicero’s use of Pansa as an example of the incoherence of Epicurean politics is discussed in my analysis of 15.17. One is reminded of Seneca’s use of vivid anecdotes to introduce his philosophical lessons in his polished *Epistulae Morales* (e.g. Ep. 12, where Seneca’s visit to an old and dilapidated villa provokes a meditation on old age and mortality). Unlike Seneca, however, Cicero never got around to formally publishing his letters, philosophical or otherwise, and they were often composed on the spot (see White 2010: ch. 1). It seems therefore that it was simply natural for Cicero to pepper his letters with philosophical arguments and allusions.
of Amafinius and his aemuli challenged Cicero’s literary aspiration to play a foundational role in shaping Latin philosophy; the criticism of Catius’ vocabulary in 15.16 lends important support for this interpretation. This important subtext of literary rivalry should be kept in mind, but given the treatment in Chapter I, I omit further discussion of this issue. I begin instead with a reading of an earlier criticism of the Epicurean theory of vision in a letter to Atticus written approximately 14 years prior in order to show that Cicero was thinking about Epicurean physics long before the works of 45-44 and to underline the growing sophistication of his arguments.

B. Epicurean vision in Ad Atticum 2.3

In Att. 2.3 Cicero once again seizes upon a piece of daily minutiae in order to take a shot at Epicureanism. Unfortunately there are a few textual problems with this letter, but it is still worth comparing his criticism here with that of 15.16:

fenestrarum angustias quod reprehendis, scito te Κύρον παιδείαν reprehendere. nam cum ego idem istuc dicercm. Cyrus aiebat virid<ar>iorum diaphásieis latis luminibus non tam esse suavis. etenim ἔστω ὄψις μὲν Ἡ A, τὸ δὲ ὀρῴνεν <τὸ> ΒΓ ἀκτίνες δὲ +ΑΠΑ+ . vides enim cetera. nam si κατ᾽ εἰδώλων ἐμπτωσείς videremus, valde laborarent εἰδώλα in angustiis. nunc fit lepide illa ἐκχυσις radiorum…

You find fault with the narrowness of my windows. Let me tell you that you are criticizing the ‘education of Cyrus.’ When I said precisely the same thing, Cyrus told me that views of greenery through wide apertures are not so agreeable. For let vision be A, the object perceived BC, the rays (?)… You see the rest. For if we see due to the impact of images, these images would have a hard time of it in narrow spaces, but as things are the emission of rays works quite nicely…

(Att. 2.2 = SB 23, c. Dec. 60/Jan. 59)

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76 Philosophy runs through the letter: Cicero continues by discussing the state of the Republic by arguing “Σωκρατικὸς εἰς ἐκάτερον.” On this practice see n.5.
What would undoubtedly have been a charming joke has suffered in the course of transmission. While other letters allow us to discern the reference to Cicero’s architect, Vettius Cyrus, and some elements of the geometrical example can be reconstructed, the thrust of his point remains opaque.\(^\text{77}\) A more fruitful point of departure is the comment following the corruption. He imagines Epicurean εἴδωλα struggling in narrow spaces and so failing to reach the observer. He claims that his preferred explanation, a theory of rays emitted by the eyes, works very nicely.\(^\text{78}\) How rays offered a better account, and how the geometrical example undermined the Epicurean account of the impact of εἴδωλα remains unclear even in light of this further information. This is frustrating but perhaps not entirely surprising: Epicurus himself claimed the opposite conclusion with a similar balance of assertion and (lack of) evidence.\(^\text{79}\) Despite the uncertainty of Cicero’s rejection of εἴδωλα in this passage, it is sufficient for the purposes of this chapter to stress that he is attacking Epicurean physics on the same point that he would concede 14 years later to Cassius. This may or may not indicate a certain sharpening of his views or a deepening of his knowledge of Epicureanism; in any case this passage shows that Cicero had been grappling with this technical issue of Epicurean physics for many years.

\(^{77}\) For Cyrus, see Shackleton Bailey 1965: i.356. For the supplements and textual problems in the geometry example, see idem. 356-7; Watt 1962. Shackleton Bailey offers a helpful diagram of his reconstruction.

\(^{78}\) A theory of rays was the main alternative in antiquity: cf. the dichotomy at Vitruvius, 6.2.3: “hoc autem sive simulacrorum impulsa seu radiorum ex oculis effusionibus, ut physicis placet, videmus.” The theory was adopted by a variety of Ancient thinkers; for references, see Bailey 1947: iii.1179-81. For more detailed discussion, see Lindberg 1976: 1-17; for an overview of Arabic engagement with ancient theories of optics, see Adamson 2006.

\(^{79}\) Ep. ad Hdt. 49: “For external objects would not stamp into us the nature of their color and shape via the air which is between us and them, nor via the rays or any kinds of flows which move from us to them, as well as they would by means of certain models [εἴδωλα] which share the color and shape of the objects and enter into us from them…” (trans. Inwood and Gerson).
C. The Epicurean theory of vision and the “argument” of Att. 2.3

The Epicureans, like other ancient philosophical schools, offered a detailed and comprehensive account of physics, including perception. Physics was especially important for Epicureanism due to its crucial role in dispelling fears about the gods, death, and celestial phenomena. Epicureans claimed, with some plausibility, that false beliefs about such topics often led to great mental anxieties and greatly hindered the pursuit of happiness. Therefore it was necessary for them to advance a strictly materialist and atomistic explanation of perception and sensation, based, likely to a large extent, on the theories of the Presocratic philosopher Democritus of Abdera.

Our sources for the Epicurean theory of perception and sensation are thankfully abundant and fairly clear. In particular we are lucky to possess a detailed account in Lucretius Book IV and Epicurus’ own summary of the doctrine in his *Letter to Herodotus*, preserved in Book X of Diogenes Laertius. This physical theory often intersects with several weighty issues in Epicurean epistemology (or “canonic”): empiricism, the proper use of evidence, our knowledge and awareness of the gods—each of these issues informed and/or guided Epicurean physics and its account of perception. The details and coherency of the

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81 The relationship between Democritus and Epicurus is a difficult subject, not least because our evidence for both thinkers is fragmentary. For some brief comments on this heritage with respect to Epicurean physics (and for an introduction to Epicurean atomism), see Morel 2009. On Democritus’ influence on Epicurean ethics, see Warren 2002. For more general comments about the relationship of the two philosophers and Epicurus’ “originality,” see Erler 2011. For a judicious comparison of their theories of perception, see Furley 1993.


83 On Empiricism and epistemology in general, the work of Elizabeth Asmis continues to be fundamental. Later discussions have been more topical. Glidden 1985 returns to the difficult issue of “preconceptions”; Striker
Epicurean position on these larger issues have been the subject of scholarly debate. With respect to the basic physical theory of perception, however—which is what Cicero is criticizing in *Att. 2.3* and *Fam. 15.16*—the evidence is relatively uncontested, the theory understood.  

According to the Epicureans, we see because our eyes are struck by streams of thin films or images (εἰδωλον; Cicero prefers *imago*, Lucretius *imago* or *simulacrum*) which atomic compounds constantly shed in all directions. These εἰδωλα move with incredible speed but preserve their position relative to the other films in the stream; the repeated impact of these εἰδωλα on our sense organs creates an impression (φαντασία) which normally offers reliable information about the external object which shed the εἰδωλα. Sometimes,
however, the streams of \( \epsilon \delta \omega \lambda \alpha \) are disrupted from their course by other physical bodies; the result of these collisions and obstructions is that our impressions may no longer accurately reflect the external object in all respects. Epicureans were fond of citing the example of a square tower, which from a distance might look round: the angles of the tower preserved by the \( \epsilon \delta \omega \lambda \alpha \) become blunted by frequent aerial “collisions” (offensibus) as they pass from the tower to our eyes.\textsuperscript{88} Still, it should be emphasized that our mental image of a round tower is not false, at least in one critical sense. For the blunted \( \epsilon \delta \omega \lambda \alpha \) are real physical objects; our impressions of them therefore transmit true information about them. However, in light of the possibility that other bodies may have disrupted a stream of \( \epsilon \delta \omega \lambda \alpha \) or combined with them in the air, we need to be very careful when we draw conclusions about the nature of the external objects whose \( \epsilon \delta \omega \lambda \alpha \) we perceive. Our interpretation of our impressions are what leads us astray, not the \( \epsilon \delta \omega \lambda \alpha \): “Falsehood and error always rest in the addition of opinion” (\( \tau \delta \varepsilon \nu \delta \mu \zeta \kappa \alpha \xi \eta \mu \gamma \gamma \alpha \tau \), \( \tau \delta \varepsilon \nu \delta \mu \zeta \kappa \alpha \xi \eta \mu \gamma \gamma \alpha \tau \) \( \epsilon \nu \tau \delta \varepsilon \nu \delta \mu \zeta \kappa \alpha \xi \eta \mu \gamma \gamma \alpha \tau \) \( \epsilon \nu \tau \delta \varepsilon \nu \delta \mu \zeta \kappa \alpha \xi \eta \mu \gamma \gamma \alpha \tau \)).\textsuperscript{89} So when we think we see centaurs or round towers, we are really perceiving combinations of \( \epsilon \delta \omega \lambda \alpha \) or disrupted and/or blunted \( \epsilon \delta \omega \lambda \alpha \). To deal with such instances of optical illusions or hallucinations, Epicurean epistemology offered a sophisticated and complex process of evidential verification designed to “confirm” our beliefs about the external object—a topic which for good reason continues to interest historians of philosophy and which I will return

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\textsuperscript{88} Lucretius, 4.353-63.

\textsuperscript{89} Epicurus, \textit{Ep. ad Hdt.} 50; cf. Lucretius 4.379-68.
to in the final section of this chapter.\textsuperscript{90} Finally, the Epicurean account of vision was employed as a paradigm for physical explanations of the other senses, especially hearing and smell: in each case our sense organs are bombarded by $\varepsilon\text{ι}\omega\lambda\alpha$.\textsuperscript{91} More intriguingly, as we will soon see, this same process was held to explain mental impressions, including imagination and dreams.

Before considering the Epicurean account of mental images, it is worth pausing to consider again Cicero’s claim in \textit{Att.} 2.3. It should be stressed again that the textual uncertainty of the geometry example complicates any analysis, but it is nevertheless difficult to see how he can be making a good criticism. His claim, it seems, is that it is implausible or even absurd to believe that $\varepsilon\text{ι}\omega\lambda\alpha$ would get stuck in narrow passages and bounce around; this is so counterintuitive as to cast doubt on the theory. But an Epicurean would not find this argument problematic. Lucretius discusses at length how various materials (wood, glass, etc) obstruct the path of $\varepsilon\text{ι}\omega\lambda\alpha$, and how a mirror distorts an object in its reflection (4.143-75). Lucretius makes plausible analogies based on common experience of the world and claims that his theory can accommodate the phenomena.\textsuperscript{92} And as we will see later, Epicurus insists that we anchor explanations for non-observable phenomena on analogous observed phenomena.\textsuperscript{93} Lucretius can therefore simply concede that narrow windows might indeed

\textsuperscript{91} See Epicurus, \textit{Ep. ad Hdt.} 52-3; Lucretius, 4.522-721. Taste and touch are easier to explain since they involve direct physical contact.
\textsuperscript{92} See especially the clear statement of this practice at 4.418ff: “principio quoniam mittunt in rebus apertis corpora res multae… quae quoniam fiunt, tenuis quoque debet imago ab rebus mitti summon de corpore rerum.”
\textsuperscript{93} He makes the demand that an explanation has to be “in agreement with the phenomena” throughout the \textit{Letter to Pythocles} (e.g. συμφώνως τοις φαινομένοις; σύμφωνον ὁν τῷ φαινομένῳ). To support the theory of $\varepsilon\text{ι}\omega\lambda\alpha$, Lucretius employs the analogies of smoke coming from fire, a snake’s shedding of its skin, our gradual perception of heat and cold, and the properties of mirrors. On the appeal to the phenomena, see Asmis 1984: 175-80 and Allen 2004: 97-8.
result in the streams of εἰδωλα becoming deflected or trapped. This may seem counterintuitive, but so is Cicero’s assumption of rays projecting from the eyes.\textsuperscript{94} He needs to do better if he wants his critique of Epicurean physics to stick.\textsuperscript{95} As we have seen, fourteen years later Cicero did in fact abandon this line of criticism in 15.16 and focused his attack on Epicurus’ theory of mental images—a strategy that, as we will see, has real philosophical bite to it and which he took up in \textit{De Natura Deorum}.

D. The Epicurean account of mental images and the argument of 15.16

Epicurean materialism demanded an equally materialistic explanation of various basic mental phenomena like thinking and dreaming, as well as more complex experiences such as our awareness of the gods. As with sight and the other senses, εἰδωλα were mobilized to explain such mental phenomena. Epicurus is remarkably brief in his \textit{Letter to Herodotus} (51) and merely stresses the logical necessity of a corporeal explanation. Lucretius describes the doctrine in more detail in Book IV of \textit{De Rerum Natura}:

\begin{quote}
principio hoc dico, rerum simulacra vagari
multa modis multis in cunctas undique partis
tenuia, quae facile inter se iunguntur in auris,
obra cum veniunt, ut aranea bratteaque auri.
quippet enim multo magis haec sunt tenvia textu
quam quae percipiunt oculos visumque lacesunt,
corporis haec quoniam penetrat per rara cientque
tenem animi naturam intus sensumque lacesunt.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{94} Compare the favorable judgment of the Epicurean theory at Long and Sedley 1987: 78: “Naturally the [Epicurean] theory must in any case prove crude and unsatisfactory in certain details. But the mediation of images in vision is sufficiently comparable to the mediation of light waves in the modern account to give the related epistemological thesis a live philosophical interest”; cf. Everson 1990: 183.

\textsuperscript{95} It is possible that, at least in the case of \textit{Att.} 2.3, Cicero did not intend for his anti-Epicurean sally to be more than a joke; cf. the general allusion to Trebatius noted by Griffin (n.70). There is no need to claim that every philosophical reference in Cicero’s letters is a powerful and serious argument.
In the first place I tell you that many images of things are moving about in many ways and in all directions, very thin, which easily unite in the air when they meet. In truth these [images] are much thinner in texture than those which take the eyes and assail the vision, since these penetrate through the interstices of the body, and awake the thin substance of the mind within…

(Lucretius, De Rerum Natura 4.724-31)

A thinner sort of εἰδωλα enter not only the eyes but also through the rest of the body; the texture of these fine films is such that they combine easily with other εἰδωλα in the air.

These combinations of fine εἰδωλα, Lucretius continues, explain how we can imagine things like centaurs or Scylla, entities which neither exist nor ever have: “When the image of man and horse meet by accident, they easily adhere at once, as I said before, on account of their fine nature and thin texture.”

We do not find in this explanation the elaborate experiential analogies that Lucretius used to justify his account of vision or the other senses. Instead, he has postulated a special type of εἰδωλον to exist by analogy with normal εἰδωλα in order to offer an atomistic theory of mental perception. These thin εἰδωλα, however, still do not offer a satisfactory explanation of thought and imagination. It is hardly clear how our mind “sees” these εἰδωλα at the moment of cognition, much less how the appropriate εἰδωλα always happen to be present for us to imagine.

This problem is in fact the thrust of Cicero’s argument in Fam. 15.16. With this background in place, the force of his point will now be clear:

his autem spectris etiam si oculi possunt feriri, quod <pup>ulis ipsa occurrunt, animus qui possit ego non video… in meane potestate sit spectrum tuum, ut, simul ac mihi collibitum sit de te cogitare, illud occurrat? neque solum de te, qui mihi haeres in medullis, sed si insulam Britanniam coepero cogitare, eius εἰδωλον mihi advolabit ad pectus?

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Even if the eyes can be struck by these images, I do not see how the mind is able [to be struck by these images].... Is it the case that your spectrum is in my power, so that it meets up with me as soon as it pleases me to think of you? And not only of you (who cling to my very marrow), but if I start to think of the island of Britain, will its εἴδωλον fly into my heart?

As we have seen, most commentators have interpreted this passage as a mere joke. No doubt there is an element of humor in Cicero’s rhetorical questions. But that should not obscure the fact that he is pressing Cassius on a very real point: how is it that our mind picks up on these special εἴδωλα, not only of well-known friends, but also of a place like Britain, on the absolute margins of the known world, which neither Cicero nor Cassius had ever seen—how can εἴδωλα of all these things suddenly be present at the whim of our imagination? A joke, perhaps, but it is also a good philosophical question and much sharper critique than the feeble criticism of physics in Att. 2.3.

Of course the Epicureans had a response to Cicero’s objection. Lucretius tells us that our mind is highly sensitive and able to pick up on appropriate εἴδωλα through mental focus—in Epicurean terminology, through an “application of the mind” (ἐπιβολὴ τῆς διανοίας).97 Here Lucretius can offer a reasonable appeal to our experience: he compares the squinting of eyes to the ability of the mind to focus and notes that many things escape our vision if we are not paying close attention (4.807-815). Analogously, our mind is able to pick up on especially thin and fine εἴδωλα through a similar act of mental focus. However, even after positing special εἴδωλα and the receptivity of our minds to them, the Epicurean theory still does not answer how it is that images of Britain and Cassius are present for

Cicero’s mind to pick up on as he writes, or how the process happens so quickly. Lucretius was aware of this problem and flagged it for special attention:

*quaeritur in primis quare, quod cuique libido venerit, extemplo mens cogitet eius id ipsum.*
*anne voluntatem nostram simulacra tuentur et simul98 ac volumus nobis occurrit imago,*
*si mare, si terram cordist, si denique caelum?*
*conventus hominum, pompam, convivia, pugnas,*
*omnia sub verbone creat natura paratque?*

The first question is why the mind immediately thinks of whatever the desire takes it to think of. Do the images wait on our will, and as soon as we wish it does an image present itself to us, be it sea or earth that we desire, or even heaven? Congregations of men, procession, banquets, battles—does nature make and prepare them all at a word?

(Lucretius, 4.779-85)

This passage offers several striking parallels to *Fam.* 15.16. Both texts ask whether mental perception is in our power (C: *in meane potestate sit spectrum tuum*; L: *anne voluntatem nostram simulacra tuentur*); in both this query is followed by the further question as to how this process could take place immediately (C: *ut, simul ac mihi collibitum sit de te cogitare, illud occurrat?*; L: *extemplo mens cogitet… et simul ac volumus nobis occurrit imago*); finally, both end their exposition of the problem with a reference to the availability of distant and/or unimaginably vast εἰδωλα (C: *sed si insulam Britanniam coepero cogitare, eius εἰδωλον mihi advolabit ad pectus?*; L: *si mare, si terram cordist, si denique caelum?*). The philosophical problem, the structure of its presentation, and the vocabulary of these passages

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98 I suggest that the *simul ac* of 782 puns on the *simulacra* of the previous line: the *simulacra* are all over Lucretius’ lines, just as well as everywhere else. If we imagine the lines being recited, the pun is a good illustration of the mind’s role in distorting our interpretation of our perceptions: our minds expect that the *simul ac* is going to be completed as *simulacra*, but in fact it is something else entirely. This reading may find some justification and an interesting parallel in Lucretius’ explicit comparison between words—arrangements of individual letters—and compounds made up of individual atoms (*DRN* 2.688ff).
are all very similar. Cicero’s “joke” turns out in fact to be a serious philosophical problem that Lucretius had identified as in need of defense. Furthermore, it is worth recalling that a few lines before this criticism Cicero had mocked Catius Insuber’s translation of εἰδωλον as *spectrum*. In other words, Cicero was thinking about his Epicurean literary rivals and their translations as he was composing his critique in 15.16. These linguistic and thematic parallels, when considered along with the broader context of Cicero’s references to his Epicurean literary rivals, suggest that he may have had this passage of Lucretius in mind as he was writing to Cassius, a claim which I will defend in more detail over the next few sections of this chapter.\(^99\) However, even if this claim about Lucretius is rejected, I think the preceding analysis has shown that the criticism in this letter is more than a joke. It is also more than an example of Cicero making an excellent philosophical point against his “old enemy Epicurus” in his private correspondence. We are seeing Cicero working through arguments and practicing his own exposition of Epicurean physics.

Now, if Cicero was indeed engaging with Lucretius at this point, he knew not only that his rival had identified a potential weakness in the theory but also that he had tried to address the problem.\(^100\) Lucretius’ answer to the problem of the swiftness of thought and the availability of every type of image can be found in several short passages in Book IV:

\[
\textit{an magis illud erit verum? quia tempore in uno,}
\]
\[
\textit{cum sentimus, id est, cum vox emittitur una,}
\]
\[
\textit{tempora multa latent, ratio quae comperit esse,}
\]
\[
\textit{propterea fit uti quovis in tempore quaeque}
\]

\(^99\) We know that his acquaintance with Lucretius’ poem went back as far as Feb. 54 (\textit{Ad Quint. Fr.} 2.9).
\(^100\) Cicero may therefore seem a bit disingenuous to ask Cassius a question whose answer he already knew. But Cicero clarifies in the following lines that he is “testing him” (\textit{tempto te}) and asking him to justify his Epicurean beliefs. Here, I think, is where we can see a little humor and perhaps even a little Socratic irony as Cicero poses a tough, technical problem that he probably did not expect Cassius—however learned in Epicureanism—to solve. I discuss the significance of this passage in Chapter V, section ii.
praesto sint simulacra locis in quisque parata.
tanta est mobilitas et rerum copia tanta.

Or will this rather be the truth [i.e. to the questions posed at 779-85]? Because in one moment of time perceived by us, that is, while one word is being uttered, many times are lurking which reason understands to be there, that is why in any given moment all these various images are present, ready in every place: so great is their velocity, so great the store of things. (Lucretius, 4.794-799)

quod superest, non est mirum simulacra moveri
brachiaque in numerum iactare et cetera membra…
quippe ubi prima perit alioque est alterna nata
inde statu, prior hic gestum mutasse videtur.
scilicet id fieri celeri ratione putandum:
tanta est mobilitas et rerum copia tanta
tantaque sensibili quovis est tempore in uno
copia particularum, ut possit suppeditare.

Moreover, it is not wonderful that images move and stir their arms rhythmically, and the rest of their limbs… the truth is, when the first image perishes and a second is then produced in another position, the former seems to have altered its pose. Of course this much be supposed to take place very swiftly: so great is their velocity, so great the store of things, and so great the store of particles in any single moment of time, that [the image] is able to be supplied. (Lucretius, 4.468-76)

101 Lucretius here replies at the same time to the two problems he raised at 4.779-85 (cited above): how we can see instantly whatever we wish to think about, and how it is that we seem to see motion in our dreams and thoughts? The answer to both problems is *tanta copia* of images of all types and times (so Bailey 1947: iii.1273-5). On the question of the organization of Book IV’s arguments, see n.103.

102 Cf. the more general statement at 4.735-8: “… since images of all kinds are being carried about everywhere, some that arise spontaneously in the air itself, some that are thrown off from all sorts of things, others that are made of a combination of these shapes…” (*omnigenus quoniam passim simulacra feruntur/partim sponte sua quae fiunt aère in ipso/partim quae varis ab rebus cumque recedunt/et quae confiunt ex horum facta figuris*).

103 Asmis 1981 has convincingly argued that this passage more properly belongs between lines 815 and 816. The major advantage of this reordering is that the appeals to the *copia tanta* in 474-476 and the discussion of the movements of figures in dreams do not make a lot of sense until after Lucretius has answered the problems of mental images in 4.794-9. I am convinced by this and other arguments offered by Asmis, but the reordering is not especially relevant for my purposes here, which is to try to claim that Cicero is engaging with Lucretius Book IV—whatever the order of its lines. At this point it should also be noted that there are a number of other abrupt changes of thought and argument in Book IV, which has led to a variety of textual interventions or the
Thought of faraway people and places is made possible by the “great store of things” and by the “great mobility” of the fine images, a phrase emphatically repeated by Lucretius (\textit{tanta est mobilitas et rerum copia tanta… tanta est mobilitas et rerum copia tanta… tantaque… copia particularum}). Lucretius seems to be appealing here to infinity to justify the availability of proper images of every time and place: an infinite number of atoms allows for an infinite number of appropriate εἴδωλα. Without such an appeal, he would be hard pressed to defend his theory.\footnote{104} Recourse to infinity is not surprising: Epicurean texts make a variety of similar appeals in other contexts. The infinity of worlds, multiple explanations, and the existence of a world somewhere in the boundless universe where men trained boars and lions to fight alongside them in battle—all these claims depend in different ways on an infinite universe filled with infinite atoms.\footnote{105} To sum up: the combination of our mind’s ability to focus on appropriate images and the postulation of an infinite number of images everywhere is Lucretius’ “solution” to the question raised by Cicero in \textit{Fam.} 15.16.

\footnote{104} The Epicureans might have claimed more plausibly that εἴδωλα make a lingering impression on our minds, so that our recollections of a dead person or centaurs are effected by this internal mental process instead of tuning in to the appropriate εἴδωλα outside of the mind. There are in fact some curious (and unclear) references to an “eidolic residue” (\textit{ἐγκάταλειμμα τοῦ εἴδωλου} = \textit{Ep. ad Hdt.} 50) that could persist in the mind, on which see Asmis 1984: 137-9. Whatever the role this idea may have played in Epicurean physics, it is clear that it was not adopted as a general explanation for imagination, dreams and thought.

\footnote{105} Infinity of worlds: after establishing that the universe and number of atoms are infinite (\textit{Ep. ad Hdt.} 41-2; cf. Lucretius 1.1008ff), Epicurus argues (45) that the infinity of worlds follows by the principle of indifference (see Asmis 1984: 310-5; Taub 2009: 115-8). Infinity plays a somewhat different role in multiple explanations. While a particular celestial phenomenon must have a single cause, our inability to observe the event limits us to offering multiple explanations which have not been “counter-witnessed” and are “consistent with the tois \textit{phainomenois}” (on these restrictions see the final section of this chapter)—i.e. each one of the multiple explanations obtains \textit{somewhere} in the infinite universe, even if it is not certain which explanation applies to any given case or cosmos (see Epicurus, \textit{Ep. ad Hdt.} 50; Lucretius, 5.526-32, 6.703-11; Asmis 1984: 321-330; Allen 2004: 97; Taub 2009: 115-6). This is also the rationale behind the remarkable description of martial lions and boars (Lucretius, 5.1308-1349, on which see the notes of Rouse and Smith 1992 and Bailey 1947 \textit{ad loc.}). Lucretius’ conclusion provides the key (ll. 1344-6): “you might rather maintain that this happened \textit{somewhere} in the universe, in the different worlds made in different ways, rather than in any single and particular earth” (\textit{et magis id possis factum contendere in omni in variis mundis varia ratione creatis, quam certo atque uno terrarum quolibet orbi}). On Epicurean uses of infinity more generally, see Kleve 1979 and Asmis 1984: 261-75.
Now, Lucretius made some effort, as we have seen, to explain our mind’s ability to focus though analogies with normal acts of mental and concentration, squinting to focus our sight, etc., just as he did when he justified his account of vision and the other senses. His argumentative strategy changes sharply when he explains thought and dreams. In order to offer a materialist and atomistic explanation for these phenomena, his arguments are far more theoretical and require him to make strong commitments to the existence of an infinite number of special mental εἰδωλα. This is a breathtaking leap: in order to explain thought, we must posit the presence, from every time and in every location, of a limitless diversity and number of special εἰδωλα, which are theoretical posits justified by analogy with “normal” sensory εἰδωλα, which are themselves theoretical entities based on analogies with our perception of heat, the workings of mirrors, etc. These are strong claims, and Lucretius does not elaborate further on his appeal to the copia tanta, nor can I find a more substantial defense in the fragments of Epicurus himself.\(^\text{106}\)

To return to Cicero: the extravagance of the Epicurean explanation is, I claim, what Cicero is underlining in 15.16. Later I will try to tease out some of the rationale for why Epicureans were willing to defend this position, and we will see Cicero try to do the same thing—only to go on to reject the Epicurean defense—when he returned to the topic in De Natura Deorum, to which I now turn.

\(^{106}\) Outside of the brief comment in the Letter to Herodotus, Epicurus’ Letter to Mother, preserved by Diogenes of Oinoanda (= fr. 125 Smith), offers a basic statement on mental images but does not explain their infinite and immediate availability. On this passage, see Smith 1993: 555-8 and Gordon 2012: 85-6 (it has been suggested that the letter was actually written by Diogenes to his own mother, but Smith makes a strong case that the letter is Epicurus’).
V. The critique of mental images in De Natura Deorum 1.107-8

This section has two goals. First, I argue that parallels between the arguments in 15.16 and De Natura Deorum support my claim that the letters and his interactions with contemporary Epicureans informed his treatment of the school in his published works.

Second, I attempt to support my earlier, more speculative claim that Cicero was engaging with the De Rerum Natura, thereby further underlining the importance of his rivalry with Latin translators of philosophy, and also increasing our understanding of the genesis of the arguments in this dialogue.

A few comments on the nature, date and sources of the De Natura Deorum are required to locate it in relation to Fam. 15.16, especially since treatments of Cicero’s sources for this dialogue typically focus on Philodemus, not Lucretius or the correspondence with Cassius. Along with De Finibus I-II, De Natura Deorum I provides the most extended critique of the Garden in the Ciceronian corpus. The dialogue proper begins with an exposition of Epicurean theology by C. Velleius; his account is subjected to the criticism of the Academic speaker Cotta. The ostensible purpose of Cotta’s attacks is to challenge the coherence of Epicurean claims about the nature and our knowledge of the gods, but his criticisms range far more widely. The passage we will be examining is one example of his expansive polemics: after undermining the Epicurean account of how we have knowledge

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107 Marcus sticks to the background but makes the famous comment at the end of Book III that “Cotta’s discourse seemed to be truer to the Epicurean Velleius, but it seemed to me that Balbus’ speech was closer to probable truth” (ut Velleio Cottae disputatio verior, mihi Balbi ad veritatis similitudinem videretur esse propensior).
and perception of the gods, the critique widens into a general criticism of εἰδωλία and thus imagination and thought.\textsuperscript{108}

We are lucky to know a good deal about the dating and sources of \textit{De Natura Deorum}.\textsuperscript{109} His correspondence once again provides unparalleled insight into Cicero’s progress. In a letter written on August 5th, 45 (\textit{Att.} 13.39.2 = SB 342), Cicero requests a copy of a theological work, \textit{περὶ θεῶν}, by the Epicurean scholarch Phaedrus, whom we met in Chapter II as the former teacher of Atticus, Cicero, and Sauveius. A letter from the previous day contains the charming line “before dawn when I was writing against the Epicureans” (\textit{Att.} 13.38.1 = SB 341: \textit{ante lucem cum scriberem contra Epicureos}), which has been taken to indicate work on the anti-Epicurean polemics of Book I and helps to situation the dialogue in this period.\textsuperscript{110} Furthermore, in the retrospective on his philosophical works in the second preface to \textit{De Divinatione} (2.3), Cicero places \textit{De Natura Deorum} after the \textit{Tusculans}, usually dated to July or August 45.\textsuperscript{111} From this evidence it seems plausible to posit serious work on the treatise in August and publication soon after. Fixing a more precise date is neither necessary nor possible, especially since my chief concern is with the preparation and practice that went into the composition of the dialogue. To summarize, Cicero’s active work on the dialogue falls approximately five to seven months after \textit{Fam.} 15.16-19.

\textsuperscript{108} It is important to keep in mind in the following discussion that the primary focus of Cicero’s criticism is Epicurean theology and our perceptions of the gods; I will be attempting to isolate passages which are directed at the theory of mental “perception” more generally.


\textsuperscript{110} So Pease 1955: 21 and Dyck 2003: 2 n.8. It is possible that a request for a book of Panaetius’ \textit{On Providence} (\textit{Att.} 13.8 = SB 313, 8 June, 45) indicates work on Stoic exposition of Book II.

\textsuperscript{111} For the date, see Marinone 2004: 215 with further references.
As the letter about Phaedrus suggests, we also have excellent information about Cicero’s sources for this dialogue. In addition to the book of his teacher, it has long been recognized that the Presocratic doxography of the Epicurean speaker Velleius [ND 1.25-43] shares remarkable similarities with the account in Philodemus’ *De Pietate.*\(^{112}\) Cicero can be seen to expand or contract certain sections, but in general the criticisms and structure are largely preserved. Remarkably, Cicero seems to have imitated his Epicurean source’s rather caustic and hostile style in Velleius’ vitriolic speech.\(^{113}\) The general consensus is that Cicero used *De Pietate* directly; however, it cannot be ruled out that an intermediate source is responsible for the similarities in ND 1.25-43—both Zeno of Sidon and Phaedrus have been suggested as candidates. Like the date of publication, Cicero’s precise source is not so important for the purposes of this chapter. It is clear that he took care to research Epicurean theology and that he did so through his network of Epicurean friends—indeed, all of the proposed candidates find their way onto my map of his intellectual network.

However, as interesting and valuable as this source background may be, substantive parallels between Cicero’s critique of the Epicurean explanation of thought and the theological positions defended by Philodemus are minimal. There is one reference to our perception of the gods in *De Pietate.*\(^{114}\) The text is uncertain and Philodemus’ point has been debated, making a comparison to Cicero difficult. This passage is in fact heavily supplemented (φυσεὶς αὐτῶν τῶν ἐἰδῶν) but seems to be explaining our

\(^{112}\) See the references in n.109. Diels printed the passages side by side in his *Doxographi Graeci.*

\(^{113}\) And for good reason: our evidence for Epicurean polemics in fact supports Cicero. On the basis of this evidence Knut Kleve (1978: 60-1) has collected the terms of this abuse and concludes: “To Epicurus and his Greek followers other philosophers were not only strange, naïve, idle, ridiculous, boorish, ignorant, and stupid; they were also charlatans, liars, ruthless, slavish, treacherous, and sacrilegious—or, to put it even more bluntly, deaf, blind, dreaming and raving mad (The list is not exhaustive.).”

\(^{114}\) *De Piet.* col. 12, 322-37 Obbink.
perception of a single composite image of a god from an eidolic stream. It is not clear whether Philodemus is referring to the mental process of forming a composite image or the physical movement of the εἰδωλικά through space. A link between this language and certain passages of *De Natura Deorum*, one of which follows Cicero’s critique of the images at 1.108, has been suggested. The linguistic parallels are really rather general; they may easily reflect the broad technical terminology of Epicureanism, not that Cicero was following Philodemus. Furthermore, positing a close connection between the two texts requires that we a) accept the supplements in Philodemus; b) read the passage as referring to the movement of an eidolic stream; and c) read Cicero’s language as referring specifically to this process.

While I would certainly welcome further evidence for Cicero enriching his critique of Epicureanism with the ideas of a contemporary Greek Epicurean in Italy, there are too many assumptions to press this link very far. I suggest that reading Cicero’s critique of Epicurean physics at ND 1.107ff in light of Lucretius is more productive than attempting to adjudicate its relationship with the fragmentary arguments of *De Pietate*.

With this source background in mind, let us turn to Cicero’s argument. The critique of εἰδωλικά comes, as noted, after an attempt to problematize the Epicurean account of how we acquire knowledge of the gods through dreams. Cicero explicitly broadens his critique to a general criticism of the physics of εἰδωλικά, with particular emphasis on what I will be calling the school’s “explanatory extravagance” in their account of imagination and thought:

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116 Argued for by Purington 2001: 203-4. Philodemus refers to the “leaping [i.e. of the images] over of the things in the interval” (ἐξ ὑπερβάς τῶν μεταξύ), which is linked to Cicero’s description of the formation of impressions of composite objects from the impact of the eidolic stream (at ND 49 and 109: “imaginibus similitudine et transitione perceptis; fluentium frequenter transitio fit visionum”).
117 Indeed, Cicero’s language has been disputed: some see a reference to a method of “inference according to similarity,” described by Philodemus in *De Signis*: see Asmis 1984: 74-6 (Dyck 2004: 127-8 provides further references). On this treatise more generally see Allen 2001: 194-241 (text in De Lacy and De Lacy 1978).
But what are these images of yours, and where do they come from? This extravagance is altogether the work of Democritus; but he has been criticized by many philosophers and you cannot find a satisfactory explanation: the whole affair staggers and limps. For what is there that is less probable than your claim that images of everyone fall upon me—of Homer, Archilochus, Romulus, Numa, Pythagoras, of Plato.... Why is it that different images of the same person enter my mind and your mind? Why is it that images come to us of those entities which altogether never existed nor ever could—things like Scylla, the Chimaera, or of people, places, and cities which we have never seen? Why is it that, as soon as it pleases me, the image is here on the spot? Why is it that these images even come un-called to someone sleeping? The whole matter, Velleius, is just silly. Yet you force these images not only on our eyes but also on our minds. So great is the impunity of your chatter!

(De Natura Deorum 1.107-8)

At first glance this passage may seem unimpressive: Cicero barrages the reader with a series of pointed rhetorical questions designed to make the Epicurean theory look ridiculous. However, as we saw in Chapter III, this vigorous style finds close parallels in the works of contemporary and later Greek philosophers and is fully in line with ancient polemical practices. Furthermore, the preceding discussion of the eccentricities of the Epicurean explanation of thought has suggested that Cicero may be on to something. For the moment, however, it is worth pausing to identify further striking linguistic, structural and argumentative parallels between this passage, Fam. 15.16 and Lucretius Book IV.
The linguistic parallels are the strongest and will be treated first. Cicero’s phrasing tracks Lucretius’ language closely—with the exception that in 15.16 Catius’ translation of εἰδωλα as *spectra* is employed and derided, while Lucretius’ *imago* is used in the dialogue:

*ND*: “*quid, quod, simul ac mihi collibitum est, praesto est imago*?”

*Fam*. 15.16: “*in meane potestate sit spectrum tuum, ut, simul ac mihi collibitum sit de te cogitare, illud occurrat*?”

*Luc.* 4.781-2: “*anne voluntatem nostram simulacra tuentur/et simul ac volumus nobis occurrit imago*.”

*Luc.* 4.797-8: “*propterea fit uti quovis in tempore quaeque/praesto sint simulacra locis in quisque parata.*”

Cicero could have used different vocabulary to make his point. The terminology of at least one later author, for example, is somewhat different; and we have seen that Catius had his own preferred Latin coinage.

There are also several structural patterns which help build the case for a link between Lucretius and Cicero (with the letter to Cassius as a sort of middle step). First, Cicero begins his critique in both *Fam*. 15.16 and *De Natura Deorum* with a charge of plagiarism: Epicurus stole all his ideas from Democritus. We should recall that Cicero began his attack in 15.16 with precisely this charge: “Catius calls ‘*spectra*’ what the Gargettian (= Epicurus) and already before him Democritus called images…” *(quaie ille Gargettius et iam ante*

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118 Cf. *Div.* 2.138, where Cicero returns once more to the theory of images. The following line provides the closest parallel: “*istae imagines ita nobis dicto audientes sunt, ut, simul atque velimus, occurrant.*” This passage, which offers an abbreviated summary of the critique in *De Natura Deorum* with somewhat varied language and a new argument at the end, does not provide the close parallels we see in *Fam*. 15.16 or *ND* 1.109. Therefore it provides no significant additional support for a link to Lucretius, since Cicero may have had his earlier discussion in mind, not Lucretius. Fox 2007: 223-5 misses the anti-Epicurean thrust of the passage and goes off on a flight of fancy involving Roman ancestor masks and a baffling reference to “the seemingly unstoppable success of the Stoic views of the nocturnal emergence of the *imagines*.”

119 E.g. Augustine, Ep. 7.4: “*ego enim mihi ut libet atque ut occurrit animo Aeneae faciem fingo*”; at *De Trin.* 8.9, he is closer to Cicero: “*sic et Alexandriam cum eloqui volo, quam numquam vidi, praesto est apud me phantasma eius.*” Even in the second passage, however, Augustine, who certainly knew his Cicero, does not use the same Latin vocabulary for εἰδωλα as Cicero and Lucretius.
Democritus εἰδώλα, hic [Catius] spectra nominat). In *De Finibus*, written roughly a couple of months before *ND*, we find the same unusual combination of criticisms. The charge of plagiarism is, of course, a commonplace. Still, the fact that Cicero links his distaste for the theory of εἰδώλα with the charge of plagiarism is rather less common and may offer circumstantial support for positing a connection between 15.16 and *ND*, especially in light of the linguistic parallels noted above. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the questions in both texts highlight identical problems: how does our mind access the images? How do we conceive of fantastical creatures or far-away places and why are their εἰδώλα always available? This is all the more striking because other ancient critics do not press the Epicureans on their explanation for thought and imagination. Third, the actual examples are at several points identical: Cicero refers to fantastical creatures like Scylla, the Chimaera, and a hippocentaur, which are all discussed at some length by Lucretius in *Book IV*. While these creatures had long been discussed by intellectuals in Antiquity as examples of

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120 *Fin.* 1.17: “And so Epicurus corrupts those things which he changes; as for what he adopts, it’s all from Democritus: atoms, void, images (which he calls εἰδώλα) by whose incursions we not only see, but even think” (*ita, quae mutat [Epicurus], ea corrumpit, quae sequitur sunt tota Democriti, atomi, inane, imagines, quae eidola nominant, quorum incursione non solum videamus, sed etiam cogitemus*). He makes the plagiarism charge elsewhere in *De Natura Deorum*; 1.73, 1.120; cf. *Tusc.* 1.21, where Epicurus is pointedly elided by Democritus (this point is missed by Gildenhard 2007: 240-1 in an otherwise insightful reading of this preface).


122 The criticisms collected in fragments 318-24 Us. attack the Epicurean explanation of the five senses, not thought. While fragments 325-8 and 317 (on dreams and a general doxographic notice) do in fact note that mental phenomena depend on images, I find no substantive critique of the theory outside of Cicero and the imagined objection in Lucretius. The closest is Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 1123B-C (I owe this reference to Larkin Philpot), but his argument is related to his larger claims about the reliability of Epicurean claims about our knowledge of external objects (see n. 87) and thus rather different than Cicero’s criticism. Perhaps ancient critics felt that a refutation of Epicurean sense perception was sufficient to collapse the related explanation of thought. Nevertheless, Cicero’s alternative—to concede normal perception and focus on thought—is arguably more successful in underlining the weaknesses of the theory.

123 E.g. 4.732-44; cf. 5.90 (=*Il.* 6.181). Cicero’s reference to centaurs comes two sections earlier, at *ND* 1.105.
non-existent entities,\textsuperscript{124} the presence of all three of them together in a passage with apparently Lucretian language is suggestive. It is worth adding that Vergil, whose account of the Underworld in \textit{Aeneid} VI has been repeatedly read in light of his engagement (and subversion) of Lucretius,\textsuperscript{125} similarly deploys the Lucretian triad of Scylla, the Chimaera, and centaurs.\textsuperscript{126}

None of these points is definitive. It is possible, for example, that these parallels reflect an unknown common source. Nevertheless, we find in Lucretius Book IV, \textit{Fam.} 15.16, and \textit{ND} 1.107ff a tight cluster of linguistic, argumentative and structural parallels; similar or even identical examples; and the treatment of a philosophical topic for which we have no other substantial ancient parallels. The conjunction of all these factors justifies, I think, entertaining my hypothesis that Cicero had in mind Lucretius as well as Catius in the critique of \textit{Fam.} 15.16, and that he was therefore relying on Lucretius’ arguments for his depiction of the Epicurean position in at least this portion of \textit{De Natura Deorum}. This conclusion, if correct, provides an important supplement to our understanding of the complex blend of sources which informed the composition of this dialogue, and anchors his research and preparation for his published works in his engagement with a rival Epicurean author and an Epicurean correspondent. On this reading, \textit{Fam.} 15.16 is a sort of bridge between Lucretius and Cicero’s dialogue. In this exchange, then, we see Cicero at work, formulating and practicing his stylistic and argumentative technique in light of his reading and

\textsuperscript{124} E.g. D.L. 9.75, where Scylla and the Chimaera are offered as examples of non-existent entities. Pease 1955: 491 once again provides further parallels.

\textsuperscript{125} Vergil’s knowledge of and engagement with Lucretius is virtually indisputable; there is an enormous literature on the subject (see Chapter I, section iii.G)

\textsuperscript{126} 6.286-8: “\textit{centauri in foribus stabulant/Scyllaeque biformes… flammisque armata Chimaera…”} The parallels with Lucretius are noted by commentators (e.g. Conington 1865: ii.454; Fletcher 1962: 55; Norden 1970: 215; Horsfall 2013: 246-7).
engagement with a wide range of contemporary Epicurean opponents. Equally importantly, we can see that this practice informed his published works.

VI. Tanta rerum copia? Tanta impunitas garriendi!

Cicero’s critique of Epicurean epistemology in De Natura Deorum, 1.109

I have argued that Cicero followed Lucretius in De Natura Deorum 1.107-8 and expanded the latter’s discussions of the difficulties of the Epicurean theory. I now show that Cicero also offers a refutation of Lucretius’ defense. Continuing from where ND 1.108 left off, Cicero allows an imagined Epicurean to respond to his attack:

\textit{at quam licenter! “fluentium frequenter transitio fit visionum, ut e multis una videatur.”}

\textit{puderet me dicere non intellegere si vos ipsi intellegeretis qui ista defenditis. quo modo enim probas continenter imagines ferri, aut si continenter, quo modo aeternae?}

\textit{“innumerabilitas,” inquit, “suppeditat atomorum.”}

And how extravagantly [the Epicureans explain themselves]! “There is a constant stream of flowing visual presentations, from which one is seen out of many. I would be embarrassed to say that I didn’t understand, if you Epicureans actually understood your position. For in what way can you prove that images are continuously being emitted? Or, if their stream is in fact continuous, how are the images eternal? You say, “the innumerability of atoms\textsuperscript{127} supplies them.””

\textit{(De Natura Deorum, 1.109)}

The contemptuous reference to the Epicurean theory’s \textit{licentia}, its extravagance, is central to the critique. This is in fact the very charge with which he began his critique of images at ND 1.107 (\textit{a Democrito omnino haec licentia}). Similarly, much earlier in his critique of Epicurean claims about the nature, activities, and dwelling-places of the gods, he complains,

\textsuperscript{127} Cicero uses the \textit{innumerabilitas atomorum} to segue into a critique on Epicurean uses of infinity more generally. A concern about the legitimate use of infinity is something Cicero brings up at various points. These passages warrant further discussion but fall outside of the scope of this chapter’s focus on perception. For some comments on the validity of Cicero’s complaint and an analysis of his argument, see Kleve 1979 and Dyck 2004: 129, 191.
“You make great play with the power and extravagance of atoms: from these you create and bring about ‘everything that comes upon the ground,’ as it is said” (abuteris... atomorum regno et licentia; hinc quodcumque in solum venit, ut dicitur, effingis atque efficis) (ND 1.64). He also made this complaint in passing in the Tusculans—with similar distaste. He also made this complaint in passing in the Tusculans—with similar distaste.128 Therefore the repeated appeal to licentia at the beginning and end of his discussion of images highlights importance of his objection.129 I will argue shortly that this criticism is an attempt to highlight a soft spot in Epicurean epistemology, but at this point a few more words on Cicero’s following comments are needed in order to explicate his argument and to provide some final evidence for my claim that he was engaging with Lucretius on this issue.

Cicero first imagines his Epicurean interlocutor to defend the formation of a composite image in the mind as a result of a continuous stream of εἴδωλα. This is in fact Lucretius’ response to his discussion of the potential weaknesses of the theory (4.794ff; cf. 4.768-76). When Cicero imagines an Epicurean defense, it is an appeal to the infinity of atoms (C: ‘innumerabilitas,’ inquit, ‘suppeditat atomorum’; L: rerum copia tanta... copia particularum, ut posit suppeditare). But Cicero claims that the Epicureans do not understand what they are saying: for (enim) how will they prove that these images are emitted continuously, how will they prove that the images are eternal? This is a clarification of his charge of licentia: the Epicureans postulate a variety of exotic atomic entities and physical processes, but they cannot offer any proof for their extravagant claims. Cicero’s repeated

128 TD 1.22: “For [Epicureans], there is nothing which that jumble of atoms cannot make” (nihil est enim apud istos, quod non atomorum turba conficiat). Note that the previous sentence is another instance of the charge of plagiarizing Democritus.
129 Cicero uses the term licentia at two other points in Book I in equally pejorative but more general terms. At 1.123, the absurdity of someone like Epicurus writing a treatise de sanctitate is explained by his “licentia scribendi.” At 1.93, Cicero exposes the licentia of the Garden with a reference to a philosophical work against Theophrastus by the Epicurean hetaera Leontion. His point is that the school opened membership to a range of non-traditional social roles like slaves, women, and prostitutes (I take this to be true even if we agree with Gordon 2012: 72-108 that many hostile references to Epicurean hetaerai are historically unreliable).
emphasis on *licentia* is an attempt, I claim, to underline a tendency in Epicurean physics to explain unobservable phenomena by a twin appeal to theoretical entities and an infinite supply of them (itself a result of the infinity of atoms). The problem is that it is impossible to disprove Lucretius at all. As Cicero says, this mob of atoms can do anything.

As noted above, Lucretius does not offer further defense of this theory, nor can I find an elaboration of his argument in the fragments of Epicurus or in the anonymous Epicurean treatise on perception. Some such defense probably existed somewhere and has simply been lost, but nevertheless so far as the state of our evidence goes Cicero is more than justified in criticizing Lucretius’s rather thin account on this point. To sum up, I have tried to underline that Cicero not only accurately described the basic theory of images but also cited Lucretius’ defense of them, only to press his Epicurean rival when an appeal to infinity is made without much explanation or justification. Standards of charity in ancient polemic are not always so high, and Cicero turns out to be a sophisticated critic on this reading.

It may be worth one final moment to consider whether Cicero’s critique has any real purchase, or if he is just pushing around his source on a poorly-expressed point. Lucretius’ justification can in fact be reconstructed from Epicurean epistemology.\(^{130}\) For matters which are clear and open to direct observation, such as verifying our opinions about the shape of a tower, the Epicureans demanded a very high level of evidential support: not only do we have to directly observe a phenomenon in a way consistent with our theory—in Epicurean terms, we have to “witness” it (ἐπιμαρτύρησις)—but there must be no counter-evidence (no “counter-witnessing,” οὐκ ἐπιμαρτύρησις) to the predictions of the same theory. For

matters that are not observable (ἀδηλαξ) and therefore cannot by definition find support through witnessing (such as the nature of the gods, the process of thought, or the details of distant astronomical phenomena), the Epicureans adopted a radically more permissive standard for proof. All that was required to judge a theory “true” was a lack of counter-witnessing (οὐκ ἀντιματύρησις) and an analogy with observed phenomena. In other words, while the Epicureans adhered to a rigorous and empirical standard of proof for observable phenomena, their standards for unobservable phenomena allowed them enormous flexibility in their explanations and allowed the postulation of theoretical entities.

Now, the Epicurean requirements for theories about unclear matters do not always lead to absurd or strained conclusions. They started on firm empirical ground when they explained the five senses through the impact of εἰσωλα based on the analogy of touch, mirrors, our perception of minute participlies of cold and warmth, and the ability of our mind to focus. Their insistence on a consistent materialistic theory tested and theorized in light of observable experience got the Epicureans much closer to the modern physical explanation based on light waves than the ray theories of other ancient thinkers. Their explanation of everyday, non-mental perception therefore provides an attractive showcase for the school’s success in employing theoretical entities to justify observable phenomena. When it comes to explaining the “sense” of thought, however, we can see a darker side to their permissive epistemic standards for matters which are “unclear.” We see a proliferation of theoretical constructs, from special mental images postulated on the basis of normal images (themselves based on analogies with observable phenomena) to repeated appeals to infinity to justify a variety of exotic and improvable claims, from war-lions to an infinite number of images of our former lovers everywhere at all times (a most unsettling thought); to postulating a special
type of atomic compound (i.e. a god) which is eternal because “that which has no share of the void endures.” In a sense the Epicureans have rigged the epistemological game and made it possible to warrant the postulation of just about anything without any substantive empirical support.

The Epicureans, of course, can stand their ground and claim that their requirements for proof are just right, adequate for explaining the phenomena, and that their uses of infinity are legitimate. This is not the place to settle this issue in the philosophy of science. Still, one does not have to agree with Karl Popper that “falsifiability” is the single criterion for demarcating science from pseudo-science to conclude that Cicero had good reason to underline Epicureanism’s willingness to in engage theory-crafting with so little in the way of empirical support or the total lack of the possibility for verification of their conclusions. It is a point worthy of discussion and Cicero was right to broach the issue. The legitimacy of his point is further strengthened by the fact that Lucretius’ presentation of the theory leaves

131 This latter point is apparently Philodemus’ attempt (De Piatate col. 7, 185-6 Obbink) to combat an essentially damning critique of Epicurean theology: all compounds with an origin—even the gods—should be subject to destruction. To parry this objection, Philodemus (citing Metrodorus’ On Change) posits a special sort of compound which can resist decay and death. Apparently the density of the compound (through its lack of void) allows immortality. Philodemus does not offer further details and goes on to make an even more obscure reference to “unified entities, some of which are perfected out of the same elements and others from similar elements” ([εντοπίσει] προσαγορεύειν σθεναί, τάς μὲν ἐκ τῶν ὀντων τῶν α<υ>τῶν ἀπότελεσθαι, τάς δὲ ἐκ τῶν ὀμοίων... = col. 8, 214-19; the context justifies most of the supplements). Such “unities,” he goes on to explain, are similarly not subject to destruction. This is not the place to wade into the difficulties of interpreting these arguments. It should suffice to say that Philodemus in both cases is justifying his account of the gods by postulating several exotic types of atomic compounds in order to parry an objection (i.e. all compounds should be mortal). He is justified according to Epicurean canonic because he is theorizing about unclear matters (ἀδηλωτα) and consequently requires no empirical evidence. Whatever the details of Philodemus’ position (i.e. what phenomena does this sort of entity “agree with”?), this explanatory extravagance provides a parallel to Lucretius’ moves in Book IV and underlines the legitimacy of Cicero’s critique in Fam. 15.16 and ND 1.109: Philodemus’ claims provide an excellent illustration that “there is nothing that jumble of atoms cannot make.” For more details on these passages, see Obbink 1996 ad loc. (he is surprisingly less bothered by Philodemus’ claims than Cicero and I are).

132 Popper 1963: 33-9; see also Chapter V, section v.
much to be desired. Cicero is therefore highlighting a real issue in the Epicurean theory, one which does not seem to have interested other ancient critics.133

Cicero’s engagement with contemporary Epicurean authors and Roman Epicureans in *Fam.* 15.16 and *ND* allows us to track the development of his criticism of Epicurean physics, a critique which shows Cicero as a philosopher at his best. In contrast to this real and unusually charitable engagement with a high-level philosophical problem, Epictetus called Epicurus a “teacher of passive penetration” (κινατδολόγος)134 and, as we saw in Chapter III, shows more generally few signs of grappling with Epicurean doctrines or their attempts to defend their positions. While Seneca can at times show a laudable willingness to find common ground with the Garden, especially in the early letters, when it comes to criticizing Epicurus the violent denunciations of Epicurean social theory in *De Beneficiis* are one-sided and uncharitable.135 Indeed, it is really only Plutarch in his *Adversus Colotem* who provides a parallel for Cicero’s high-level engagement with Epicureanism at *ND* 1.107-9. But while Plutarch’s treatment has received a good deal of attention, Cicero’s criticisms have been ignored or, in the case of the letters, written off as jokes.136 I hope to have shown that not only did Cicero offer serious arguments in his letters with a level of sophistication and charity unusual for any ancient critic of the Garden, but we can actually track in them the development of his treatment of Epicurean physics as well as see him practicing possible arguments and translations. Finally, if my claim about Lucretius can be sustained, we also see Cicero attempting to pin down his possibly greatest rival on a weak and partial justification.

133 See n.122.
135 This contrast is emphasized by Inwood 2005: 16.
136 On Plutarch’s epistemological critique, see the references in n.87.
Chapter V: *Ad Familiares* 15.16-19, Part II:

Virtue and pleasure in the letters and *De Finibus* I-II (*Fam.* 15.17 and 15.19)

I. Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued that the critique of the Epicurean theory of perception and thought in *Fam.* 15.16 provides a concrete example of how Cicero used his letters as practice for the arguments of his dialogues and as an opportunity to experiment with possible Latin translations of technical Greek terms (including those of his rivals Catius and Lucretius). I further argued that we can see the results of this practice in the corresponding refutation of Epicurean physics in *De Natura Deorum* (written later that year). My analysis of the final two letters of the *Fam.* 15.16-19 offers a further opportunity to see Cicero at work on his wide-ranging anti-Epicurean polemics. More specifically, I argue that Cicero took seriously Cassius’ defense of Epicurean ethics and virtue theory and tried to respond to his claims in the comprehensive attack on the school in *De Finibus*; he returned to Cassius’ position and offered further refutations in the *Tusculans* and *De Officiis*. These letters therefore allow us to observe how an ancient philosophical author responded to the ideas of his contemporaries and allow us to reconsider Cicero’s sources for the arguments and debates in his dialogues.¹

¹ In contrast, that is, to views which see Cicero as largely dependent on mining Hellenistic Greek treatises. Not many scholars still believe Cicero was mostly or entirely derivative (*De Officiis*’ close dependence on Panaetius for Books I-II is the major possible exception: see n.146), but few treatments take seriously the possibility that the arguments in the dialogues may have reflected a range of more informal sources like letters or discussions in Cicero’s villas and abroad at Athens. For example, Stokes 1995: 153 wishes to defend Cicero (in *De Finibus* I-II) against charges of ignorance or slavish dependence but drastically underestimates the possibilities for more varied sources: “That Cicero had not paid careful attention to at least some texts, whether Epicurus’ own in extenso or (as I think more likely) a few short works or extracts plus one or more doxographical writings, is not yet proved.” More general expressions like “Cicero or his source” or “Cicero’s doxographical source” are still common (e.g. Stokes 1995: 148; Scholfield 1995: 196, 199, 205; Brunt 2012: 203 actually goes so far as to speak Cicero “interpolating” his Greek source in *De Officiis*—an excess noted by Inwood 2013: 112). A notable exception is McConnell 2014: while he consistently approaches the letters as self-standing philosophical works, his analysis of Cicero’s diverse reading of Platonic, Peripatetic, and Stoic treatises sharply undercuts any basis for claiming that Cicero used his wide reading so selectively. My readings of his
The focus of this chapter, then, will be on tracing Cicero’s response to Cassius’ defense of Epicurean ethics in the works following their epistolary exchange. In order to do so it is first necessary to analyze the criticisms in 15.17 and Cassius’ response in 15.19. Unlike much of the correspondence in the last two chapters, these letters have benefited from a number of recent discussions which have done much to clarify the issues which the correspondents debated. On a few points I will try to offer a number of corrections or alternate interpretations, but the chief objective of the first two sections is to lay the foundation for an analysis of the sudden and prominent appearance of Cassius’ arguments in De Finibus I-II—along with Cicero’s repeated attempts to rebut them.

II. Cicero’s criticism of Pansa (Fam. 15.17)

In this section I focus on Cicero’s criticism of the Epicurean C. Vibius Pansa, but a few preliminary comments on the other content of the letter are in order. This background material casts further doubt on reductionist interpretations of the role of philosophy in this exchange and can also help clarify Cicero’s argument. I begin by providing the text and translation of the letter:

\[\text{praeposteros habes tabellarios, etsi me quidem non offendunt. sed tamen, cum}
\text{a me discedunt, flagitant litteras, cum ad me veniunt, nullas afferent. atque id ipsum facerent}
\text{commodius, si mihi aliquid spati ad scribendum darent, sed petasati veniunt, comites ad}
\text{portam exspectare dicunt. ergo ignosces: alteras habebis has brevis, sed exspecta πάντως}
\text{πάντως. etsi quid ego tibi purgo, cum tui ad me inanes veniant, ad te cum epistulis}\]

correspondence in Chapters III-V extend McConnell’s analysis of non-Epicurean material and at the same time offer concrete examples of a very different type of philosophical source: debates and arguments conducted with Cicero’s Epicurean contemporaries.


3 I.e. that philosophical references are idle banter or divorced from the concerns of real life. See e.g. Castner 1988 and Dettenhofer 1990 (for further discussion and references, see Chapter IV, section iii).
revertantur?

[b] nos hic, ut tamen ad te scribam aliquid, P. Sullam patrem mortuam habebamus. alii a latronibus, alii cruditate dicebant. populus non curabat, combustum enim esse constabat. hoc tu pro tua sapientia feres aequo animo; quamquam πρόσωπον πόλεως amimus.

Caesarem putabant moleste laturum verentem ne hasta refrixisset. Mindius Marcellus et Attius pigmentarius valde gaudebant se adversarium perdidisse. de Hispania novi nihil, sed expectatio valde magna: rumores tristiores, sed ἀδὲσποτοτ. 

c] Pansa noster paludatus a. d.III Kal. Ian. <ita> profectus est ut quivis intellegere posset, id quod tu nuper dubitare coepisti, τὸ καλὸν δι αὐτὸ αἰφέτον. nam quod multos miseriis levavit et quod se in his malis hominem praebuit, mirabilis eum virorum bonorum benevolentia prosecuta est.

d] tu quod adhuc Brundisii moratus es valde probo et gaudeo, et mehercule puto te sapienter facturum, si ἀκενόσπουδος fueris: nobis quidem qui te amamus erit gratum. et amabo te, cum dabis posthac aliquid domum litterarum, mei memineris; ego numquam quemquam ad te, cum sciam, sine meis litteris ire patiar. vale.

[a] Your letter carriers are strange—not that I mind, but when they go away they demand a letter, while when they arrive they bring none. Even so, it would be more convenient if they gave me a little time to write, but they arrive with their traveling caps on and say their companions are waiting for them at the city gate. So you must forgive me: you’re going to get a second short letter. But you may look forward to a little bit of everything [in my next letter]. Though I can’t think why I am apologizing to you, when your people come to my house empty-handed and go back to you with letters.

[b] Here in Rome (just to write you something after all) we have a death to talk about—P. Sulla Senior. Some say it was bandits, others overeating. The public doesn’t care which, as there’s no doubt that he’s ashes. You will bear the news with a level head as befits your wisdom. Still, we have lost a prominent citizen. They think Caesar will take it hard—he’ll be afraid the public auctions will grow cold. Mindius Marcellus and Attius the perfumer are delighted to have shed a competitor. From Spain nothing new, but there is a great expectation of news. The rumors are rather gloomy, but there’s no one to vouch for them.

[c] Our friend Pansa left Rome in military dress on 30 December, an unmistakable illustration
of what you have recently begun to question, that moral goodness⁴ is to be chosen for its own sake. He has relieved many from their miseries and behaved like a human being in these bad times; as a result he left Rome escorted by the extraordinary goodwill of reputable citizens.

[d] So you are still at Brundisium. I heartily approve and rejoice, and by god I think you will act wisely if you are “without empty worry.”⁵ We who care for you will be happy if you do. And in the future, when you send a note home, please remember me. I shall never knowingly allow anyone to go to you without a letter from me.

(Ad Familiares 15.17 = SB 214, Jan. 45)

There is still no new information about Spain, but unlike the previous letters Cicero does have news to share: Publius Sulla, the nephew of the dictator and partisan of Caesar, had died. This piece of political gossip is relevant for two reasons. First, Cicero’s candor is pronounced. Sulla had been involved in the distasteful business of auctioning off property confiscated from Pompeians,⁶ and Cicero contemptuously relates the rumor that Caesar will take his death hard—the auctioning might not be as profitable. This explicit disdain and

⁴ τὸ καλὸν—translated by Cicero in his treatises as honestum or honestas—is not identical with the Plato’s “good” (ἀγαθόν). More precisely, Cicero uses τὸ καλὸν/honestum as terms for “moral goodness” characterized by selfless action; indeed, the aesthetic connotations of the Greek word are not conveyed by his Latin translation (cf. Cicero’s translation of καθῆκον as officium—here too the Greek term carries wider connotations than its Latin equivalent). Cicero’s usage is not exceptional. Diogenes Laertius, for example, reports that “[The Stoics] say that only τὸ καλὸν is good” (λέγουσι δὲ μόνον τὸ καλὸν ἀγαθὸν εἶναι = SVF 3.30 = D.L. 7.101; cf. SVF 3.310); here too the idea is something along the lines of “moral goodness.” Cf. Brunt 2012: 226-7 in a largely persuasive critique of the choice of Atkins and Griffin 1991 to translate honestum as “honorable.” For a reading of Atτ. 7.11 = SB 134, where Cicero employs both the Greek term and his Latin translation to describe Caesar’s shortcomings, see McConnell 2014: 87-88.

5 Can we identify a playful Epicurean allusion in Cicero’s use of the unusual word ἀκενόσπουδος? The sudden switch to Greek certainly invites us to do so—on the importance of “code-switching” into Greek see Adams 2003: 308-47; Gordon 2012: 129-32; McConnell 2014: 109-112; Gordon (forthcoming)—as does Cicero’s well-attested practice of slipping in subtle allusions to his addressee’s convictions. The word is not specifically Epicurean but is attested in philosophical contexts (e.g. SVF 3.254 = Antipater of Tarsus; Marc. Aur., 1.6; Cicero uses the term without the alpha privative in a more general sense at Atτ. 9.1 = SB 167). The key to unlocking an Epicurean allusion is the crucial Epicurean term “κενός,” which was used in a variety of contexts (see the index entry in Arrighetti 1973: 766 for references): it describes not only the void but more importantly the false beliefs and desires which lead humans astray and make them unhappy (on this aspect of Epicurean emotional therapy see the literature cited in n. 8). KD 30 provides an interesting parallel: “Among natural desires, those which do not lead to a feeling of pain if not fulfilled and about which there is an intense effort (σπουδὴ), these are produced by groundless opinion (παρὰ κενὴν δόξαν)...” (trans. Inwood and Gerson). If this is right, then Cicero uses Epicurean language to advise Cassius to avoid empty hopes regarding the uncertain outcome of Caesar’s campaign in Spain.

⁶ On Sulla’s activities see Shackleton Bailey 1977: ii.377; Griffin 1995: 345; cf. Off. 2.29. For Cicero’s efforts to aid Pompeians, see Chapter IV, section iii. Lucretius, 1.80
ironic expectation that Cassius would bear the news of Sulla’s death with philosophical equanimity strongly undercut Dettenhofer’s reading of the philosophy in these letters as political “code” at a time when frank discussion was dangerous. Cicero expressed himself quite openly; Cassius was even more explicit. Why then was there a need for code-words?

Second, Cicero’s disparaging remarks are also relevant to his following criticism of Epicureanism: the lack of general sympathy for the death of the selfish Sulla is contrasted with the far greater affection which attended the apparently altruistic Epicurean Pansa’s less fatal departure.

We met C. Vibius Pansa at various points in the last three chapters. The dedicatee of Philodemus’ On Rhetoric IV, this long-time Epicurean and future consul boasted of converting Cicero’s protégé, the jurist Trebatius Testa, to Epicureanism in 53, thereby prompting a letter from Cicero to his younger friend which thundered against the incoherence of his juridical activities and his newfound Epicurean convictions (Fam. 7.12). Chapter IV, on the other hand, discussed Pansa’s role in helping secure the recall of exiled Pompeians.

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7 “You will bear the news with a level head as befits your wisdom” (hoc tu pro tua sapientia feres aequo animo). Aequo animo is of course a very general expression, but a variety of factors suggest that this is another Epicurean allusion. It may even be Lucretian: at DRN 3.939 the phrase is used of the correct attitude toward death and elsewhere as a positive characterization of Epicurean tranquility (e.g. 5.119 and 1.80; cf. Horace, Sat. 1.5.8—my thanks to Pamela Gordon for drawing my attention to these passages). These parallels make good sense of our letter: Cicero playfully encourages Cassius to live up to the Garden’s highly-developed arguments designed to fortify oneself against death—after all, “death is nothing” to an Epicurean (on this famous claim see e.g. Armstrong 2004b; Warren 2006; Tsouna 2007b: 239-311; Henry 2009: xvi-xxii). The reference to Cassius’ sapientia (here meaning philosophy: OLD, s.v. sapientia, 3) supports looking for a philosophical reading of aequo animo, and we know that Cicero was thinking about Epicurean arguments about death around this time: he would in fact go on to employ a number of them in the non-sectarian protreptic against death in Tusculans I, and there is some discussion of the issue in De Finibus—two works written, as we have seen, several months after this exchange (an even more speculative parallel to this reading may be found in Att. 1.3 = SB 8, where Cicero ironically comments that Atticus should be expecting a consolatio from that indefatigable Epicurean, L. Saufeius, urging Atticus to move beyond his grief for his recently deceased grandmother; cf. Shackleton Bailey 1965-70: i.287). If this analysis is on the right track, we see Cicero once again structuring his moral exhortations to Epicurean correspondents with relevant Epicurean ideas, arguments, and playful linguistic allusions.

and other targets of Caesar’s displeasure in the months preceding Cicero’s exchange with Cassius. Thus this committed Epicurean returns some nine years after the letter to Trebatius; in both letters Cicero tries to undermine the Epicurean convictions of his correspondents.

The argument in this letter is compressed. Griffin has offered the most detailed analysis of this difficult passage and has done much to unravel its argument, with the somewhat depressing conclusion that Cicero simply blundered.9 His argument proceeds as follows: Pansa departed from Rome in military uniform;10 his good reception illustrates the intrinsic value of τὸ καλὸν, or “moral goodness,” something which Cassius had begun to doubt after he his conversion to the Garden. The following sentences explain Cicero’s point in more detail:

1. Since Pansa aided those in need and acted ‘like a man’ in troubled times,
2. A wonderful good-will (mirabilis… benevolentia) arose from the good men (virorum bonorum) when he departed from Rome.
3. This reaction undermines Epicurus’ denial of the intrinsic value of τὸ καλὸν.

The issue here is not Pansa’s departure from Rome but the benevolentia which accompanied it. The benevolentia of the “good citizens,” which probably arose from Pansa’s efforts to help Pompeians, is supposed to undermine the coherency of Epicurean social theory. To help make sense of this point, Griffin has collected passages from works of later that year which discuss gloria and its proper role in politics. In these passages it is the performance of good

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9 Griffin 1995: 343-6. I follow her on most points but will argue for a more positive reading of Cicero’s argument.
10 The reasons behind Pansa’s departure are unclear. It has been speculated that he left to meet Caesar in Spain, or that his departure was involved with his efforts to provide aid to Romans who had sided with Pompeius and fared poorly after Caesar’s victory. As to the first point, Shackleton Bailey 1977: ii.378 has acutely undermined the logistics of a junket to Spain and back before Pansa’s governorship of Gaul in March; as to the second, it is not clear why Pansa’s informal support of Pompeians would lead to a military command (paludatus) or his departure from Rome. Shackleton Bailey therefore suspends judgment on the matter. However, for reasons that will become clear the precise nature of Pansa’s commission is not particularly relevant to Cicero’s argument.
actions for their own sake (and not for self-serving motives) that results in spontaneous
approval and good will—this is “true glory.” On the other hand, if these activities had been
motivated by a selfish Epicurean hedonistic calculus, the same positive reception would not
have occurred. On this reading, then, Pansa’s activities were sufficiently altruistic to warrant
the spontaneous good will characteristic of true glory. Griffin believes that Cicero makes
here an outright blunder with his choice of Pansa as an example:

Now Cicero knew that Pansa was an Epicurean who thought that the virtues should be
cultivated in order to achieve pleasure and tranquility…. Of course, when Cicero pursues the
argument in the two treatises [De Gloria and De Officiis], it emerges that it is the sincere
pursuit of virtue over interest that inspires true and lasting glory, but Pansa would not qualify
on these grounds, so Cicero cannot make this point, and, in failing to do so, he leaves himself
open to the reply that Cassius will make…. Cicero, of course, should have seen this argument
coming, but he may have thought that the glory of Pansa’s departure would be enough to
sway Cassius, a brave military man himself.12

Griffin seems right to link this argument to Cicero’s claims about gloria, and it is difficult to
resist her conclusion that his critique of Pansa is unconvincing. However, I do not think
Cicero is quite as sloppy as she suggests, nor does it seem likely that the force of his
argument rests upon the appeal of Pansa’s glory to “a brave military man” like Cassius. I
suggest instead that this brief sally against Pansa and the Garden is tapping into the venerable
polemical strategy of claiming that the life and actions of a philosopher refute his or her own
doctrines (see Chapter III, section ii on “living refutation arguments”). More specifically,
Pansa’s efforts to support downtrodden Pompeians and the resulting spontaneous good will
that resulted from his actions simply cannot be justified by an elaborate hedonistic calculus:

11 Griffin 1995: 343, citing Fin. 3.57, 5.62-3; Off. 2.32, 43. McConnell 2014: 202-3 provides a substantial list
of further parallels and a very helpful discussion of Cicero’s treatment of gloria throughout his philosophica.
12 Griffin 1995: 344, 346; cf. McConnell 2014: 24 (“In his reply Cassius demonstrates skillfully that it is indeed
Cicero who has underestimated Epicureanism.”).
his actions are non-reducible other-oriented actions, and his life and character are therefore better than his beliefs. If this is correct, his tactics are fully in line with the practice of other ancient philosophers and should not be dismissed so quickly as a bad argument or a straightforward blunder.

A passage from the latter portion of Cicero’s next letter (Fam. 15.16) supports my reading and clarifies the reasons for his continued nagging:

\[sed\ haec\ posterius;\ \text{tempto}\ \text{enim}\ \text{te,}\ \text{quo}\ \text{animo}\ \text{accipias;\ si}\ \text{enim}\ \text{stomachabere\ et\ moleste feres,\ plura\ dicemus\ postulabimusque,\ ex\ qua\ \alpha\iota\omicron\omicron\omicron\epsiloni\ “vi\ hominibus\ armatis”\ deiectus\ sis,}\ in\ \text{eam\ restituare.\ \text{in}\ \text{hoc}\ \text{interdicto}\ \text{non}\ \text{solet}\ \text{addi\ “in}\ \text{hoc}\ \text{anno”;\ quare,\ si\ \text{iam}\ \text{biennium\ aut triennium\ est,\ cum}\ \text{virtuti}\ \text{nuntium}\ \text{remisisti}\ \text{delenitus illecebris\ voluptatis,\ in}\ \text{integro}\ \text{res nobis\ erit:}\ \text{quamquam}\ \text{quicum\ loguar?\ cum}\ \text{uno}\ \text{fortissimo\ viro,}\ \text{qui,}\ \text{posteaquam\ forum attigisti,\ nihil}\ \text{feci}\ \text{ nisi}\ \text{plenissimum}\ \text{amplissimae}\ \text{dignitatis.\ In}\ \text{ista}\ \text{ipsa\ \alpha\iota\omicron\omicron\omicron\epsiloni\ metuo\ ne plus\ nervorum\ sit,\ quam\ ego\ putaram,\ si\ modo\ eam\ tu\ probas.}}\]

But all of this later. For I am testing you to see how you take [my criticisms of Epicurus]. For if you are troubled and upset, I will continue to file a claim for your restitution to that philosophical school from which you have been ousted by “violence, force of arms.”\(^\text{13}\) In this formula they don’t usually add “during the current year,” so that if it is now two or three years since you were seduced by the enticements of Pleasure into serving notice of divorce to Virtue, the offer will still be good. But to whom am I talking? With the single most courageous man alive, whose every action since entering public life has been in the fullest accord with his exalted standing. I am afraid that even this sect of yours [Epicureanism] must have more spunk in it than I had supposed, that is if you really are an adherent.

(Ad Familiares 15.16 = SB 215, Jan. 45)

\(^\text{13}\) It is unclear what sect Cassius followed before his conversion to Epicureanism. Shackleton Bailey: 1965-70: ii.379 entertains the idea that he was a follower of Antiochus of Ascalon (like Brutus), but there is no reason he could not have been a Stoic or even a Peripatetic (Griffin 1995: 343-4 appropriately suspends judgment); Benferhat 2005: 261 n.189 suggests that Pansa may have converted Cassius (I argue below against her less plausible claim that Cassius’ emphasis on virtue in Fam. 15.19 reflects earlier Stoic convictions). Sedley 1997: 41 (cf. Sedley 2013: 44) argues with some plausibility that the reference to Cassius’ conversion “by violence and arms” refers to the Civil War. Much earlier Momigliano 1941 had suggested that the conversion was related to Cassius’ decision to assassinate Caesar, but Cicero’s reference to “two or three years” (and Fam. 15.16’s date of 46-5) is decisive counterevidence (so Shackleton Bailey 1965-70: ii.378, followed by Griffin 1995: 342).
Two points are relevant here. First, Cicero lavishes at the end of this passage kind words on Cassius’ character and distinguished public career. That such a man should be a follower of Epicurus—note the use of the Greek αἰσχρός to describe philosophical allegiance—is surprising to Cicero, who ironically offers to admit that he misjudged Epicureanism;\footnote{The irony is noted by McConnell 2014: 25.} this “open-minded” stance toward his Epicurean opponents is a move employed elsewhere in the dialogues.\footnote{E.g. Fin. 1.23 (ac fieri potest ut errem); ND 1.17.} More importantly, Cicero seems to be turning the living refutation argument which he deployed against Pansa in Fam. 15.17 onto Cassius himself; I take this as further support for my reading of Cicero’s strategy there.\footnote{Griffin 1995: 346 n.90 identifies this parallel strategy, but does not conclude, as I do, that the practices of ancient philosophical polemics warrant a more positive reading of Cicero’s argument.} Second, at the beginning of this passage Cicero confesses that he is testing Cassius (tempto enim te) to gauge his commitment: was he a serious Epicurean who could defend the school’s position on ethics or its somewhat extravagant physics?\footnote{Cf. McConnell 2014: 24-5.} In other words, it seems that Cicero was picking a friendly fight with his Epicurean correspondent and wanted to see how he would respond.\footnote{Chapter IV, section ii argued that the two men had a somewhat distant and cool relationship, so Cicero may not have known what to expect from Cassius. There is no reason to suspect that he really hoped to convince Cassius to abandon his convictions.}

This reading clarifies the structure of the argument, locates it firmly in a venerable tradition of philosophical polemic, and explains what Cicero was trying to accomplish with his criticism. Of course he knew that Pansa could redescribe seemingly altruistic actions in terms of self-interest and pleasure. Instead, Cicero simply claims that whatever clever egoistic reinterpretations of their actions Epicureans might adduce, they are refuted by their own deeds and their own nature. While I hope my analysis has shown that Cicero’s
supposedly unconvincing argument is in fact fully in-line with other ancient philosophical polemics, it is still difficult to believe that this blunt strategy could possibly persuade any committed Epicurean. He or she can simply reinterpret what is going on in the case of Pansa’s departure and deny Cicero’s categorical assertion that pleasure and virtuous activity are irreconcilable. Indeed, this is precisely Cassius’ strategy. Nevertheless, it can be granted to Cicero that Epicurean ethics is somewhat counter-intuitive when discussing the motivations of morality, friendship or public patronage; it is certainly fair for him to ask Cassius to defend his beliefs and the prima facie altruistic actions of Pansa. That said, I would not claim that Cicero’s chaffing of his correspondent’s convictions in this letter is particularly interesting evidence of him practicing a high level of philosophical rigor or originality. However, I will show in the following sections that the philosophical “trolling” of Fam. 15.17 did in fact yield serious and sophisticated results.

III. Cassius’ Reply (Fam. 15.19)

Cassius’ response will repay scrutiny. I cite the letter in full with translation; my analysis focuses on what I have marked as section b:

[a] *non mehercule in hac mea peregrinatione quicquam libentius facio quam scribo ad te; videor enim cum praesente loqui et iocari. nec tamen hoc usu venit propter "spectra Catiana," pro quo tibi proxima epistula tot rusticos Stoicos regeram ut Catium Athenis natum esse dicas.*

[b] *Pansam nostrum secunda voluntate hominum paludatum ex urbe exisse cum ipsius causa gaudeo tum mehercule etiam omnium nostrum. spero enim homines intellecturos quanto sit omnibus odio crudelitas et quanto amori probitas et clementia, atque ea, quae maxime mali petant et concupiscant, ad bonos pervenire; difficile est enim persuadere hominibus τὸ καλὸν δὲ αὐτὸ αἰφετόν; ἡδονήν vero et ἀταραξίαν virtute, iustitia, τῷ καλῷ parari et verum et probabile est; ipse enim Epicurus, a quo omnes Catii et Amafinii, mali verborum*
interpretes, proficiscuntur, dicit: οὐκ ἐστὶν ἴδεως ἄνευ τοῦ καλῶς καὶ δικαίως ἵν.

itaque et Pansa, qui ἴδονήν sequitur, virtutem retinet, et ii, qui a vobis φιλήδονοι vocantur, sunt φιλόκαλοι et φιλοδίκαιοι omnesque virtutes et colunt et retinent. itaque Sulla, cuius iudicium probare debemus, cum dissentire philosophos videret, non quaesit, quid bonum esset, omnia bona coemit: cuius ego mortem forti mehercules animo tuli; nec tamen Caesar diutius nos eum desiderare patietur, nam habet damnatos, quos pro illo nobis restituat, nec ipse sectorem desiderabit, cum filium viderit.

[c] nunc, ut ad rem publicam redeam, quid in Hispaniis geratur, rescribe: peream, nisi sollicitus sum ac malo veterem et clementem dominum habere quam novum et crudelem experiri. scis Gnaeum quam sit fatuus; scis, quomodo crudelitatem virtutem putet; scis, quam se semper a nobis derisum putet: vereor, ne nos rustice gladio velit ἀντιμυκτηρίσαι.

quid fiat, si me diligis, rescribe: hui, quam velim scire, utrum ista sollicito animo an soluto legas! sciam enim eodem tempore, quid me facere oporteat. ne longior sim, vale meque, ut facis, ama. si Caesar vicit, celeriter me exspecta.

[a] There’s nothing in this sojourn of mine abroad that I do more with more pleasure than write you. For I seem to talk and joke in your very presence. This does not happen, however, because of Catius’ “specters”—in return for him I’ll throw so many boorish Stoics back at you in my next letter that you’ll say that Catius had been born in Athens!

[b] I am glad that our friend Pansa left Rome in uniform amid general good will, both for his sake and, let me add, for all our sakes. For I hope that people will understand how intense and universal hatred is for cruelty and love for worth and clemency, and that they will see how those things which the wicked seek and covet come in fact to good men. For it is difficult to persuade men that the moral goodness is to be chosen for its own sake; but it is both true and probable that pleasure and tranquility are furnished by virtue, justice, and moral goodness. For Epicurus himself, from whom all those Catiuses and Amafiniuses (bad translators of his words) depart, says: “it is impossible to live pleasantly without living rightly and justly.” And in this way both Pansa, who follows pleasure, retains virtue; and those who are called by you lovers of pleasure are in fact lovers of moral goodness and lovers of justice and they cultivate and retain all the virtues. And so Sulla, whose “judgment” we ought to approve, when he saw that the philosophers disagreed [over what counts as a good], didn’t ask what was good but bought up all the goods. Indeed, I have borne his death with fortitude. Nor will Caesar miss his activity in the auction rooms—he will only have to look for Sulla’s
son.

[c] Now, to get back to public affairs, let me know in your reply how things are going in Spain. I’m extremely worried, and I’d rather have the old easygoing master than try a cruel new one. You know what a fool Gnaeus is, how he thinks cruelty is a virtue, and how he thinks we always made fun of him. I’m afraid he wishes to answer our mockery boorishly with his sword. If you love me, tell me what is going on. Ah, how I should like to know your frame of mind as you read this, and whether you are anxious or relaxed. I should then know at the same time what I ought to do. Not to be too prolix, goodbye. Go on caring for me. If Caesar has won, expect me back quickly. (Ad Familiares 15.19 = SB 216, Jan. 45)

I have already discussed in Chapter I (section iii.D) Cassius’ censure of the translations of Amafinius and Catius: he concedes their inferiority to Epicurus and chooses instead to stand his ground against the critique of Pansa and Epicurean ethics. In doing so he also evades entirely Cicero’s criticism of the physics of thought and dreams in 15.16. What are we to make of this omission? One might be reminded of characterizations of “Roman philosophy” as predominantly concerned with practical ethics or resistant to abstract theoretical topics like physics or mathematics.19 Cassius’ evasion may seem to support this interpretation. But this conclusion would be rash. Chapter IV demonstrated that Cicero’s criticism was penetrating and technical; furthermore, the problem of the availability of mental images seems to have been fairly marginal in ancient critiques of Epicurean perception, which typically sought to undermine Epicurus’ materialistic explanations of the five senses (especially vision).20 The fact that Cassius was unable to muster a response to a thorny and apparently little debated

19 E.g. Reydams-Schils 2005 (on Roman Stoicism) and Sedley 2013: 35-6 (arguing that Philodemus’ omission of physics reflects the “tastes and priorities of a powerful Roman elite educated in the liberal arts.”). Benferhat 2005: 262-4 does not focus on the omission of physics but claims Cassius’ emphasis on virtue reflects his Roman mentality. There is also a growing literature on supposed attempts by Philodemus to cater to a variety of other topics supposedly interesting to a readership of Roman aristocrats: e.g. Erler 1992 (political philosophy for Roman readers in De Rhetorica and On the Good King); Armstrong 2004b (comments addressed to a Roman audience in De Morte); Asmis 2004a: 150-1, 173-6 and Tsouna 2012: 94, 96 (practical ethical advice consistent with Roman elite life in On Property Management). Lucretius’ possible engagement with contemporary Roman concerns has generated even more discussion (for references see Fish 2011 and McConnell 2012).

20 See Chapter IV, n.122.
problem does not necessarily mean that he did not care about physics or that his knowledge of the school was superficial. Indeed, Lucretius was unable to provide a satisfactory answer to the same problem, and he cared quite a lot about physics. Moreover, Chapter I’s reconstruction of early Epicurean writers has shown that Amafinius, Catius, Lucretius, and Egnatius wrote on physics. These writers do not at all support stereotypes of practical Romans interested only in ethical debates and thereby challenge the value of this stereotype more generally.\textsuperscript{21} Therefore Cassius’ silence on a tough philosophical problem ultimately says very little.

Cassius’ defense of Epicurean ethics is far more interesting than his evasions. After brushing aside Catius’ spectra, he joins Cicero in rejoicing at the goodwill which Pansa’s activities had incited. But he thereafter departs from Cicero’s analysis and offers a radical reinterpretation of the situation in order to defend Epicurean ethics. His strategy is to challenge Cicero’s claim about the incompatibility of hedonism and virtue; he instead argues that justice and the other virtues are necessary prerequisites for a pleasant life. He begins by underlining the dangers of vice and the benefits of virtue: crudelitas arouses intense hatred while probitas and clementia result in amor.\textsuperscript{22} He further claims that the actions of the wicked are misguided; the goods that they crave are in fact acquired only by good conduct. This comment is compressed, but later in the letter he provides concrete examples of his point: the avariciousness of Sulla and the crudelitas of Gnaeus Pompeius resulted in hatred, while Pansa’s virtuous character yielded benevolentia and amor. In other words, Cassius is

\textsuperscript{21} It is clear that Roman philosophers did not stop writing about physics after the fall of the Republic. The clearest indication of this is Seneca’s \textit{Natural Questions}, but see Griffin 1992: 40-1 and Inwood 2005: 14-5 for a discussion of the interest in physics evinced by a number of now-lost Roman philosophers in the first century A.D. For some general doubts on the utility of the expressions like “Roman philosophy,” see Inwood’s review (2006) of Reydams-Schils 2005. Skepticism has also been raised regarding Philodemus’ appeals to his Roman audience or societal conditions (e.g. Roskam 2007: 111-2, 128-9).

\textsuperscript{22} Armstrong 2011: 113.
claiming that the misguided and empty beliefs of wicked men significantly impede their
acquisition of goods productive of happiness (e.g. a wide range of friendships or the goodwill
and reputation which might provide security against violence and injustice). His strategy so
far has been to argue that being good is in everyone’s best interest; his following comment
offers a more abstract formulation of his position, which he presents as far more intuitive
than Cicero’s hopelessly unrealistic ideal of selfless action: “For it is difficult to persuade
men that moral goodness is to be chosen for its own sake; but it is both true and probable\(^{23}\)
that pleasure and tranquility are furnished by virtue, justice, and moral goodness” (\textit{difficile
est enim persuadere hominibus τὸ καλὸν δὶ αὐτὸ αἰσχῶν; ἡδονὴν vero et ἀταραξίαν
virtute, iustitia, τῷ καλῷ parari et verum et probabile est}).

As befits Epicurean \textit{ipsedixitism},\(^{24}\) Cassius then cites a maxim of the master (\textit{ipse
enim Epicurus… dicit}) in Greek to justify the tight relationship between pleasure and virtue:
“It is impossible to live pleasantly without living with moral goodness and justice” (οὐκ
ἔστιν ἡδέως ἀνευ τοῦ καλῶς καὶ δικαιῶς ζῆν). This is a close citation of the first
clause of a comment from either Epicurus’ \textit{Letter to Menoeceus} (D.L. 10.132) or \textit{Kuria Doxa
5}. Cassius is more probably thinking of the latter; the \textit{Kuriai Doxai} were a series of maxims
summarizing key points of Epicurean philosophy and were intended to be memorized to help

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\(^{23}\) Griffin 1995: 346 suggests that Cassius’ term \textit{probabile} alludes to Cicero’s Academic Skepticism; cf. \textit{TD} 4.7:
“I will always seek what is the most plausible answer (\textit{maxime probabile}) to each question.” This clever
allusion would be in line with the playful Epicurean language Cicero employed when writing to Epicurean
correspondents.

\(^{24}\) Cf. Bentham 1834: 323 (“The appellative of \textit{ipsedixitism} is not a new one; it comes down to us from an
antique and high authority—it is the principle recognized (so Cicero informs us) by the disciples of
Pythagoras…. the master has said that it is so; therefore, say the disciples of the illustrious sage, therefore so it
is.”).
guide one’s conduct. Furthermore, Cassius omits the adverb φρονίμως (“prudently”), since Epicurus’ letter at this point presents the other virtues as derivative or as subdivisions of φρόνησις, it would be somewhat surprising for him to leave out the central term in the passage. A few scholars have argued that this omission was intentional. Benferhat views this as the result of eclectic tendencies in Cassius and suggests that he aimed to link pleasure with the Platonic ideas about justice and τὸ καλὸν (which she sees as more authentically Platonic than φρόνησις). However, it is just not true that Plato did not value φρόνησις; but perhaps even more importantly, I will argue shortly that Cassius’ defense of Epicurean virtue is thoroughly orthodox, not eclectic: there is therefore no need to posit a Platonic influence. Griffin suggests more plausibly that he omitted the adverb only temporarily in order to allude to it in a clever pun on Sulla’s own misguided φρόνησις. Such a linguistic flourish would be in line with the epistolary style of Cicero and his more learned correspondents, but it is perhaps more likely that Cassius is simply quoting from memory.

This is probably a sufficient explanation for the omission of an adverb, especially in light of

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25 So Griffin 1995: 344-5. For the importance of the Kuriai Doxai, see Fin. 2.20: “Who of you Epicureans have not learned the Kuriai Doxai… because they are the most weighty and pithy maxims for living well?” (quis vestrum non edidicit Epicuri κύριαι δόξαι… quia gravissimae sint ad beate vivendum breviter enuntiatae sententiae?). Might Cicero have had Epicurean correspondents like Cassius in mind when he wrote this?
26 He also omits the second half of the clause which states that a virtuous life is impossible without a pleasant life. This proviso is important, of course, and underlines the tight relationship between pleasure and virtue. That said, Cicero pressed Cassius to explain why virtuous conduct is essential for Epicurean ethics—the topic of the clause that Cassius quotes.
28 Benferhat 2005: 263.
29 In fact Plato explicitly discusses the relationship of pleasure and φρόνησις in the Philebus. See e.g. 11d-12a: “Will you then then show me that the disposition of the soul [most able to produce happiness] is pleasure (τοῦ χαίρειν), and I that it is of wisdom (τοῦ φρονεῖν)? …. But if [this disposition of the soul] is more related to wisdom (φρονήσει), then wisdom (φρόνησις) is victorious and pleasure (τὴν ἕδοσθην) is vanquished?” Plato’s guardians are described at Rep. 9.51A as φρονίμοι.
30 Griffin 1995: 345, followed by Gordon 2012: 130 n.48. I discuss the pun and his judgment on Sulla below.
31 It seems unlikely that he would have carted around Epicurean treatises while he waited in Brundisium for news of the outcome in Spain.
the context of the debate. After all, Cicero is not demanding a justification for the importance of φρόνησις; the issue is how an egoistic hedonism can value justice and moral goodness as essential components of the good life. That Cassius recalls the portions of KD 5 relevant to this point is therefore not surprising.

To return to the argument, Cassius concludes his defense of Epicurean ethics by drawing out the consequences of the tight relationship between virtue and pleasure. Cicero is simply wrong to insist on their incompatibility; both Pansa and Cassius himself can speak meaningfully about a virtuous life of pleasure: “And in this way both Pansa, who follows pleasure, retains virtue; and those who are called by you lovers of pleasure are in fact lovers of moral goodness and lovers of justice and they cultivate and retain all the virtues (itaque et Pansa, qui ἡδονήν sequitur, virtutem retinet, et ii, qui a vobis φιλήδονοι vocantur, sunt φιλόκαλοι et φιλοδίκαιοι omnesque virtutes et colunt et retinent).”32 Cassius then picks up on Cicero’s pairing of Sulla and Pansa and uses them as illustrations of his conclusion: “And in this way Sulla, whose ‘judgment’ we ought to approve, did not ask, ‘what is good,’ when he saw the philosophers disagree, but bought up all the goods. I did indeed bear his death with remarkably great fortitude!” (itaque Sulla, cuius iudicium probare debemus, cum dissentire philosophos videret, non quaesiit, quid bonum esset, omnia bona coemit: cuius ego mortem forti mehercules animo tuli). Cassius, as Griffin has pointed out, makes a pun: Sulla’s iudicium refers to both his “judgment” about what goods are to be pursued in life as well as to his “conviction” for ambitus in 66. Cassius’ ironic distaste is as palpable as Cicero’s in Fam. 15.17, but the contrast between Pansa and Sulla acquires a different charge in 15.19. Sulla here illustrates Cassius’ point about the consequences of

unvirtuous conduct: Sulla’s greed and ambition resulted in hatred, while Pansa was able to reap the positive rewards of benevolentia (friendship, security, etc.). The difference between the two men, then, was that the Pansa knew the difference between rational and empty desires (in contrast to Sulla’s “buying-spree”), and he furthermore understood that a virtuous disposition and conduct were crucial prerequisites for the acquisition of the goods which could satisfy appropriate desires and thereby produce a happy life.

There is one last element to Cassius’ lecture on Epicurean virtue which has not received the attention it deserves. After expressing his concern for Spain, Cassius reveals that he hopes for Caesar’s victory: “I prefer an old and clement master (veterem et clementem dominum) instead of a new and cruel (crudelem) one. For you know what a fool Gnaeus is, you know how he thinks cruelty is a virtue (quomodo crudelitatem virtutem putet).” Shackleton Bailey in his commentary on Fam. 15.19 thinks that virtus is used here in a general sense of “manly courage” and has nothing to do with philosophical virtues discussed earlier in the letter. However, Cassius had stressed just a few sentences earlier the negative and positive results of crudelitas and clementia in his smart exposition of Epicurean virtue theory. It seems incredible that his characterization of Caesar as clemens and Gnaeus as a crudelis fool who deemed crudelitas a virtus ignored the running argument and vocabulary of virtue in the rest of the letter. On the contrary, Cassius’ preference for Caesar and contempt for Gnaeus are presented as the natural results of his philosophical convictions; his characterizations of these two potential domini reflect his earlier, more abstract analysis of consequences of virtue and vice. If this is right, then not only do Epicurean ideas run through the entirety of the letter, but Cassius actually presents his decision to side with
Caesar as the logical conclusion of his Epicurean principles. Like Cicero’s less sophisticated culinary cliché in *Fam.* 15.18, Cassius used Epicureanism in 15.19 as a way to structure his political analysis and to justify his choices. This consistent Epicurean content, I think, amounts to the final nail in the coffin for any reductive interpretation which argues that the philosophical content in these letters was divorced from the realities of politics.

Moving forward, it is worth discussing the sophistication of Cassius’ argumentation in his defense of Epicurean ethics. First, he does not merely parrot Epicurus. His quotation of *KD* 5 is introduced by a series of claims designed to show the benefits of good conduct and the dangers of injustice; he later illustrates the truth of these claims with the concrete examples of Caesar, Gnaeus, Pansa, and Sulla. Second, he makes clear at each step of his argument that the virtues have only instrumental value: they are to be cultivated because they invariably lead to the goods which are productive of a life of pleasure and tranquility; in contrast, wickedness is indicative of mistaken judgments and results in universal hatred. Epicureanism can therefore speak meaningfully about a virtuous life of pleasure; as such, the *benevolentia* which Pansa gained is not a living refutation of Epicureanism at all but in fact evidence of the veracity of his argument. Even if we grant that Cicero’s living refutation argument was not simply sloppy but reflected an accepted ancient polemical strategy, and while Cassius’ brief comments in this letter in no way constitute a comprehensive

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33 McConnell 2014: 26 suggests that Cassius’ decision to side with Caesar was the result of “a humane concern to avoid wanton bloodshed” and claims that this virtuous behavior parallels Pansa’s recent activities. This may in some sense be true. However, Cassius’ actual language does not suggest such other-oriented concern. He seems primarily interested in his own immediate safety; as such Caesar’s virtue of *clementia* appeals to him more than Gnaeus’ *crudelitas*. Indeed, Cassius, now a legate of Caesar, was staying in Brundisium precisely so he could quickly flee if Gnaeus were victorious. Any concern with general welfare seems tangential here, nor does Cassius’ concern for his own hide provide a particularly close parallel to Pansa’s support of Pompeians (though from an Epicurean perspective both activities are of course ultimately motivated by self-interest).

34 See Chapter IV, section iii; cf. McConnell 2014: 20-3, 26. Griffin 1995: 343 seems wrong to claim that Cicero and Cassius “explicitly distinguish talking about philosophy and talking about the *res publica.*” While it is true that both correspondents lament their waiting game and marginalization, their philosophical debates focus on the clearly political activities of Pansa, Sulla, Caesar, etc.
justification of Epicurean ethics, his response is nevertheless strong enough to rebut Cicero’s criticism.

His response is also in line with our evidence for Epicureanism; we will see shortly that the Epicurean spokesman Torquatus in *De Finibus* I-II similarly argues for a rigorously instrumentalist interpretation of virtue. However, a number of scholars questioned the orthodoxy of Cassius and Cicero’s discussions of Epicurean virtue theory;\(^\text{35}\) at the same time, more general worries about Epicurus’ own stance on this issue have been raised.\(^\text{36}\) It is therefore necessary to justify the Epicurean credentials of their interpretations lest both men turn out to be hopelessly confused about the doctrines of the Garden.\(^\text{37}\) First, Benferhat has detected Stoic influences in Cassius’s emphasis on virtue. After noting parallels between Cassius’ praise of virtue and the Stoic exposition in *De Finibus* III, she concludes that Cassius’ philosophical allegiance amounts to a fusion of Epicurean and Stoics ideas which is characteristically Roman:

\[
[I]l\ n'y\ a\ aucune\ raison\ de\ nier\ ou\ d'ignorer\ l'épicurisme\ de\ Cassius:\ il\ était\ probablement\ un\ épícurien\ sincère.\ \text{L'étude\ de\ la\ correspondance\ de\ Cicéron\ révèle\ surtout\ une\ sorte\ de
synthèse\ entre\ épícurisme\ et\ stoïcisme\ assez\ représentative\ d'une\ période\ où\ les\ Romains
cherchent\ dans\ la\ philosophie\ une\ ligne\ de\ conduite\ par\ temps\ de\ tempête:\ ils\ ne\ trouvent\ en
réalité\ dans\ les\ différentes\ écoles\ philosophiques\ grecques\ que\ leurs\ propres\ idées\ confortées
par\ une\ connaissance\ non\ pas\ superficielle\ mais\ peut-être\ biaisée\ de\ ses\ doctrines.\ Cassius
est,\ comme\ nombre\ de\ ses\ contemporains,\ un\ adhérent\ sincère\ de\ la\ philosophie\ grecque,\ en
l'occurrence\ de\ l'épicurisme,\ mais\ un\ adhérent\ romain.\text{38}\]

While this verdict is in some sense an improvement on the completely dismissive readings of Castner and others, the very notion of a “Stoic Epicurean” is incoherent.\(^\text{39}\) When Cassius and

\(^\text{35}\) Mitsis 1988: 69-70; Benferhat 2007: 262, 64.


\(^\text{37}\) Here I side with a number of studies which accept the extreme importance of virtue without conceding its instrumentality: e.g. Long 1986; Sedley 1998b; Roskam 2007; Brown 2009; Armstrong 2011.

\(^\text{38}\) Benferhat 2005: 264.

\(^\text{39}\) As charges of eclecticism often are: see Donini 1988.
the Cato of *De Finibus* III both praise virtue, they do so very different reasons. Both agree that virtue is necessary for the good life, but the Stoic holds that virtuous actions and virtuous dispositions are *per se* desirable; for the Epicurean they are instrumentally subordinate to the real good, pleasure. Virtue therefore plays a very different role in each of these schools and has a fundamentally different value. The two positions are simply incompatible. It is therefore difficult to imagine what a coherent “Epicurean Stoic” theory of virtue would even look like; in absence of such a theory, it would seem necessary for Benferhat to confess that Cassius’ philosophical learning was, after all, a superficial muddle. This is in fact the pessimistic conclusion of Phillip Mitsis’ reading of the discussion of virtue in *De Finibus* I: he suggests that Cicero has injected Roman moral vocabulary into Torquatus’ speech which does not reflect Epicurus’ actual position.\(^{40}\) A more general objection has been raised by Julia Annas, who has argued at some length against instrumentalist interpretations of Epicurean virtue and justice; she furthermore claims that Epicurus did in fact allow for a *per se* value for friendship beyond calculated self-interest.\(^{41}\)

However, each of these worries has to confront a number of fragments of Epicurus which state unambiguously an uncompromising position on both the necessity of the virtues and also their total subordination to pleasure. Consider the following three passages: “I spit on τὸ καλὸν and those who emptily (κενῶς) gaze at it, when it produces no pleasure”; “One should honor τὸ καλὸν, the virtues… if they furnish pleasure; but if they don’t furnish pleasure, bid them farewell”; “the [virtue of] courage does not come about by nature but

\(^{40}\)Mitsis 1988: 69-70; his arguments are refuted by Armstrong 2011: 115 n.41.

\(^{41}\)Annas 1993: 293-302 (justice); 339-43 (on virtue more generally).
rather by a calculation of advantage (λογισμῷ τοῦ συμφέροντος). It will not do to brush aside these unambiguous statements as bombastic or “immature,” as Annas tries to do, but she also has a more serious worry. She argues that these instrumentalist interpretations of virtue do not seem consistent with the exceptional link between pleasure and virtue described in KD 5:

If having the virtues is actually part of the pleasant life, and if the virtues are not to be redefined, but are taken the commonsense way, then part of the pleasant life is formed by acting and living according to the virtues, i.e., in accordance with dispositions to do the moral thing for its own sake, rather than for any ulterior motive.

Epicurus is therefore “double-minded” about the virtues: at some points he claims that they are calculated actions promoting long-term pleasure and to be cast aside if they fail to do so; at other times he demands these virtues to be cultivated without qualification as necessary components of a pleasurable life. On Annas’ reading Cassius and Cicero would be reflecting the real Epicurean position, but Epicurus himself was confused. This unappealing verdict would be sufficient for the purposes of this chapter (that is, Cassius’ authentic defense of Epicurus’ confusion could still have influenced Cicero, whose treatment would also still offer a reliable reflection of the Garden’s doctrines). Nevertheless, these worries about the stability of Epicurean virtue theory are overstated. It is not a contradiction to claim

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42 Athenaeus, 12.547a = fr. 512 Us.; Athenaeus, 12.546f = fr. 70 Us.; D.L. 10.120 = fr. 514 Us. For further references, see Reid 1925: 67.
43 Annas 1993: 341 (“The iconoclastic passages are ripped out of context, and hostile sources may have made them appear worse than they are…. Even if they did, Epicurus may simply have been succumbing, as he often does, to an immature tendency to shock people out of conventional attitudes; thus initial shocking claims might give way to a more nuanced conclusion.”). It is difficult to conceive of a context outside of complete fabrication which would soften Epicurus’ uncompromising language.
44 Annas 1993: 341 (cf. Erler and Schofield 1999: 668-9). I am not doing full justice to Annas’ account here, which relies on other fragments and aspects of Epicurean philosophy (e.g. the role of friendship, the appeal to “ordinary language—which she seems to take to mean respecting our intuitions—and the different descriptions of justice in our evidence) as well as her larger claims about the general nature of ancient debates on virtue. Nevertheless, none of these factors warrant the dismissal of evidence which asserts unconditionally that the virtues are instrumentally valuable.
45 Annas 1993: 342.
both the complete instrumentality of virtue as well as the brute fact about this world that a virtuous disposition is *always* a necessary component of a pleasant life (to such a degree that all pleasant lives are also virtuous lives). It is certainly an astonishing coincidence that developing virtuous dispositions has turned out to be the royal road to pleasure in our cosmos. But this does not imply that Epicurus is therefore “double-minded.” The tension in the Epicurean position derives from the school’s insistence on defending a very counter-intuitive and extremely strong claim about the superior long-term rewards of virtue in *every* situation. As such, the plausibility of his theory depends upon its ability to resist the efforts of critics to find counterexamples where virtuous conduct does not lead to maximal long-term pleasure. Cicero, then, had good reason to press this issue in *Fam.* 15.17 and *De Finibus* I-II; section v will explore his attempts to do so.

Before moving on to *De Finibus*, a few concluding comments on Cassius’ response are in order. This reply, after all, is the only surviving letter where we can see one of Cicero’s contemporaries responding to his philosophical polemics. Cassius’ convictions certainly seems sincere. Not only did Cicero treat him as an adherent, Cassius responded as one and even presented his political analysis in terms of these convictions. He was furthermore sufficiently knowledgeable to respond to criticism with a coherent and orthodox defense of Epicurean ethics. Indeed, what is striking about this reply is that it is so sophisticated. Without this letter, there would be little or no reason to believe that Cassius, who never wrote a treatise and whose philosophical credentials were almost completely forgotten in later antiquity, would be have been able to construct such a cogent defense,

46 Cf. Inwood 1990: 162-3 and section v.
47 Annas 1993: 341-2 (and Inwood 1990) accepts Cicero’s arguments to this effect; section vi will show that the matter is not so clear.
complete with an exegesis of a critical maxim of Epicurus in Greek. Presumably Cicero’s learned Epicureans friends like Atticus, Paetus, and Saufeius could have and no doubt did reply to their friend’s needling. Indeed, the abundant evidence for the wide learning and philosophical interests of these Roman Epicureans (i.e. in contrast to our slim evidence for Cassius) makes such replies all the more likely. The chance survival of Fam. 15.19 invites us to consider the possibility that these responses would routinely have been just as sophisticated and may have influenced Cicero’s dialogues in the same way that I am arguing his exchange with Cassius did.

**IV. Epicurean virtues and KD 5 in De Finibus I**

In this and the following section I analyze the structural, linguistic, and argumentative parallels between Cassius’ epistolary defense and Cicero’s presentation and refutations of Epicurean ethics in *De Finibus I-II.* I advance two claims of differing strength. First, I argue that Fam. 15.17 and 15.19 show—like the other letters analyzed in the past two chapters—that Cicero’s correspondence provided opportunities for him to practice his arguments and dialectical technique and allow us to trace the continuations of these epistolary debates in his dialogues. Second, I argue more strongly that the letters to and from Cassius provide more than general argumentative and linguistic parallels to Cicero’s later published treatises. I claim that Cassius’ defense of Pansa and Epicurean instrumentalist virtue ethics (summarized by *KD 5*) clarified to Cicero the centrality of this doctrine in

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48 Griffin 1995: 345 notes this correspondence in passing; cf. Castner 1988: 29. Note that my analysis is explicitly structural: I deliberately limit my comments about the soundness of Cicero’s criticisms or Torquatus’ defense. I feel that a verdict about Cicero’s skill as a philosophical critic is best left until his more general polemical strategies have been clarified and my claim about the influence of Cassius’ response has been substantiated. I therefore delay consideration of the strength of Cicero’s arguments until the conclusion of this chapter.
discussions of social and political philosophy and underlined the threat it posed to his consistent claim that virtue is intrinsically valuable. His exchange with the Cassius, then, caused him to rethink his criticisms and alter his tactics. This second, significantly stronger claim requires a number of qualifications and extended justification, which I will endeavor to provide over the course of my analysis. But if this hypothesis can be sustained, Cicero’s exchange with Cassius will amount to powerful support for my claims about Cicero’s use of the letters as epistolary practice and their significance for understanding his continuing literary, personal, and philosophical opposition to the Garden and its Roman adherents.

First, a few words on the date of the work and its chronological relation to Cassius’ response. It is certain that Cicero had completed all five books of the treatise by the end of June: a letter dated to the 29th of that month refers to the five books of De Finibus in the past tense. Thankfully other letters allow for a more precise dating of his progress on the elaborate presentation and critique of Epicurean ethics in Books I-II. Cicero informs Atticus in two earlier letters dated to May 29th and June 5th that he had sent his friend copies of the first two books, which he refers to as the Torquatus; these comments suggest that he was working on it in early May and perhaps as early as late April. It is possible, however, that Cicero had done some preliminary planning as far back as the beginning March or even earlier: in a letter dated to March 6th he promised his friend that he would change the character of an Epicurean speaker in an unnamed dialogue. Scholars have been

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49 I wish to flag at the outset that I am not suggesting that Cicero was unaware of KD 5 before Cassius’ citation of it (after all, Cicero cited KD 1 as early as Leg. 1.21, and the collection was widely known in the ancient world).
50 See Marinone 2014: 214 for further references and bibliography.
52 Att. 13.32.3 = SB 305; 13.5.1 = SB 312.
53 Att. 12.12.2 = SB 259: “As to Epicurus, it will be as you wish (de Epicuro, ut voles); but in the future I intend to change my system with regard to this category of characters. It is incredible how anxious some people are to
understandably eager to see here a reference to the *Torquatus*, but some caution is necessary. After all, Cicero began a number of literary works which he never completed, and this may refer to one of them. Still, the Epicurean books of *De Finibus* are certainly plausible candidates; therefore it cannot be discounted that he was already seriously thinking, planning, or even writing in early March or even late February. On a conservative interpretation, then, Cicero was working on Books I-II three or four months after his exchange with Cassius; if *Att. 12.12.2* refers to *De Finibus*, then the distance becomes as little as a month. This chronology in no way proves any link between Cassius’ letter and Cicero’s later treatise, of course, but it is important for my argument that this chronology is consistent with such a relationship.

Next, a few comments on the sources for Books I-II. I noted at the outset of this chapter that despite an increased appreciation for Cicero’s originality a somewhat depressing tendency to refer to “Cicero’s source” or “doxographical sources” has persisted. Such judgments yield a relatively simplistic view of Cicero’s practice: even if he often added his own emphases, ideas, and arguments, he generally followed one or possibly two sources fairly closely for his presentations of the various Epicurean, Stoic, and Peripatetic/Antiochean positions in the different books of *De Finibus*. Thus Michael Stokes argues that Cicero in Books I-II made use of “a few short works or extracts plus one or more

get in. Back to the ancients, therefore; for that will be *sans ressentiment* (*ad antiquos igitur; ἀνμεμέσητον γάρ*).

54 Thus I am less certain than Marinone 2014: 214 and Shackleton Bailey 1965-70: v.316 that this letter refers to *De Finibus*.
55 E.g. the political dialogue about the ten Commissioners (see Chapter I, section ii) or the aborted letter of advice to Caesar (see McConnell 2014: 195-220).
56 I limit my discussion to the Epicurean sources for this dialogue, but it would be remiss to omit a reference to Algra’s important analysis (1997) of the role that the so-called *Carneadea divisio* played in structuring Cicero’s presentation and critiques of the various ethical doctrines throughout the dialogue (including book II).
doxographical writings.”\textsuperscript{57} Voula Tsouna, on the other hand, has argued that Cicero’s main source for Epicurean ethics in \textit{De Finibus} I was Philodemus, though she has recently qualified her position and now allows for the possibility of a shared source, their mutual teacher Zeno of Sidon.\textsuperscript{58}

A great deal of evidence, however, militates against such limiting conclusions about Cicero’s use of philosophical materials; a few examples should be sufficient to show that his sources were usually quite diverse. I have argued in Chapter IV that Cicero was drawing upon Lucretius and Catius for his discussions of Epicurean physics in \textit{De Natura Deorum}— in addition, that is, to \textit{De Pietate} and a theological work by the Epicurean Phaedrus\textsuperscript{59}— and comments to Atticus reveal how deeply he scoured the philosophical tradition for his \textit{Consolatio} and the \textit{Tusculans}.\textsuperscript{60} Likewise, discussions in his letters of the dialogical practice of Aristotle and Heraclides Ponticus show that the works of the 50s were likewise composed with a wide range of models and sources in mind.\textsuperscript{61} The hardest case would seem to be \textit{De Officiis}, for not only was this work written with incredible speed in one of the busiest periods

\textsuperscript{57} Quoted in n. 1.
\textsuperscript{58} Tsouna 2001; Tsouna 2007a: 345-51, esp. 346 n.7; cf. Tsouna 2007b: 14-5 with n. 3-4. In this last discussion she adds a new claim: “[Cicero’s sources for \textit{De Finibus}] cannot belong to Latin authors, for Cicero also says that those Epicureans who write in Latin are not genuine philosophers, and he adds that he has never read their books.” My analysis of Cicero’s literary polemics in Chapter I completely undermines this literal interpretation.
\textsuperscript{59} See Chapter IV, section v.
\textsuperscript{60} E.g. \textit{Att.} 12.14.3 = SB 251: “Nothing has been written by any author on the alleviation of grief which I did not read in your house. But my sorrow is stronger than any consolation. I have even done something which I imagine no one has ever done before, consoled myself in a literary composition” (Cicero’s justification for building a shrine to Tullia at \textit{Att.} 12.18 = SB 254 seems to invoke similarly wide reading). He refers in this letter to the lost \textit{Consolatio}; this research also informed the \textit{Tusculans}. On the latter work, note also the wide-ranging doxography of opinions about death in Book I (including discussions of Dicaearchus, Epicurus, Panaetius, Plato, and Pythagoras).
\textsuperscript{61} See \textit{Att.} 4.16.2 = SB 89; \textit{Fam.} 1.9.23 = SB 20; \textit{Ad. Q. Fr.} 3.5.2 = SB 25. The \textit{Republic}, of course, was a work influenced by a wide range of sources: in addition to the formal models of Aristotle and Heraclides, Polybius is used for his constitutional theory and history of Rome; above all Plato is constantly present as a model or a foil in specific passages and the work as a whole. Dyck’s commentary on \textit{De Legibus} (2003) and Atkins 2013 reveal the presence of a range of Stoic, Platonic, and Roman legal ideas. Fantham 2004 provides a good discussion of the diverse philosophical and rhetorical sources for \textit{De Oratore}.
of Cicero’s life, but there is good reason to suspect that he followed Panaetius’ περὶ καθήκοντος quite closely, at least for Books I-II.62 It is nevertheless clear that Cicero took the time to conduct a good deal of background research even in this hastily composed work. He shows awareness of later discussions by the Stoics Hecato of Rhodes and Antipater of Tarsus; two letters attest that he was searching for a treatise by his former teacher Posidonius and had also requested bibliographical aid from the Stoic Athenodorus Calvus.63 These examples do not support the conclusion that Cicero restricted himself narrowly to one or two sources at any point.

I hope these comments are sufficient to cast doubt on vague assumptions about Cicero’s limited sources in De Finibus I-II; however, Tsouna’s attempt to identify Philodemus as the primary source of these two books is more interesting. She draws attention to the fact that Torquatus actually names Philodemus in Book II: at the end of Marcus’ critique, Torquatus claims somewhat lamely that he will defer a rebuttal to “more able” Epicureans (tamen invenire malo paratiores). Marcus then clarifies the identities of these unnamed men: “You’re talking, I think, about our friends Siro and Philodemus, men who are not only excellent but also most learned.”64 Strictly speaking, all this passage offers is an acknowledgement that two Greek Epicureans would be able to respond to Marcus’ extended critique. However, I would concede that this passage provides a reason to entertain

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62 During the composition of De Officiis Cicero finished or was working on De Senectute, the 2nd Philippic and another, unnamed work—all while mobilizing the senate against Antonius (on this background see Dyck 1996: 8-10 and Brunt 2012: 220-2). On Cicero’s dependence on Panaetius in Books I-II and his comparative independence in Book III, see n.146.


64 Fin. 2.119: familiares nostros, credo, Sironem dicis et Philodemum, cum optimos viros, tum homines doctissimos. Torquatus then affirms this identification (recte, inquit, intelligis). I return to this parting exchange in section vi.
the possibility that Philodemus might be a source for at least certain portions of Torquatus’ speech. After all, Cicero not only knew Philodemus but used his works; furthermore, the nod to Philodemus at 2.119 is reminiscent of the way that Cicero gestured toward his use of Polybius in *De Republica* (*Rep.* 1.34). That said, Tsouna’s attempts to provide concrete examples of passages where Cicero follows Philodemus’ positions and arguments—thereby fleshing out the nature of Cicero’s use of his source—are unconvincing. The problem is that there is no smoking gun like the close linguistic and structural parallels between the doxography in *De Piatate* and *De Natura Deorum* I (or the similarities between Scipio and Polybius’ account of the Roman state).65 As a result, Tsouna is forced to point to a number of cases where Philodemus and Cicero agree on issues for which there is some evidence of alternative Epicurean positions.66 The problem with this methodology is that most of these doctrinal similarities reflect venerable and thoroughly orthodox Epicurean ideas. Thus when Torquatus insists on his preference for a rigorously instrumentalist interpretation of virtue or friendship, emphasizes the importance of the Epicurean hedonistic calculus, or claims that a person is happy if he or she enjoys present pleasures with the expectation that they will last, Torquatus is simply following the school’s mainline positions.67 The fact that Philodemus also subscribes to these traditional views is therefore neither surprising nor does it support the claim that Cicero followed Philodemus on these points (or that these similarities reflected

65 For Cicero’s use of Polybius, see Chapter III, n.96; for *De Piatate*, Chapter IV, n.109.
66 Tsouna 2007a: “[Philodemus] advances his own position as the only correct one and, if necessary, contrasts it with the positions of his [Epicurean] rivals. Torquatus makes similar moves in the first books of *De Finibus*: he distinguishes among diverging Epicurean views on a certain ethical topic and then endorses one of them…. I find that in every case of this sort, Torquatus’ preferences coincides with Philodemus’ own.”
67 Instrumentality of virtue: see n.42 for references (all found in fragments of Epicurus). Hedonistic calculus: see *Ep. ad Men*. 129-32. Definition of the happy life: *Fin.* 2.92 ascribes this doctrine to Metrodorus (Tsouna omits this passage and cites only *TD* 3.38, where it is ascribed to a lecture of Zeno Sidonius which Cicero heard in Athens. I take it that Zeno quoted with approval Metrodorus’ orthodox position.
their mutual teacher, Zeno). Now, if Torquatus’ arguments reflected Philodemus’ positions on the issue of whether rhetoric is a techne or made use of the technical epistemological arguments in De Signis—i.e. issues which seem to reflect later developments in Epicureanism and/or special interests of Philodemus or Zeno—then a case could be made for either Greek as a source. But in the absence of any such clear indications, I conclude that while Cicero may have relied on a work or works of Philodemus to some degree in De Finibus I-II, there is no reason to think that he did not also make use of his wider reading, his studies and associations with no less than three heads of the Athenian Garden (which he explicitly flags at Fin. 1.16), and, as I have been arguing over the course of this thesis, his debates with his Roman Epicurean contemporaries like Cassius.

With this background in place I now turn to analyze the structure and identify a number of recurrent argumentative and polemical strategies De Finibus I. The dialogue proper begins in section 12. The Epicurean Lucius Manlius Torquatus and a mutual friend, Triarius, have joined Marcus at his house in Cumae. Torquatus takes the opportunity

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68 *Pace* Tsouna 2007a (e.g. pp. 350-1: “… according to Torquatus, anti-hedonism is refuted and hedonism is confirmed if we stress the importance of the calculus and in that manner bring out the rationality inherent in the pursuit of pleasure. Philodemus assumes exactly the same stance.”). I add here that Tsouna’s reading becomes even more problematic in light of her additional goal of reconstructing Philodemus’ own positions based on the “indirect evidence” of Torquatus’ testimony (see 2007a: 346).

69 Cf. my conclusion in Chapter IV, section v, where I similarly argued for the value of exploring other sources for *De Natura Deorum* beyond Philodemus.

70 My reading of Books I-II owes a particular debt to Inwood 1990. Leonhardt 1999: 197-204 also offers a good discussion; the commentary of Reid 1925 and the annotated translation of Annas 2001 provide valuable running notes (Madvig 1876 remains relevant but is chiefly concerned with textual and linguistic issues). Mitsis 1988 also makes a number of important observations, but his worry that Torquatus’ Epicurean virtue theory reflects Roman ideas limits the value of his treatment for my purposes.

71 For a good reading of the preface (sections 1-11), see Baraz 2012: 113-27.

72 Torquatus (praetor in 49) was a Pompeian and committed enemy of Caesar; he continued to fight after Pharsalus and died at sea after the Battle of Thapsus in 46 (like Cato, Torquatus preferred suicide to capture and capitulation to Caesar; Cicero’s use of these recently deceased Republicans as characters thus creates a powerful political undertow in *De Finibus*). Cicero speaks of him with admiration at *Att*. 8.11.2 = SB 161B (*L. Torquatum, virum fortem et cum auctoritate*); cf. *Brutus*, 265. His father was Cicero’s old friend and had helped him politically (see Nepos, *Vita Attici* 1; *Fin.* 2.63). Torquatus may also be the Manlius of Catullus 68 and (less probably) Horace, *Ep.* 1.5. See Mitchell 1966; Castner 1988: 40-2; Benferhat 2005: 266-70.
to ask why Marcus disagrees so strongly with the school of “my Epicurus” (*Epicurum nostrum*) and wonders whether this disdain is purely stylistic. Marcus rejects this explanation and promises to voice his concerns. Before outlining his worries, however, he is careful to emphasize his thorough knowledge of the school, citing not only his study with Phaedrus and Zeno, but also his “daily” (*cotidieque*) discussions of his lectures with Atticus. Cicero, it seems, presents these discussions with his Epicurean friends and teachers as fully relevant to his understanding and criticisms of the school’s doctrines.

His initial, brief critique (1.15-26) is structured according to the traditional three branches of philosophy. These criticisms introduce a number of themes and debates which persist through Torquatus’ defense and Marcus’ second round of criticisms in Book II; at the same time, I argue that they reveal a number of points of close contact with *Fam.* 15.17-9. Marcus begins with an attack on Epicurean physics (17-21): he ridicules the notorious doctrine of “the swerve” and depicts Epicurus as someone who not only stole from Democritus but made his physics positively worse. Marcus then turns to logic (22) and claims that Epicurean disdain for dialectic or definitions leaves Epicurus “naked and defenseless” (*inermis ac nudus*); a lacuna interrupts a further criticism of the Epicurean criterion of truth and the reliability of the senses. When the text resumes (23), Marcus is voicing his disagreement about the Epicurean position on pleasure. Once again Epicurus is called derivative (now he steals from Aristippus and the Cyrenaics, whose position was, like

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73 *Fin.* 1.16: “I know well enough all of Epicurus’ doctrines (*omnes mihi Epicuri sententiae satis notae sunt*), unless you think that Phaedrus or Zeno lied to me. For I head both men lecture (*audivi*)… Indeed, I frequently heard them with my friend Atticus, who not only admired both but had a special affection for Phaedrus. We discussed every day between ourselves what we had heard…”

74 *Fin.* 17: “And so Epicurus corrupts those things which he changes; as for what he adopts, it’s all from Democritus: atoms, void, images (which he calls *εἴδωλα*) by whose incursions we not only see, but even think” (*ita quae mutat [Epicurus] ea corruptit, quae sequitur sunt tota Democriti, atomi, inane, imagines, quae eidola nominant…*). For the charge of plagiarism, see Chapter IV, nn. 120-1.

75 These are also the charges Cicero levels at Amafinius, Catius, etc. See Chapter I, section iii.B.
the physics of Democritus, superior to Epicurus’ bungled innovations). Marcus then heavy-handedly declares that there is “nothing less worthy of a human being” (nihil homine videatur indignius) than Epicurean hedonism. To illustrate his point, he offers several examples of the seemingly altruistic actions of Torquatus’ ancestors, including the famous general and statesman Titus Manlius Imperiosus Torquatus, who not only defeated a Gaul in single combat (and took his torque, thus earning the cognomen “Torquatus”) but later put his son to death to enforce military discipline: “he gave preference to the claim of state and military office, even over his natural affection for his son” (cum ipsi naturae patrioque amori praetulerit ius maiestatis atque imperi). How could this action, Marcus asks, possibly have been motivated by the belief that pleasure is the highest good? Marcus then pivots to more recent history and asks how Torquatus can claim to derive pleasure from reading, hearing
about his noble ancestors, or memorizing poetry when Epicurus was so bombastically
dismissive of the value of these sorts of pursuits.\textsuperscript{78}

This sudden shift from Epicurean physics and logic to Torquatus’ ancestor and his
reading habits may seem like hopeless tangents. The claim about the pleasure of literature
may appear especially puzzling: Marcus stops attacking Epicureanism proper in order to
claim that Torquatus—and no doubt other Epicureans like Atticus, Saufeius, and Paetus—
lived lives inconsistent with their school’s positions. Two points can help explain these
possibly surprising comments. First, I argued in Chapter III that \textit{ad hominem} attacks were
seen in the ancient world as fully relevant to philosophical debate. Marcus’ arguments
therefore attempt to underline the implausibility of Epicurean ethics by showing how its
adherents struggled or completely failed to live by its doctrines. Second, the anti-Epicurean
polemics of Books I-II aim at more than a theoretical refutation of hedonism; these initial
living refutation arguments simultaneously confront the popularity of the school in Italy.

Brad Inwood’s incisive analysis of the multiple goals in Book II is equally applicable to
Book I:

\begin{quote}
[Cicero] wished to do two things: to air the basic issues raised by Epicurean hedonism… and
to kill its influence at Rome, if he possibly could, by showing that it was not in fact
compatible with the traditional \textit{Roman} attachment to \textit{prima facie} moral virtue. The brief
popularity\textsuperscript{79} of the school among traditional Roman aristocrats suggests that the Epicurean
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Fin}. 1.25: “Do not tell me, ‘these very pursuits are pleasurable to me,’ and that so were those deeds of your
ancestor Torquatus. Neither Epicurus nor Metrodorus nor anyone else who had a brain or had learned your
doctrines ever defended such a position.” Cicero doubtless had in mind certain dismissive statements of
Epicurus about traditional education, including the notorious advice to Pythocles to “spread your sails, blessed
one, and flee all \textit{paideia}” (fr. 163 Us. = D.L. 10.6; cf. fr. 117 Us. = Athenaeus, 12.588A). Recent discussions of
Epicurean attitudes about poetry offer more nuanced verdicts than Cicero about the value of poetry and
literature: see e.g. Asmis 1991, the essays in Obbink 1995, and Sider 1997.

\textsuperscript{79} Whether or not Cicero was successful in checking the popularity of Epicureanism in the Imperial period is an
interesting question. It is certainly true that we have nowhere near as much evidence for Roman Epicureans of
this period as we do for the Late Republic. However, this may simply be the result of the lack of something
akin to our corpus of Cicero’s letters. And in any case we can identify a number of later Epicureans: e.g. the 1\textsuperscript{\textit{st}}
century A.D. consul Pompedius (Josephus, 29.1; see Swan 1976 and Castner 1988: 50); Trajan’s widow
claim to reconcile the two was of critical importance... Cicero’s aim here... is to make Romans choose between traditional values and Epicurus.\textsuperscript{80}

In other words, if Torquatus and Cicero’s other Epicurean readers give up their hedonism, they can continue their senatorial careers, literary interests, and praise their selfless Roman ancestors. Otherwise, they are hopelessly confused and incoherent, or, even worse, they are opportunistic liars who feign talk about virtue for their own selfish purposes. It is worth reemphasizing that even if Marcus is right about Torquatus’ supposed inconsistency, this in no way refutes Epicurean claims \textit{per se}. But such an inconsistency does support this second and independent claim about the unsuitability of Epicureanism for Roman life, which I have been arguing is absolutely central to Cicero’s larger goals in his letters and dialogues and reflects his engagement with a diverse intellectual network of Roman Epicureans.

It is no doubt apparent that this first critique is brief, openly hostile, and light on argumentation. But this was intentional: “I had said these things more to provoke Torquatus than to give a speech of my own...” (\textit{Fin}. 1.26). Marcus’ philosophical trolling here turns out to be actually quite similar to Cicero’s polemics in his letters to Cassius (\textit{Fam}. 15.16-7). There too he offered compressed but wide-ranging criticisms of Epicurus’ physics and derivative doctrines; he likewise concluded rather assertorically that the altruistic actions of

\textsuperscript{80} Inwood 1990: 163-4, his emphasis. This passage comes at the end of the article, so Inwood is unable to pursue the broader social background of Roman Epicureanism (the one example he does cite, Thorius Balbus, was not in fact an Epicurean—see Castner 1986, reiterated in Castner 1988: 110-1; cf. the skepticism in Benferhat 2005: 72-3). Thorius aside, this and the previous chapters take Inwood's analysis of \textit{De Finibus} I-II to the next level by underlining that Cicero’s desire to “kill” the influence of Epicureanism in Italy characterizes and structures his philosophical work as a whole.
Pansa amounted to a living refutation of his creed and a test for the coherency of Cassius’ convictions, whose own noble deeds were also presented as living refutations of the Garden. In Marcus’ first critique, it is now the actions of Torquatus and his distinguished ancestors that refute Epicurean ethics (along with several charges of plagiarism and a knock at Epicurean εἰδωλα). In other words, Cicero has enacted in Marcus’ first critique the sort of initial heavy-handed philosophical criticism which he employed in his letters to Cassius (as well as in a number of the other letters the past two chapters have analyzed): sweeping critiques aimed at getting their addressees to defend or abandon their convictions. This would seem to support my weak claim that the style and strategies of Cicero’s published works had been shaped by his many years of epistolary polemics; the parallels between Marcus’ first speech and Fam. 15.16-7 may also provide limited circumstantial support for my stronger and more speculative claim that Cicero had Cassius’ response in mind when writing the Torquatus.

I now turn to Torquatus’ response (1.28-72). His exposition of Epicurean ethics is broad, comprehensive, and unusually vigorous; I will only be able to analyze a limited number of arguments in his speech. I therefore focus on his discussion of the instrumental value of the virtues (1.34-58), summarized pithily in KD 5 (1.57), and claim that his arguments on these issues are explicitly central to his defense of Epicurean ethics as a whole. His speech begins with some preliminary matters: Torquatus will limit his discussion primarily to ethics (28), and he takes a moment (29) to define more clearly the topic of inquiry—the sumnum bonum, which he identifies as pleasure (voluptas). He proceeds to justify this assertion by citing infant and animal behavior as well as the self-evident testimony of our senses and ordinary beliefs (prolepsis) about the value of pleasure (30-1).
The next two sections introduce the key Epicurean doctrine of the hedonistic calculus, which not only corrects mistaken clichés that hedonism leads to gluttony or passion but also provides a rational means for determining actions.

Torquatus then pauses and claims that the hedonistic calculus is what enables him to respond to Marcus’ living refutation arguments about his ancestor. The passage is worth quoting at some length because of the central role it will play in this and the following book:

* hanc ego cum teneam sententiam, quid est cur verear ne ad eam non possim accommodare Torquatos nostros? .... quorum facta quemadmodum, quaeo, interpretaris? sicine eos censes aut in armatum hostem impetum fecisse aut in liberos atque in sanguinem suum tam crudeles fuisse, nihil ut de utilitatis, nihil ut de commodis suis cogitarent? at id ne ferae quidem faciunt, ut ita ruant itaque turbent, ut earum motus et impetus quo pertineant non intellegamus; tu tam egregios viros censes tantas res gessisse sine causa? quae fuerit causa, mox videro; interea hoc tenebo, si ob aliquam causam ista quae sine dubio praeclara sunt fecerint, virtutem iis per se ipsam causam non fuisse. “Torquem detraxit hosti.” et quidem se texit, ne interiret. “at magnum periculum adiit.” in oculis quidem exercitus. “quid ex eo est consequitus?” laudem et caritatem, quae sunt vitae sine metu degendae praesidia firmissima. “filium morte multavit.” si sine causa, nollem me ab eo ortum tam inportuno tamque crudeli; sin, ut dolore suo sanciret militaris imperii disciplinam exercitumque in gravissimo bello animadversionis metu contineret, saluti prospexit civium, qua intellegebat contineri suam.

Since this is my position, what reason is there for me to fear that I can’t accommodate my ancestors to it? .... Please tell me how you would explain their actions? Do you really think that they made an attack against an armed foe or were so cruel to their own children—their own blood—but did not think at all about the utility or the advantages of their actions? But not even wild beasts act in such a way; they do not run around in such a confusion that we cannot understand what their movements and impulses are aiming at. Do you think that such excellent men would have done such great things without a cause? What this cause was I will examine shortly; meanwhile I will hold to this point: if my ancestors had a motive for their without a doubt glorious deeds, it was not the intrinsic value of virtue. “He dragged the torque from his enemy.” And indeed he saved himself from being killed. “But he undertook
great danger.” Yes, but in front of the eyes of his soldiers. “But what did he get from this?” Renown and affection, which are the most secure safeguards for living life without fear. “He inflicted death on his son.” If he did so without cause, I wouldn’t want to have descended from a man so ruthless and cruel. But if by enduring pain he could maintain his military command and preserve the discipline of his army in a very serious war by fear of punishment, then he was looking toward the safety of his fellow-citizens, which he knew was tied to his own. *(De Finibus 1.34-5)*

Torquatus then adds that “this principle has wide application” (*atque haec ratio late patet*): the hedonist calculus and its considerations of utility can explain any other historical examples of “that moral goodness of yours” (*ipsius honestatis*) which Marcus might dredge up.

This passage is important for a number of reasons. First, it is clear that Torquatus is no dialogic stooge or yes-man. In order to respond to Marcus’ living refutation argument he explains how a crucial Epicurean doctrine can explain seemingly altruistic or pain-inducing actions; he then works out the consequences of this doctrine in the concrete situation of his ancestor by redescribing how the elder Torquatus’ conduct aimed at a desire to ensure the safety of his army; and therefore the safety of his state and ultimately himself. Safety and security (*praesidia firmissima = ἀσφάλεια*) are, of course, important components of an ataraxic life. Now, Torquatus cannot fully defend this chain of reasoning or the “wide application” of the hedonistic calculus at this early stage in his argument. In particular he

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81 The following translations of *De Finibus* are my own, but I have profited (and sometimes borrowed) from the translations of Rackham 1931 and Woolf (= Annas 2001).

82 *Fin.* 1.36. Torquatus refers to “vestra… oratio, tua prasesertim, qui studiose antiqua persequeris). This comment would seem to refer most naturally to Cicero’s oratorical style, but historical *exempla* also played a role in philosophical polemics.

83 Torquatus is not committing himself to stating that his ancestor was consciously motivated by pleasure, a point which will become relevant in Book II (see n.117).

84 See Chapter II, section ii for the importance of securing ἀσφάλεια. Cf. Torquatus’ conclusion at *Fin.* 1.53: “For it is pleasant to be held in esteem and loved, because these things make life safer and fuller of pleasures” (*nam diligi et carum esse iucundum est propterea quia tuitionem vitam voluptatem pleniorem efficit*).
needs to explain in more detail why the virtues are so invariably\textsuperscript{85} conducive to greater long-term pleasure. Still, Torquatus’ response is already a good deal more charitable and dialectically sophisticated than almost all other surviving hostile ancient accounts of Epicurean ethics; Cicero has given Marcus’ Epicurean interlocutor a real opportunity to defend his views against criticism. Furthermore, Torquatus is in fact aware that further argumentation on this point is required; his defense of his ancestor is merely an outline and preliminary response which he promises to flesh out and support.\textsuperscript{86} Torquatus, it seems, takes this living refutation argument very seriously, and accepts Marcus’ challenge to offer hedonistic justifications for traditional instances of Roman virtue. We will therefore see exempla like the elder Torquatus serve again and again as test cases for the coherence of Epicurean social theory over the course of Books I-II.\textsuperscript{87} In other words, Cicero has emphasized with Torquatus’ initial response the importance of the charge that Roman life and Epicurean doctrine are incompatible.\textsuperscript{88}

Torquatus does not delay his discussion of the virtues for very long. After four sections which clarify what he means by pleasure,\textsuperscript{89} Torquatus turns in 1.42-3 to the application of these hedonistic considerations to guide our decision-making process (i.e.

\textsuperscript{85} It is worth reiterating the importance of this qualification. For if Cicero can provide a single situation where the hedonistic calculus would justify an Epicurean to act contrary to justice or the other virtues, then KD 5 and Epicurus’ (and Roman Epicureans’) attempt to justify traditional ethical conduct is seriously undermined.\textsuperscript{86} \textit{Fin.} 1.37: “But enough has been said at this point about the illustrious and glorious deeds of famous men. There will be an appropriate place later for discussing the course of all the virtues toward pleasure” (\textit{sed de clarorum hominum factis illustribus et gloriosis satis hoc loco dictum est. erit enim iam de omnium virtutum cursu ad voluptatem proprius disserendi locus}).

\textsuperscript{87} Cf. Inwood 1990: 158-9, who glosses \textit{Fin.} 1.34 with the following comment: “[Torquatus] sees his task as being the reconciliation of such cases with hedonism…. the question will turn on the Epicurean’s ability to give plausible interpretations of all actions which are agreed to be \textit{prima facie} instances of virtue.”

\textsuperscript{88} Torquatus’ dismissive reference Cicero’s \textit{ipsius honestatis} also flags the central role that the debate over the intrinsic or instrumental value of virtue will play in Book II—and the intrinsic value of the \textit{honestum} was, of course, also central to the critique of Pansa and Cassius in \textit{Fam.} 15.17.

\textsuperscript{89} \textit{Fin.} 1.37-41. He also offers brief arguments against the fear of death and an explanation as to how Epicurean doctrine can help to endure pain. Annas 2001: 16 n.36 notes that Cicero seems to be paraphrasing KD 1-4 here (as always Reid 1925: 59-60 saw this long ago).
“choices and avoidances,” appetendi et refugiendi). After claiming that all actions originate from considerations of pleasure and pain he concludes that, “it is clear that all actions are correct and praiseworthy only if they lead to a live of pleasure” (perspicuum est, omnes rectas res atque laudabiles eo referri ut cum voluptate vivatur). Torquatus explicitly contrasts this interpretation with other philosophers’ empty talk about virtue: “Those who place the highest good in virtue alone have been beguiled by the splendor of its name (id qui in una virtute ponunt et splendore nominis capti) and do not understand what nature really demands… For unless those exceedingly beautiful virtues of your school produced pleasure (istae enim vestrae eximiae pulchraeque virtutes nisi voluptatem efficerent), who would think that they are laudable or to be sought after?”

He then begins his Epicurean interpretation of the four cardinal virtues (1.42-54), beginning with wisdom (sapientia = φρόνησις), which offers not only a potent illustration of his general approach to virtue but also provides the justification for the hedonistic value of the virtues. Just as medicine and navigation are valued not in themselves but for their respective results of health and smooth sailing, so wisdom, the “art of living” (ars vivendi), must also be valued only in so far as it is the “artificer of procuring and producing pleasure” (artifex conquirendae et comparandae voluptatis). He then embarks on a passionate panegyric of the ability of wisdom to dispel fear, passions, and false beliefs, all of which are said to cause great physical and mental torment, and underlines how beneficial Epicurus’ classification of desires is to a wise man.

90 Cf. Fin. 1.52: “For the [Stoics] deny that there is any good except for that vague shadow which they call ‘moral goodness,’ a name more dazzling than substantial” (illi enim negant esse bonum quidquam nisi nescio quam illam umbram quod appellant honestum, non tam solido quam spendido nomine).

91 Cicero thus has Torquatus correctly emphasize here the cardinal role of φρόνησις in Epicurean ethics: see e.g. Epicurus, Ep. ad Men. 132: “Therefore φρόνησις is more precious than even philosophy, for from it have grown all the virtues, because [φρόνησις] teaches that it is not possible to live pleasantly without living... [= KD5].”
He closes his discussion with a restatement of the instrumental value of wisdom: “*sapientiam propter voluptates expetendam*” (46).

The following ten sections of his speech explain the other virtues; the structural parallels with his treatment of wisdom are marked and deliberate. Up next is temperance (*temperantia* = σοφρωσύνη): “By the same principle we Epicureans say that not even temperance has intrinsic value, but is pursued because it brings peace of mind…” (*eademque ratione ne temperantiam quidem propter se expetendam esse dicemus, sed quia pacem animis afferat…*).92 After explaining in more detail how temperance gives humans the strength to endure pains and avoid slavery to the passions, Torquatus concludes with a restatement of the virtue’s purely instrumental value, just as he had done with wisdom a few sentences earlier: “temperance is to be sought not because it flees pleasures but because it procures greater ones” (*temperantiamque expetendam non quia voluptates fugiat sed quia maiores consequatur*).

Courage (*fortitudo* = ἀνδρεία) follows the same pattern. Torquatus in fact offers a broader reiteration of the instrumentality of virtue when he broaches the topic of courage:

*eadem fortitudinis ratio reperietur. nam neque laborum perfunctio neque perpessio dolorum per se ipsa allicit, nec patientia... nec ea ipsa, quae laudatur, industria, ne fortitudo quidem; sed ista sequimur ut sine cura metuque vivamus animumque et corpus, quantum efficere possimus, molestia liberemus.*

The same argument will be found true of courage. The performance of labors or suffering pain offer no intrinsic attractions, nor endurance or… that much-praised virtue, diligence, nor even courage; we pursue all of these virtues in order to live without care or fear and to liberate our mind and body from pain as much as we can do so. *(De Finibus 1.49)*

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92 *Fin.* 1.47.
Torquatus focuses primarily on the fear of death and the deleterious consequences of cowardice, which he claims often lead to the betrayal of friends, parents or otherwise lead to self-destruction. As with the other virtues, he concludes with an emphatic restatement of the real value of courage: “... fortitude and endurance are not praised in their own right; they are desired because they provide pleasure” (*nec fortitudinem patientiamque laudari suo nomine... has optari quia voluptatem*).

The final virtue, justice (*iustitia = δικαιοσύνη*), is the climax of his account of Epicurean virtue theory (50-4). He explicitly stresses once again that his argument is the same:

\[ iustitia restat, ut de omni virtute sit dictum; sed similia fere dici possunt ut enim sapientiam, temperantiam, fortitudinem copulatas esse docui cum voluptate, ut ab ea nullo modo nec divelli nec distrahi possint, sic de iustitia iudicandum est. \]

Justice remains, then I will have discussed every virtue, but my treatment is really rather similar. Just as I have shown that wisdom, temperance and courage are joined with pleasure to such a degree that they are in no way able to be torn or dragged from it, so we must make the same judgment concerning justice. (De Finibus 1.50)

Torquatus then introduces a range of arguments to justify the pleasure-producing possibilities of justice (50-4). Natural and necessary desires are easily satisfied; as a result, “there is altogether no reason for sin” (*omnino nulla sit causa peccandi*) because the potential rewards of crime are superfluous. The possibility of detection can never fully be eliminated; the resulting fear of punishment “never allows [the criminal] to breathe or rest easy” (*numquam sinit eum respirare, numquam acquiescere*). Even if one escapes conviction, the possibility of suspicion and rumor to generate hatred or ill-will offers a good reason for cultivating a just disposition. Perhaps most importantly, even if one has the resources and power to commit
injustice, the cultivation of justice and generosity (*liberalitas*) is nevertheless maximally efficacious of pleasure, because people who do so “attract goodwill toward themselves as well as affection, which is tightly connected to living an untroubled life” (*benevolentiam sibi conciliant et, quod aptissimum est ad quiete vivendum, caritatem*). Torquatus concludes his discussion of justice (53) with the now expected restatement of virtue’s instrumental value: “And so one would say correctly that not even justice is intrinsically desirable; it is desired because it yields so much pleasure. For it is pleasant to be held in esteem and loved, because they make life safer and fuller of pleasures” (*itaque ne iustitiam quidem recte quis dixerit per se ipsam optabilem, sed quia iucunditas vel plurimum afferat. nam diligi et carum esse iucundum est propterea quia tutiorem vitam voluptatum pleniorem efficit*).

Torquatus pauses here to offer a number of “corollaries” to his preceding discussion (55-60). He expands on a variety of issues relevant toward the practice or hedonistic justification of various virtues. He then offers something of a peroration to his account of the happy life by stressing that Epicurus’ doctrines offer a royal road to the most pleasurable life. The conclusion to his panegyric of Epicurus and defense of virtue is *KD* 5:

*clamat Epicurus, is quem vos nimis voluptatibus esse deditum dicitis, “non posse iucunde vivi nisi sapienter, honeste iustaeque vivatur; nec sapienter, honeste, iuste, nisi iucunde.”*

Epicurus, whom your school claims has given himself over to excessive pleasure, shouts out,

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93 As Reid 1925: 78 points out, *liberalitas* is usually closely associated with justice, e.g. *Off.* 1.43: “There is nothing generous… which is not at the same time just” (*nihil est… liberale quod non idem iustum*).

94 *Fin.* 1.55: *huic certae stabilique sententiae quae sint coniuncta explicabo brevi*.

95 E.g. the distinction between mental and physical pleasures, and how memories of past pleasure help endure pain or hardship.

96 See in particular his comment, “What a glorious, open, simple, and direct road toward the happy life (*o praecclarem beate vivendi et apertam et simplicem et directam viam*)!” Madvig also recognizes the structural importance of this passage, but I prefer to see it as the conclusion of his discussion of virtue rather than as a *novum exordium* (1876: 109: *novo sumpto exordio Torquatus ostendit, omnia apud Epicurum comparata esse ad beate vivendum…*).
“It is not possible to live pleasantly without living wisely, morally, and justly; nor is it possible to live wisely, morally, and justly without also living pleasantly.” (De Finibus 1.57) Torquatus’ use of KD 5 to summarize his previous arguments about the individual virtues reveals the real force of this pithy saying. KD 5 is not doubled-minded, in tension with other Epicurean claims, or a contamination of Roman moral vocabulary. On the contrary, it is the logical conclusion of the convergence of a range of distinct but mutually reinforcing arguments and doctrines which justify the instrumental value of the performance of virtuous actions and the cultivation of virtuous dispositions in order to provide ataraxia. And so Torquatus, as Cassius had done a few months earlier in his response to Cicero’s living refutation arguments, cites KD 5 as the culmination of his defense of the utility of virtue and as the conclusion of his rebuttal of Marcus’ criticisms of Epicurean ethics and his ancestor.

Now, I should confess that I have somewhat mischievously characterized this passage as Torquatus’ “peroration” or “conclusion.” His speech, of course, continues for another 15 sections. But much of this is a restatement of earlier comments: a comparison of the terrible consequences of false beliefs and their resultant anxiety with the equanimity of the sage (59-62), a claim about the superiority of Epicurus’ physics and disdain for logic-chopping (63-4), and a concluding remark on Epicurus’ great benefactions to mankind (71-2). It is only the discussion of friendship which offers something new (65-70); but here too Torquatus adopts the instrumentalist interpretation which he had already fleshed out in his more elaborate treatment of the virtues.

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97 Pace Annas 1993 (see nn.41, 43-4).
98 Pace Mitsis 1988 (see nn.35, 40).
99 These topics are discussed earlier at sections 42-4, 30, and 45, respectively.
100 Torquatus (69-70) famously refers here to certain Epicurean dissidents who tried to justify some intrinsic value for friendship.
If we take a step back and look at the broader structure of Torquatus’ presentation, however, his discussion of the virtues with KD 5 as its conclusion is the central argument of Book I and the core of his defense to Marcus’ initial critique. For in the ethical portions of the first critique, Marcus’ claim was that Epicurean ethics could not justify the seemingly altruistic and pain-inducing actions of Torquatus Imperiosus (and by implication altruistic behavior more generally). Torquatus, as we have seen, took this ad hominem attack very seriously and sketched early in his speech a preliminary response which he elaborated on in his account of the virtues; the culmination of this defense was KD 5. This defense in fact amounts to almost two-thirds of Torquatus’ entire speech; no other topic is given a more detailed treatment, and Marcus’ relentless barrage of additional living refutation arguments in Book II underlines its fundamental importance to the debate. The ability of the virtues to justify Epicurus’ efforts to preserve traditional values in a hedonistic context, then, is the central debate of both speeches in Book I. We will see that this debate continues in Book II, but it is worth pausing to consider how this initial exchange can support the two claims I have been advancing in this chapter.

In Fam. 15.17 Cicero had asked Cassius how he could justify the altruistic actions of Pansa and presented him (and Cassius) as living refutations of their creed. This is same strategy as Marcus’ first critique, where the actions of Torquatus and his ancestors are similarly said to have refused to admit hedonistic explanations. Second, Torquatus’ stress on the instrumentality of virtue as the basis of his reinterpretation of Marcus’ exempla is exactly

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101 Cf. Inwood 1990: 156-64, who stresses the centrality of Epicurean virtue theory in Book II.
102 Torquatus’ treatment of the virtues runs from 1.32-58 (I include here the discussion of the hedonistic calculus at 1.32, since it serves as the foundation for his arguments about virtue). In Annas 2001 this amounts to 7 full pages; the rest of his speech together is only 4.5 pages. Of course these figures are approximate; there are a number of digressions over the course of sections 32-58, but the virtues on any reckoning dominate Torquatus’ speech. It seems unlikely that Cicero would have spent so much time discussing the question of virtue’s intrinsic or instrumental value had he not felt this question was of crucial importance.
Cassius’ strategy in *Fam.* 15.19. Torquatus, of course, offers a more comprehensive treatment of Epicurean ethics than Cassius is able to do in his brief letter. But both authors emphatically reject Cicero’s claim that τὸ καλὸν δὶ αὐτὸ αἰρετόν and Marcus’ appeal to the “empty name of virtue”; both underline the benefits of virtuous conduct and the destructive consequences of unvirtuous dispositions, which are summarized in a quotation of *KD* 5 and which allow them to conclude that Epicurean ethics can neutralize Cicero’s living refutation arguments and his attempt to drive a wedge between being Roman and being an Epicurean. On a more concrete level, Cassius and Torquatus outline the benefits of a good reputation in similar language (*Fin.* 1.52-3: *benevolentiam sibi conciliant et… caritatem… diligi et carum esse iucundum ~ Fam. 15.19: *quanto amoris probitas et clementia*; cf. *Fam.* 15.16: *mirabilis eum [Pansa] virorum bonorum benevolentia prosecuta est*); and both stress the dangers of false beliefs, excessive desires, and a bad reputation arising from injustice.

In other words, Book I enacts the debate of *Fam.* 15.16-9 in a more expansive dialogue form. The difference is that Cicero now has the opportunity to respond to Cassius’ defense (Book II).

I hope these structural, argumentative, and linguistic parallels are striking.

Nevertheless, my claim that Cicero had Cassius’ response specifically in mind when he composed the *Torquatus* is a very strong one. In particular I need to defend myself against the same objection that I made to Tsouna’s attempt to identify Philodemus as a source—i.e. Cicero’s and Cassius’ mutual emphasis on Epicurean virtue theory may reflect no more than the orthodox Epicurean position. While I do think that Marcus’ use of Roman *exempla* as

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103 It is interesting that both Cassius and Torquatus evade Cicero’s technical criticisms of Epicurean physics.

104 E.g. *Fin.* 1.43-4, 58-61; cf. *Fam.* 15.19’s references to the conspicuous absence of *benevolentia* for the selfish Sulla, the *crudelitas* of Gnaeus, and the phrase “*quanto sit omnibus odio crudelitas*.”
test cases, the argumentatively identical use of *KD* 5, and some similarities in language may provide additional circumstantial evidence for a close link between Book I and Cassius’ response, I feel that these parallels are still insufficient to justify my hypothesis or even to parry my worry about common Epicurean sources and arguments. On the other hand, the language and polemical strategies of Book I resonate in a more general way with the letters which this and the previous two chapters have examined; I think there is now sufficient evidence to sustain my weaker claim that Cicero’s epistolary practice is relevant to our interpretation of his dialogues in a way that goes far beyond matters of dating or charting the different versions of a work. The letters allow us to see Cicero practicing his technique and making the same sorts of arguments in his more expansive published critiques of the Garden.

One final point. Although Cicero has not offered a perfectly neutral or unbiased presentation of Epicurean ethics,\(^{105}\) he gives Torquatus a very vigorous response to Marcus’ arguments. As I suggested earlier, this defense is far more charitable and sophisticated than other presentations of Epicurean ethics by hostile philosophical critics, who are far more often content to attack the Garden without offering much of an opportunity for any Epicurean response. All things considered, Cicero is operating on a level of dialectical debate which is really rather remarkable by ancient standards. This calls for an explanation. I suggest that this nuanced Epicurean voice is very plausibly the result of Cicero’s opportunities to debate and hear the responses of his diverse network of Epicurean acquaintances over two decades.

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\(^{105}\) For example, Torquatus is also unable to adequately justify his interest in poetry (1.72). More seriously, Torquatus nowhere clarifies the distinction between kinetic and katastematic pleasure (as noted by Annas 2001: 13 n.31, cf. 15 n.35; on this distinction see n.107). Additionally, his cradle argument at 1.30 seems only to apply to kinetic pleasure, not katastematic; Cicero thereby sets up his critique of Epicurean pleasure in Book II (cf. Inwood 1990: 150). Armstrong 2011 has also criticized Cicero for not emphasizing the ability of virtue to win over friends (the latter topic is separated from the discussion of virtue) and cites a number of relevant passages in Philodemus which do so. Cicero’s presentation of the benefits of virtue therefore resembles Cassius’ account more than Philodemus’; this may or may not be significant.
V. Epicurean virtues and KD 5 in De Finibus II

The critique of Epicurean ethics in Book II is even more wide-ranging than Torquatus’ speech in Book I. At one point Marcus even confesses that he has made all his important points but will throw in a few more criticisms so that his refutation is fully comprehensive.106 Not all of these diverse criticisms, of course, are directly relevant to my goals in this chapter, and in any case this is not the place for a running commentary on Book II. My analysis in this section will therefore focus squarely on Marcus’ discussion of the virtues (2.44-70), his use of living refutation arguments, and his repeated citation and attempted refutation of KD 5. Among other things, this means I omit his discussion of friendship (2.78-84) and his long but important criticism at the beginning of the book of the distinction between kinetic and katastematic pleasure as an incoherent conflation of two different types of pleasure (2.5-43).107

Marcus moves away from more abstract considerations of pleasure to practical ethics in section 44. Here he is even more emphatic than in Book I that the whole debate turns on the question whether virtue has intrinsic or instrumental value: “The remaining battle is not between Torquatus and me, but between pleasure and virtue… In my view, if I can show that there is something called moral goodness which is intrinsically valuable, then your whole

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106 Fin. 2.82: “But we are spending too much time on obvious matters. For when it has been proven that there is no place for either the virtues or friendship if all things are referred to pleasure, nothing much else needs to be said. Nevertheless, lest I seem to not respond to any of your points, I will also say a few words about the rest of your speech” (sed in rebus aperitissimis nimium longi sumus. perfecto enim et concluso neque virtutibus neque amicitias usquam locum esse si ad voluptatem omnia referantur, nihil praeterea est magno opera dicendum. ac tamen, ne cui loco non videatur esse responsam, pauca etiam nunc dicam ad reliquam orationem tuam).
107 Fin. 2.5-44. Cicero is our fullest account on the different kinds of Epicurean pleasure; as a result, there has been much discussion about the reliability of his openly hostile interpretation (e.g. Striker 1993; Inwood 1990: 149-51, 153-4; Stokes 1995; Gorman 2005: 47-64; Woolf 2009). I do not discuss Marcus’ treatment of friendship in depth here because it played a limited role in Cassius’ defense, which is more concerned with virtue proper; furthermore, as noted above, the central issue there is once again whether friendship is altruistic or self-interested, intrinsically or instrumentally valuable. On the anti-Epicurean arguments in De Amicitia, see Chapter III, n.105.
system lies in ruins” (relinquitur non mihi cum Torquato sed virtuti cum voluptate certatio…

ego autem existimo, si honestum esse aliquid ostendo quod sit ipsum sua vi propter sequē

expetendum, iacere vestra omnia). This certatio of pleasure versus virtue is, of course, a

redeployment of Prodicus’ fable of the Choice of Heracles (as reported by Xenophon). Cicero describes the story in more detail in De Officiis 1.118: Heracles was given the choice between two paths in life, one of pleasure the other of virtue (unam voluptatis, alteram

virtutis). Gordon has recently observed that Cicero in fact strengthens the contrast: in

Xenophon Heracles chooses between a beautiful woman called Happiness or Vice, and a

rougher-looking woman named Virtue; the contrast is sharpened by the Latin alliterative

binary of virtus cum voluptate. With the battleground properly identified, Marcus asserts

that his account of virtue can make a far more plausible claim to reflect traditional moral

values than the ethical consequences of Epicurean hedonism (2.45-8). He then tries to turn

the tables on Epicurus and claims that if he had really meant what he said when he praised

moral goodness with statements like KD 5, then he could only mean intrinsic goodness:

itaque idem natura victus, cui obsisti non potest, dicit alio loco id quod a te etiam paulo ante
dictum est non posse iucunde vivi nisi etiam honeste…. non is vir est ut, cum honestatem eo
locus habeat ut sine ea iucunde neget posse vivi, illud honestum, quod populare sit, sentiat et
sine eo neget iucunde vivi posse, aut quicquam aliud honestum intellegat, nisi quod sit rectum
ipsumque per se sua vi, sua natura, sua sponte laudabile. itaque, Torquate, cum diceres

108 The programmatic nature of this claim is rightly stressed by Leonhardt 1999: 198.
109 Xenophon, Mem. 2.1.21ff. I am indebted here to the analysis of Gordon 2012: 109-38 on Cicero’s
redeployment of Prodicus.
110 The only reference to pleasure is Happiness/Vice’s offer to lead Heracles on “the more pleasant and easiest
path” (ἡδίστην τε καὶ ὑστερήν ὀδόν). Gordon 2012: 122-4 plausibly suggests that Cicero may have been
responsible for the sharpening of the virtue/pleasure contrast, which is taken up by Seneca and Quintilian.
Gordon is aware of Cleanthes’ fable (ap. Fin. 2.69) of Pleasure seated on a throne and surrounded by her slaves,
the virtues, but she rightly argues that Cicero’s contrast is still more explicit; furthermore, his dichotomy
between virtue and pleasure as opposed to plural virtues versus pleasure frames the debate in a way unappealing
to Epicurean ethics, which had to justify each virtue individually. It is interesting to note that Lucretius reverses
the binary by presenting Epicurus’ discoveries about nature as greater than the feats of Hercules (DRN 5.22-54),
itself a polemical claim against the Stoics, since they (and the Cynics) had valorized Hercules as an ethical
And so this same philosopher [Epicurus], since he had been overcome by irresistible nature, says elsewhere what was also said by you a little while ago, that “it is not possible to live pleasantly without living morally”… Since he holds moral goodness so important that he denies that it is possible to live pleasantly without it, this man does not understand “moral goodness” as anything other than what is intrinsically right and praiseworthy by its own force, nature, and will. And so, Torquatus, when you mentioned that Epicurus shouts out that “it is not possible to live pleasantly without living morally and wisely and justly,” you seemed to me to boast about this. *(De Finibus 2.49-51)*

Torquatus’ (and Cassius’) defense of Epicurean virtue concluded with the citation of *KD*5; when Marcus turns to rebut this defense, he frames his argument by quoting or paraphrasing *KD* 5 no less than three times, thereby underlining the centrality of this claim to the entire ethical debate and announcing his strategy to undermine this doctrine. More precisely, Marcus’ strategy, as Inwood has shown, is to try to poke a hole in Epicurus’ defenses and find a case where the instrumentality of the virtues/*KD* 5 cannot explain a seemingly altruistic action or at least force Epicureans to part ways with the traditional lifestyles and moral beliefs which the school and its Roman adherents wanted to uphold.

To accomplish this Marcus launches into a long series of test cases drawn from Roman social and political life and claims that Epicurean virtue theory cannot offer a justification for the altruism of noble Roman *exempla* or virtuous conduct more generally. He is relentless and presents Torquatus with one dilemma after another; I can only discuss a small number of these many examples. The virtue of justice unsurprisingly receives the most attention (52-9). Marcus argues that the fear of detection is insufficient to justify virtuous conduct: Pompey and Crassus had immense power and could act with impunity; many

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111 Inwood 1990: 156-64.
Romans had exploited loopholes in the law to acquire vast wealth with no penalty. Furthermore, Epicureans ought to take risks for cash: it can procure great amounts of pleasure. And if one is caught, the consequences cannot really be that bad, “since Epicurean training teaches disparagement of death, of exile, even of pain itself.” These test cases for the hedonistic superiority of just conduct are interwoven with living refutation arguments aimed at Epicurus, Torquatus, and his ancestors. For example, in his discussion of legal loopholes Marcus asks Torquatus why he would honor a will which he could ignore with both profit and impunity:

*quid facies? tu quidem reddes; ipse Epicurus fortasse redderet.... sed ego ex te quaero, quoniam idem tu certe fecisses, nonne intellegas eo maiorem vim esse naturae quod ipsi vos, qui omnia ad vestrum commodum et, ut ipsi dicitis, ad voluptatem referatis, tamen ea faciatis e quibus appareat non voluptatem vos sed officium sequi, plusque rectam naturam quam rationem pravam valere.... perspicuum est enim, nisi aequitas, fides, iustitia proficiscantur a natura, et si omnia haec ad utilitatem referantur, virum bonum non posse reperiri; deque his rebus satis multa in nostris de re publica libris sunt dicta a Laelio.*

What will you do? You will give back [the money], of course; perhaps Epicurus would have done the same thing... But this is what I’m asking from you: since you certainly would have done the same thing, do you not understand that the power of nature is all the greater because of the following fact: you Epicureans, who refer all things toward your own advantage and, as you yourselves say, toward your own pleasure, nevertheless act in a way that shows that you pursue not pleasure but duty, and that straight nature more than crooked reason prevails.... For it is clear that unless fairness, honesty, and justice depart from nature, and if all things are of importance only for their utility, then there will be no good man to be

112 *Fin.* 2.56. Marcus continues: “True, you Epicureans treat pain as unbearable when you are fixing some punishment for the wicked. But when you require the wise person to have more goods than evils, it becomes quite tolerable.” This is actually quite a strong point: Epicurean arguments about enduring pain would seem to allow the sage to endure any punishment or social opprobrium resulting from injustice (so Inwood 1990: 162).

113 I.e. as did the noble Sextus Pedaecaeus, whom Marcus cites as an example of altruistic conduct that Epicureanism cannot justify. A few sections earlier (2.55) Marcus had tried to force Torquatus to admit that a hedonistic calculus should endorse underhanded legal tactics (exemplified in an anecdote about the manipulative P. Sextilius Rufus).
found. This issue is more than thoroughly discussed by Laelius in my books De Republica.

(De Finibus 2.58-9)

The strategy of pressing test cases for Epicurean justice merges here with a larger living refutation argument directed at Torquatus and Epicurus himself; the upshot is that their noble lifestyle can only reflect the intrinsic value of virtue.114 Note also how the discussion of the natural origins of justice in De Republica III is now redeployed here as ammunition against one particular Epicurean argument for the virtue of justice (and thus also for KD 5).115 Cicero, in other words, has reshaped his earlier, more limited critique to function as part of a much larger response to Torquatus’ (and Cassius’) rigorously instrumentalist defense of virtue.

After the discussion of justice Marcus turns to temperance (transfer idem ad modestiam vel temperantiam) and then courage (60-2). In his discussion of courage, for example, he demands that Torquatus explain why it is more plausible that soldiers charge into battle for the sake of pleasure rather than for reasons of moral goodness.116 Then another batch of exempla illustrating the altruistic actions of noble Romans. Marcus graciously grants Torquatus’ redescription of his Gaul-slaying ancestor,117 but presses

114 Cf. Fin. 2.72-3: “You may of course say that it’s in everybody’s interest to act rightly. But if you say this then I have won. For this is what I want and have been fighting for: duty is its own reward” ( nisi hoc dicis sua quod interest omnium recte facere. si id dicis, vicimus; id enim volumus, id contendimus, ut offici fructus sit ipsum officium).

115 This would seem to refer to Laelius’ reply to Philus’ defense of injustice in Book III (so already Madvig 1876: 244; cf. Reid 1925: 183). Unfortunately, Laelius’ speech is very fragmentary, and no clear parallel is forthcoming.

116 Fin. 2.60: “Again, do brave men go into battle and pour out their blood for the sake on behalf of their country only after a hedonistic calculus of pleasures or is it because they have been incited by a hot stirring in their soul?” ( quid? fortes viri voluptatumne calculis subductis proelium ineunt, sanguinem pro patria profundant, an quodam animi ardore atque impetus concitati?).

117 But only after an attack on the conscious intentions of the ancient Torquatus: Fin. 2.60: “Well, Torquatus, consider which of our speeches about your great ancestor Torquatus, the ‘imperious,’ he himself would have preferred. Mine, which stated that he acted entirely for his country’s sake and never for his own, or yours, which, on the contrary, put everything down to his own self-interest? Suppose you had wanted to make things even clearer and had stated more explicitly that he acted entirely for the sake of pleasure, how do you think he would have reacted to that?” As Inwood 1990: 159-60 points out, this argument is a little slippery. Torquatus has only committed himself to the claim that all rational actions and generally agreed-upon instances of virtuous
Torquatus to explain how P. Decius, a colleague of the elder Torquatus, acted for pleasure when he ritually sacrificed himself to ensure a Roman victory—an act which his son later imitated.\textsuperscript{118} Then Marcus swings back to Torquatus himself: “And was it pleasure that led you yourself—a man entirely worthy of your ancestors—to snatch the consulship away from P. Sulla while still a young man?”\textsuperscript{119} He switches tactics again and tries to force Torquatus to admit that gluttonous or otherwise licentious behavior is in fact the correct course of action for an Epicurean hedonist by citing, for example, a notorious Roman gourmand who took care good care of his health to allow for maximal enjoyment of fine-dining: “The Epicurean position forces you to call him happy.” Then more Roman \textit{exempla} of altruism that Epicurus cannot explain (65-6).\textsuperscript{120} Then another living refutation argument against Torquatus.\textsuperscript{121} Then some Greek \textit{exempla} for variety (67-8) and another living refutation argument.\textsuperscript{122} Marcus pauses his onslaught momentarily to imagine an Epicurean objection:

\begin{quote}
“\textit{at negat Epicurus (hoc enim vestrum lumen est) quemquam qui honeste non vivat iucunde posse vivere.” quasi ego id curem quid ille aiat aut neget; illud quaero, quid ei qui in voluptate summum bonum ponat consentaneum sit dicere.}
\end{quote}

Conduct can be justified according to a hedonistic calculus, not that his ancestor was consciously seeking pleasure when he killed his son or dueled the Gaul. However, Cicero presses his Epicurean descendent on a very soft point for a Roman aristocrat: it would be socially very difficult for Torquatus to openly confess that his ancestor was actually confused about the real goals of his actions. This is no refutation of Epicurean ethics, but Cicero’s almost Socratic elenchus aims at making Torquatus realize that he has to give up some of his other commitments if he wishes to defend his Epicurean convictions and avoid hypocrisy or incoherence.

\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Fin.} 2.61. The son imitated the father’s action; Cicero also mentions the \textit{devotio} of a third Decius.

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{quid etiam? te ipsum, dignissimum maioribus tuis, voluptasne induxit ut adulescentulus eriperes P. Sullae consulatum.}

\textsuperscript{120} Notably the example of M. Atilius Regulus, whose decision to return to Carthage to face torture and death rather than break his word is examined at length in \textit{De Officiis} III. Modern readers may be somewhat offended by the warm endorsement of Lucretia’s suicide after her rape by Tarquinius Superbus—Marcus thinks that her noble suicide was “the cause of freedom for the state” (\textit{causa civitati libertatis fuit}); cf. Livy, 1.57-60.

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Fin.} 2.67: “You must either censure these actions [of famous Greeks and Romans] or abandon your advocacy of pleasure” (\textit{aut haec tibi, Torquate, sunt vituperanda aut patrocinium voluptatis repudiandum}).

\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Fin.} 2.69: “Believe me, Torquatus, you will not be able to defend [Epicureanism] if you really take a long hard look at your thoughts and pursuits” (\textit{non potes ergo ista tueri, Torquete, mihi crede, sit e ipse et tuas cogitationes et studia perspexeris}).
“But Epicurus denies”—and this is your ace in the hole\textsuperscript{123}—“that anyone who does not live morally can live pleasantly.” As if I give a damn what Epicurus says or denies! I’m asking this: what can one who places the highest good in pleasure claim consistently?

\textit{(De Finibus 2.70)}

This passage reveals even more clearly than the citation of \textit{KD} 5 at 2.49-51 that the entire battery of test cases and living refutation arguments aim at undermining the plausibility and coherence of the interdependency of pleasure and virtue expressed in \textit{KD} 5. In light of this horde of counter examples, Marcus argues, it will no longer suffice to parrot Epicurus, quote his lofty sentiments in \textit{KD} 5, and offer an isolated redescription of the actions of the elder Torquatus or the Epicurean Pansa. Torquatus (and Cassius) must now explain away not only their own Roman social lives and the lives of a few others, but the altruistic highlights of several hundred years of Roman history. What is the upshot of Epicurean talk about the virtues if Marcus is correct? Either Epicureans are better than their doctrines, or they merely play along with the misguided notions of morality for their own benefit: “In this way—and this is a point which is absolutely clear—instead of a true and genuine justice your school hands down a pretense of justice after it has taught us to look down on our firm conscience and to take advantage of the foolish beliefs of others” (\textit{ita, +quod certissimum est,}+\textsuperscript{124} \textit{pro vera certaque iustitia simulationem nobis iustitiae traditis praeceptisque quodam modo ut nostrum stabilem conscientiam contemnamus, aliorum errantem opinionem aucupemur}).”\textsuperscript{125}

\textsuperscript{123} More literally this means “guiding light” or “strong point (in an argument)” (\textit{OLD}, s.v. \textit{lumen}, 6d and 11c, respectively). I take it, however, that Marcus is imagining the Epicurean spitting \textit{KD} 5 back at him as a response to his test cases—\textit{i.e.} this claim is a fallback answer which secures the position against any criticism. Since \textit{lumen} here seems more vivid and less technical than the flat “strong point in an argument,” a figurative reference to the ability of an ace in the hole to procure victory when revealed seems appropriate.

\textsuperscript{124} This parenthetical remark is suspiciously awkward; cf. Madvig 1876: 263 (“ineptissime enim, cum aliquod concluditur et affirmatur, additur tamquam animadversione dignum, hoc ipsum, quod concludatur, certum esse.”). Reid 1925: 182 tends toward an old emendation, \textit{turpissimum}, which Woolf (in Annas 2001) translates without comment as “And this is its most shameful aspect...” This is certainly an attractive solution and well in line with Marcus’ larger claims that Epicureanism involves hypocrisy.

\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Fin}. 2.71; cf. \textit{Pis}. 57: \textit{levitatis est inanem aucupari rumorem et omnis umbras etiam falsae gloriae consecetari}. 
This charge is then brought more clearly into focus in a passage where Marcus imagines Torquatus speaking in the forum—how could Torquatus possibly state his hedonistic motivations openly? He would have to lie or face social outrage; in other words, Torquatus’ Epicurean convictions entail public hypocrisy.

One would think Marcus could move on after all this, but he simply cannot contain himself and immediately renews his barrage of problem cases and living refutation arguments. There is no need to go through them all, but it is worth highlighting a few passages to underline the relentlessness of Cicero’s attempt to undermine Epicurean virtue theory. These examples continue his general strategy of trying to force Torquatus to call moral reprobates happy or explain difficult cases of apparent altruism. An Epicurean is ultimately unreliable, Epicurean friendship incoherent; Epicurus’ own life and the faithful friendship of his followers alive in Cicero’s time do not admit any coherent hedonistic explanation; and there are further ad hominem attacks directed at Torquatus. Marcus also dilates on the nobility of Epicurus’ deathbed letter and the humanity of his will and

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126 Fin. 2.74ff (quoted in Chapter III, section iii); see especially 2.76-7: “When you say these [noble phrases about virtue], we fools are astonished; you of course are laughing to yourself…. Do you make up words and say things which you do not mean? Or do you wear your beliefs like clothes, one set at home and another in public, so that it’s all show on your face but the truth is concealed within?” (haec cum loqueris, nos barones stupemus, tu videlicet tecum ipse rides…. verba tu fingas, et ea dicas quae non sentias? aut etiam ut vestitum sic sententiam habeas aliam domenicam, aliam forensem, ut in fronte ostentation sit, intus veritas occultetur?).


128 I.e. the voluptuaries again at 2.70 (on this passage see Castner 1986).

129 Fin. 2.81: “The fact that [Epicurus] himself was a good man, that many Epicureans both were and are faithful in their friendships, consistent and serious in all aspects of their lives, and guiding their deliberations with consideration not of pleasure but duty—in my mind this shows that the power of moral goodness is greater and of pleasure lesser. For these individuals live in such a way that their doctrine is refuted by their own lives” (ac mihi quidem, quod et ipse bonus vir fuit et multi Epicurei et fuerunt et Hodie sunt et in amicitias fideles et in omni vita constantes et graves nec voluptate sed officio consilia moderantes, hoc videtur maior vis honestatis et minor voluptatis. ita enim vivunt quidam ut eorum vita refellatur oratio).

130 E.g. Fin. 2.80: “Of course you would do all of these things, Torquatus; I don’t believe there is any action worthy of great praise which you would pass over for fear of pain or death. However, the question is not what is consistent with your nature, but what is consistent with your philosophical position” (faceres tu quidem, Torquate, haec omnia; nihil enim arbitror magna laude dignum esse quod pratermissurum credam aut mortis aut doloris metu. non quaeritur autem quid naturae tuae consentaneum sit, sed quid disciplinae).
demands a hedonistic explanation: “You Epicureans can twist and turn, Torquatus, but you
will find nothing written in this famous letter of Epicurus which is compatible and consistent
with his doctrines. In this way he himself is refuted by himself” (*huc et illuc, Torquate, vos
versetis licet; niihil in hac praeclara epistula scriptum ab Epicuro congruens et conveniens
decretis eius reperietis. ita redarguitur ipse a se*) (131). After a number of ancillaries points,
the conclusion of Marcus’ speech leaves no doubt about the centrality of his extended
refutation of Epicurean virtue theory or the relevance of his desire to “kill” the school in
Italy, here culminating with the now-familiar claim that society would collapse if it operated
according to an Epicurean hedonistic calculus:

\[
\text{ergo in iis adulenscentibus bonam spem esse dicemus et magnum indolem quos suis}
\text{commodis inservituros et quidquid ipsis expediat facturos arbitrabimur? nonne videmus}
\text{quanta perturbatio rerum omnium consequatur, quanta confusio? tollitur beneficium, tollitur}
\text{gratia… bene laudata virtus voluptatis aditus intercludat necesse est. quod iam a me}
\text{expectare noli; tute introspice in mentem tuam ipse eamque omni cogitatione pertractans}
\text{percontare ipse te, perpetuisne malis voluptatibus fruens… an, cum de omnibus gentibus}
\text{optime mererere, cum opem indigentibus salutemque ferres, Herculis perpeti aerumnas.}
\]

Should we therefore say that there is great hope and talent in the younger generation because
we think they will serve their own advantage and will do anything which procures benefit for
themselves? Do we not see how great a disturbance, how great a confusion would follow?
Kindness is abolished, gratitude is abolished…. It is necessary that when virtue is properly
praised it cuts off every advance of pleasure. Do not expect further argument on this point
from me. You need to look deep into your own mind; search yourself deeply in every
thought and ask yourself if you would prefer to enjoy perpetual pleasure… or to endure the
labors of Hercules, be a noble benefactor to the entire human race, and to bring help and
safety to those in need.

(De Finibus 2.117-8)

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Fin. 2.96-9. Cicero cites in particular the seemingly altruistic provisions for the children of Metrodorus and
the implausibility of the memory of past pleasures mitigating present suffering. At 2.101-3 he questions why
Epicurus would make provisions for a feast in his honor on the twentieth day of every month.
I will return to Marcus’s invocation of Hercules (another allusion to Prodicus’ fable) in the conclusion to this chapter. For the present purposes, what is important is the claim here that more is at stake than Epicurean hedonism or Torquatus’ self-consistency: Marcus argues that if their instrumentalist conception of virtue as the procurer of pleasure were to prevail, there would be destructive social consequences, which are underlined by reference to Roman *adulescentes*. This reference to the next generation is revealing. Cicero elsewhere framed his political, rhetorical, and philosophical activities as an effort to cultivate appropriate oratorical and ethical dispositions in his future readers.¹³² That Marcus summarizes his entire critique with his fears for the probity of a Roman Epicurean youth underlines the centrality of his opposition to the Garden and its influence in Rome.

We are now in a position to step back and consider the relationship of the debate in Books I-II to *Fam.* 15.17 and 15.19. Section iv argued that the debate in Book I maps onto these two letters closely. Cicero and Marcus rather heavy-handedly claim that their epistolary or dialogical interlocutors are unable to offer hedonistic interpretations of the seemingly altruistic actions and must conclude that τὸ καλὸν δὶ αὐτὸ αἰρετὸν.¹³³ Cassius and Torquatus reply by outlining an instrumentalist theory of virtue which provides arguments for the hedonic efficacy of a consistently virtuous disposition; both cite *KD* 5 to clinch their defense; they conclude that the anti-Epicurean *exempla* can be redescribed in a

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¹³² E.g. *Sest.* 136; *Att.* 2.1.3; *Leg.* 3.29; cf. the preface to *Div.* 2. Additionally, Cicero’s dedication of *De Officiis* to his son Marcus imitates Cato the Elder’s famous *Libri ad filium*, which, like Cicero’s final work, aimed to be a contribution to a larger ethical discourse (on Cicero’s dedication, see Dyck 1996: 11; on Cato’s letter see Gruen 1992: 76-80). For further references and literature to Cicero’s appeals to Roman youth, see Gildenhard 2007: 31-4 with his n.111 on the didactic nature of the *Tusculans*.

¹³³ Cassius and Pansa are the living refutations of Epicureanism in *Fam.*15.16-19; in *De Finibus* it is Torquatus and his noble ancestors.
way that is fully consistent with hedonism. The debate in Book I is, once again, a
dramatization of Cicero’s exchange with Cassius.

I suggest that Book II is Cicero’s response to Cassius. When Marcus turns to virtue
after the long opening section on the incoherence of Epicurean pleasure, he announces that
this is no idle debate but a “battle between pleasure and virtue” and declares that he will
prove that the honestum must have intrinsic value (2.44-8). The Epicurean position he is
attacking is characterized by quoting or paraphrasing KD 5 no less than three times (2.49-51).
His strategy is to abandon individual examples of Fam. 15.19 and Book I; instead, he
overwhelms his Epicurean interlocutor with dozens of test cases, all of which need to be
defended if KD 5 and the Epicurean position can be sustained. When Marcus finishes his
onslaught, he concludes that his interlocutors can no longer respond by confidently citing KD
5 as their “ace in the hole” (lumen vestrum)—compare Fin. 1.57: clamat… Epicurus [KD 5]
~ Fin. 2.70: at negat Epicurus [the contrary of KD 5; cf. Tusc. 3.49, 5.26] ~ Fam. 15.19: ipse
enim Epicurus… dicit [KD 5]—they must explain away each and every one of Marcus’
exempla. All of this, I suggest, reads as a reaction to Cassius’ confident reply in Fam. 15.19.

Finally, it is important to add that KD 5 continued to linger in Cicero’s mind. Two hostile
passages in the Tusculans (published a few months after De Finibus) paraphrase KD 5 to
summarize Epicurean ethical praxis, and a passage in De Officiis can be read as a further
attempted refutation of the Epicurean position. 134

134 TD 3.49-50: “Epicurus denies that it is possible to live pleasurably without living virtuously… all of these
statements are worthy of a philosopher but in conflict with pleasure” (negat Epicurus iucunde posse vivi nisi
cum virtute vivatur… omnia philosopho sed cum voluptate pugnantia); TD 5.26: “Or do we prefer to follow
Epicurus? He often expresses many noble sentiments, for he does not try hard to speak consistently and
cohertently…. He denies that anyone can live pleasantly unless he likewise lives morally, wisely, and justly.
There could be no statement more serious or worthy of philosophy, if he didn’t refer this very phrase ‘morally,
wisely, justly’ to pleasure” (an malumus Epicurum imitari? qui multa praeclare saepè dicit; quam enim sibi
constanter convenienterque dicat non laborat…. negat quemquam iucunde posse vivere, nisi idem honeste
sapienter iusteque vivat. nihil gravius, nihil philosophia dignius, nisi idem hoc ipsum “honeste sapienter iuste”
Cicero’s repeated and emphatic engagement with *KD 5* in the months after his correspondence with Cassius is sudden and finds no substantial parallel in his earlier works. Cicero had of course criticized Epicurean ethics and politics before *De Finibus*. Chapter III examined a number of these critiques; while certain passages anticipate arguments in *De Finibus*, he typically focused his attacks on the Epicurean denial of human sociability or pressed the school on individual issues like the power of the fear of detection to act as a deterrent for injustice or the Epicurean rationale behind oaths.\(^{135}\) There is no citation of *KD 5* before *De Finibus* I-II; in no earlier work is the Epicurean instrumentalist account of virtue given such a crucial role. All of this is not to say that he had never heard of *KD 5* or Epicurean virtues; I am also happy to concede that even without Cassius’ letter he might very well have discussed virtue ethics in some detail—the theory is after all explicated concisely in Epicurus’ *Letter to Menoeceus* (D.L. 10.129-32) and played an important role in the school’s ethics more generally. I do think, however, that the sudden, elaborate and lengthy discussions of Epicurean virtue ethics, the quotation or paraphrase of *KD 5* no less than six times in the months following Cassius’ response, and Cicero’s corresponding prolix refutations of the doctrine in *De Finibus* and elsewhere demand an explanation. The most plausible explanation for this shift in polemical strategy would seem to be the debates of *Fam.* 15.17 and 15.19. What I would suggest is that Cassius’ cogent response and his citation of *KD 5* in particular clarified for Cicero one very crucial issue for his overlapping goals of refuting Epicurean social theory and making his readers choose between Epicurean \(ad voluptatem referret\). See n.146 for the attack on *KD 5* in *De Officiis* III.

\(^{135}\) E.g. the claim at *Leg.* 1.40 that fear of punishment is insufficient to prevent unjust acts from being advantageous to an Epicurean—but note that Marcus is arguing against a denial of human sociability, which also seems to be the thrust of Laelius’ defense of the natural (as opposed to utility-based) origins of justice in *Rep.* III. Cicero’s use of living refutation arguments against Trebatius and Atticus and the general worry about the efficacy of a utility-based ethics are also of course common features of works of all periods. But these criticisms are not advanced against *KD 5* or Epicurean virtue theory at large.
convictions and their Roman social activities and traditional values. If this is right, then the correspondence with Cassius provides a concrete and striking illustration of how Cicero’s epistolary debates with Epicurean contemporaries informed and shaped his arguments in his dialogues as well as how these published debates engaged with his Roman Epicurean readers.

VI. Testing the limits of KD 5

I would like to end this chapter in the same way I closed my analysis of Cicero’s criticism of Epicurean physics in Chapter IV. There I argued that his epistolary practices and engagement with Lucretius and Catius allowed him to develop a number of arguments in De Natura Deorum into highly sophisticated and unusually charitable challenges to Epicurean physics and theology. Here I offer a few comments and observations on the strength of Cicero’s criticisms of the Garden in De Finibus and consider how the evidence of his correspondence can inform our understanding of him as a philosophical critic.

I have stressed above that Cicero gave Torquatus a vigorous and charitable defense in Book I.\textsuperscript{136} However, the relentless and hostile criticism of Book II may seem completely one-sided and far less impressive. Torquatus, after all, does not get a second chance to defend himself, and his meek deferral at the very end of the book to Philodemus and Siro hardly suggests an unbiased treatment. Nevertheless, a number of points can be made in Cicero’s defense. He is once again not writing a neutral history of philosophy. He has every right to criticize his opponent, especially after he had taken such great efforts to give Torquatus a real voice in Book I—surely the dialogue has to stop at some point (more on this last point shortly). Second, testing the plausibility of KD 5 with problem case after problem

\textsuperscript{136} But of course not completely charitable: see n.105.
case is, as we have seen, a powerful strategy for putting pressure on Epicurus’ desire to offer hedonistic explanations for a range of traditional social practices and virtues.

Several critics have been inclined to take his barrage of test-cases seriously and conclude that Epicurus’ instrumentalist account of virtue (and friendship) can only offer deeply implausible explanations for Cicero’s very concrete examples. But Epicurus provided his followers with a wide range of arguments to defend the position summarized in KD 5; when one of these defenses fails, there is usually some other way out. Take, for example, the case of P. Sextilius Rufus (Fin. 2.55). His underhanded legal maneuvering netted him a lot of money and was done in such a way as to avoid conviction. Nevertheless, this example poses no threat at all to Epicurus, who can offer a number of very plausible considerations which would explain why Rufus’ conduct was motivated by false beliefs and was ultimately self-defeating. For example, the very fact that Cicero could cite him as an example shows that even though he escaped punishment he did not escape social opprobrium: people knew even though there was no proof. It seems reasonable to argue that this lack of benevolentia would impair the cultivation of friends or might expose himself to very real possibilities of harm. Furthermore, why even risk incurring disdain, especially for the sake of money? After all, “natural wealth is both limited and easy to obtain; the wealth of empty opinions stretches into infinity” (ὁ τῆς φύσεως πλοῦτος καὶ ὁφισταὶ

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138 For example, he might be taken to court on a trumped-up charge. His enemies might bribe the jurors, or the jurors themselves might vote based on their disdain for Rufus, not the facts. This does not seem far-fetched or implausible. After all, another Rufus, P. Rutilius Rufus, was convicted for extortion despite the laudatory embassies of provincials on his behalf—the truth was not enough to save him from the hatred of the tax farmers and their friends on the jury (see Fantham 2004: 43-4, 126-8 with further references). Cf. also Cassius’ comments about P. Sulla.
Philodemus argues that an aristocrat has far better things to do than heap up more money. Rufus is therefore just another greedy fool, not the clever rogue trained in deception which Cicero portrays him to be. Another seemingly powerful test case is an argument of Carneades:

\[
\text{si scieris, inquit Carneades, aspidem occulte latere uspiam, et velle aliquem imprudentem super eam assidere, cuius mors tibi emolumentum futura sit, improbe feceris, nisi monueris ne assidat, sed inpunite tamen; scisse enim te quis coarguere possit?}
\]

Carneades says, “if you know that a viper is lurking somewhere, and someone whose death would profit you unknowingly wishes to sit down on top of it, you would act shamefully unless you warned him to sit down, but you could get away with it—for who could claim that you knew?” (De Finibus, 2.59)

This may seem like another real challenge to Epicurean claims about virtue, but there are plenty of perfectly reasonable responses. For example, if you do not warn the man about the snake and are completely sure you can escape punishment, it nevertheless seems far from certain that no one could ever suspect or blame you (after all, you were in the room with the other person when he died). And what would justify risking even the smallest chance of a bad reputation? Certainly not money. Perhaps more than anything, not revealing the presence of the snake dashes a very good opportunity to generate benevolentia and friendship, which are of course “the most secure praesidia” of an ataraxic life. Carneades’ snake would not seem to pose much threat, either. It is as if Cicero’s test cases can never be concrete enough to prevent an Epicurean from wiggling out through some appeal or appeals

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139 KD 15.
140 Like cultivating friendships; cf. Armstrong 2011.
141 Fin. 2.53: “Picture instead a shrewd calculator of advantage, sharp-witted, wily, a sly old fox, practiced at devising methods for cheating covertly—no witnesses, no accomplices” (trans. Woolf).
to the wide range of defenses for virtuous conduct which Epicurus bequeathed to his followers.

A parallel from Chapter IV can clarify what I think is a much deeper issue at stake in this debate. I argued there that Cicero tried to point out how Epicurean appeals to infinity and certain features of their epistemology and standards for proof allowed them to postulate with wild abandon theoretical and exotic entities to support their physics, a feature of their method which he characterized as *licitia*. It seems to me that Epicurean ethics is also characterized by a certain explanatory extravagance: they can always find a way to justify virtuous conduct hedonistically through some elaborate and strained causal chain which ultimately leads to pleasure. Once again Karl Popper can help clarify my argument:

I found that those of my friends who were admirers of Marx, Freud, and Adler, were impressed by a number of points common to these theories, and especially by their apparent *explanatory power*. These theories appear to be able to explain practically everything that happened within the fields to which they referred. The study of any of them seemed to have the effect of an intellectual conversion or revelation.... Once your eyes were thus opened you saw confirmed instances everywhere: the world was full of *verifications* of the theory. Whatever happened always confirmed it. Thus its truth appeared manifest; and unbelievers were clearly people who did not want to see the manifest truth; who refuse to see it, either because it was against their class interest, or because of their repressions which were still “un-analyzed” and crying aloud for treatment.\(^\text{142}\)

First, although I cannot pursue this point here, Popper’s description of these modern movements’ cultic assumptions of privileged access to the truth and dismissal of the repressed and misguided beliefs of detractors is uncannily similar to the nearly religious veneration of Epicurus and his bombastic claims about the empty beliefs of mankind.\(^\text{143}\) For

\(^{142}\) Popper 1965: 34-5, his emphasis; cf. Chapter IV, section vi.

\(^{143}\) Veneration: Lucretius, 3.1-30, 5.1-64; cf. *Fin.* 1.57-62, 71-2, and it is openly mocked at *TD* 1.21.47 (probably with Lucretius in mind). On the pseudo-religious aspects of the Epicurean school, see the engaging but speculative account in Frischer 1982, the introduction to Philodemus’ *On Frankness of Speech* (in Konstan et al. 1998: 1-24), Sedley 1989 (who extends this religious-like commitment to the other schools), and
present purposes, however, Popper’s underlining of the potential dangers of such flexible interpretive strategies maps on well to the ability of Epicureanism to justify or redescribe hedonistically virtually any action, however implausible. What do such justifications amount to? To quote Popper’s conclusion, “No more than that a case could be interpreted in the light of the theory. But this meant very little… since every conceivable case could be interpreted in the light of Adler’s theory, or equally of Freud’s.”144 In such circumstances, it becomes basically impossible to refute an Epicurean or meaningfully advance the debate. Nothing will ever convince him.145

These considerations may provide the key to understanding the seemingly one-sided end to Book II. Marcus’ final parting shot sets up, as we have seen, a contrast between a life of pleasure and the (mutually accepted) virtuous activity of Hercules. But Marcus does not ask for a response: “I would coax and force an answer from you, except I fear that you would say that Hercules himself undertook all his labors with the greatest exertion on behalf of the common weal for the sake of pleasure” (elicerem ex te cogeremque, ut responderes, nisi vererer ne Herculem ipsum ea quae pro salute gentium summa labore gessisset, voluptatis causa gessisse diceres). This is more than sarcasm; Cicero is signaling here that there is no point for further debate. Of course the Epicureans could concoct a counterintuitive

Armstrong 2011: 105-7. Konstan 2008 offers an interesting discussion of Lucretius’ Epicurean “treatment” for unconscious fears (e.g. of death)—an idea not too far removed from the appeals to “repression” by the modern movements which Popper cites.

144 Popper 1965: 35. He adds a personal anecdote: “As for Adler, I was much impressed by a personal experience. Once, in 1919, I reported to him a case which to me did not seem particularly Adlerian, but which he found no difficulty in analyzing in terms of his theory of inferiority feelings, although he had not even seen the child. Slightly shocked, I asked him how he could be so sure. ‘Because of my thousandfold experience,’ he replied; whereupon I could not help saying: ‘And with this new case, I suppose, your experience has become thousand-and-one-fold.’”

145 Cf. TD 2.7, where the early Epicurean writers discussed in Chapter I are said to be read only by fellow Epicureans who have already been persuaded. Arcesilaus (ap. D.L. 4.43) reached a less charitable conclusion: “When someone asked him why it is that students from the other philosophical schools can convert to the Epicurean school but nobody ever crosses over from the Epicureans, he said, ‘Because men can become eunuchs, but eunuchs never become men’” (trans. Gordon).
hedonistic interpretation of Hercules’ labors, and nothing could ever prove them wrong or convince them of their position’s distance from almost every other interpretation of his legendarily difficult labors. Cicero, I claim, is gesturing (even if inchoately) to Epicureanism’s tendency to indulge in what I have been calling explanatory extravagance. Now, the lack of the possibility of verification or “falsifiability” of the Epicurean position is certainly not as fatal an objection for ethical discussions as it may be for evaluating claims about ancient physics or modern science, but Cicero is nevertheless fully warranted to press the Epicureans on both KD 5 and the tenuousness of their ethical justifications more generally. These critiques, then, raise a number of very significant and interesting issues in Epicurean ethics in a much deeper way than the overwhelming majority of painfully one-sided polemics against the Garden. And this sophistication, I claim, reflects many years of debating with his Epicurean contemporaries and in particular his correspondence with Cassius a few months earlier.

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146 Cicero makes one final attempt to refute KD 5 at De Officiis 3.38-9 by using Plato’s Ring of Gyges story (Republic II) as a thought-experiment to make Epicureans choose between virtue and utility. By positing the absolute certainty of non-detection, he tries to trap his opponents: if they would act unjustly, then KD 5 and Epicurean virtue theory would collapse; if they would act justly, they would be unable to offer a hedonistic justification for their actions (since all the usual defenses—e.g. fear of detection—no longer apply). This is an interesting argument which I hope to return to on another occasion. For the present purposes I limit myself to emphasizing two points. First, I suggest that we should read this argument as a further response to the Epicurean virtue theory which he had been discussing with Cassius and writing about in De Finibus and Tusculans III. Second, his argument is all the more significant because it seems likely that Book III of De Officiis is very much his own work (as opposed to his close reliance on Panaetian material in the first two books). If so, Cicero goes back to a foundational passage of Plato to find new arguments against Epicureanism. This last point, of course, depends upon a fairly specific reading of Cicero’s sources in this final work, a much-contested issue: Griffin and Atkins 1991, Lefèvre 2001, and Griffin 2011 all take strong stances on Cicero’s interventions even in Book I-II, while Long 1996 seems to favor this interpretation but avoids source problems for the most part; Brunt 2012 is a powerful restatement of older beliefs that the work reflects Panaetius closely. Cf. also the very different collections of “fragments” of Panetius in Alesse 1997 and Van Straaten 1952. Dyck 1996 offers perhaps the most even-handed position: he takes the Panaetian source material seriously but allows for Ciceronian interventions, especially with Roman exempla.
Conclusion

The preceding chapters have advanced two claims. First, I argued that the popularity and cultural influence of Epicureanism in the first century B.C. have not been fully appreciated; Cicero was largely correct in his diagnosis of the Epicurean takeover of Italy in *TD* 4. Second, I argued that we should locate the genesis of his philosophical works firmly in this social and historical context. Doing so opens up possibilities for tracing the development of his arguments, translations, and polemical strategies over the course of some twenty years of debating philosophy with his *familiares*. Even more importantly, this approach allows us to read Cicero’s philosophical activity as a creative effort that engaged with hundreds of years of Hellenistic philosophy as well as with his more immediate Roman cultural, literary, and political contexts.

I would like to conclude with a few comments on the possible broader implications of my approach. I have focused on the epistolary debates in Cicero’s letters, but his correspondence and dialogues point to a broader engagement with his contemporaries. Certain letters, for example, refer to debates held in his villas and abroad.¹ Turning to the dialogues, *De Fato* is presented as a developing out of a visit by the consul A. Hirtius; his translation of Plato’s *Timaeus* opened with a conversation between Marcus, the Pythagorean Nigidius Figulus and the Peripatetic Cratippus; and the *Academica Posteriora* was staged as a debate between Marcus, Atticus, and Varro. No doubt these scenes are highly stylized and perhaps almost entirely fictitious, but the evidence of the letters strongly suggests that Cicero really did engage in precisely this sort of activity. Indeed, it does not seem far-fetched to

¹ *Att*. 7.2 = SB 125 appears to have resulted from a debate with Patro and L. Saufeius in Athens; cf. *Fam*. 9.4 = SB 180 (on which see Griffin 1995: 340-1 and McConnell 2014: 15-17) and *Fam*. 9.25.2: *in iis controversiis, quas habeo cum tuis combitobonibus Epicureis*. In *Att*. 9.4.2 = SB 173 Cicero tells Atticus that he has been declaiming philosophical themes about tyrants in his villas (on this passage see Baraz 2012: 55-8).
hold that Cicero may have debated philosophy in his own Academy or Lyceum—the latter, in fact, is the scene for his discussion with Quintus in both books of *De Divinatione*.\(^2\) While it is beyond the scope of my thesis to explore these allusive references to Cicero’s broader philosophical practices, I believe the analysis of the preceding chapters has shown the potential importance of more informal sources for understanding his philosophical writings.

I therefore conclude with an anecdote about one of Cicero’s Epicurean teachers, Zeno of Sidon, to illustrate one final source of contemporary philosophical inspiration.\(^3\) In an assault on the Epicurean theory of emotions in *Tusculan Disputations III*, Cicero cites a lecture he heard in his youth as evidence that he is not distorting the Epicurean position:

> *hoc ille acriculus me audiente Athenis senex Zeno, istorum acutissimus, contendere et magna voce dicere soletab: “eum esse beatum, qui praesentibus voluptatibus frueretur confideretque se fruiturum aut in omni aut in magna parte vitae dolore non interveniente, aut si interventiret, si summus foret, futurum brevem, sin productior, plus habiturum iucundi quam mali; haec cogitantem fore beatum, praesertim cum et ante perceptis bonis contentus esset <et> nec mortem nec deos extimesceret.” habes formam Epicuri vitae beatae verbis Zenonis expressam, nihil ut possit negari.*

When I was in Athens that little old spitfire Zeno, the sharpest of all the Epicureans, was accustomed to argue loudly: “He is happy who enjoys presents pleasures and is confident that he will continue to enjoy them, with pain either not intervening for the whole or greater part of his life, or, if pain does come, it will be brief if it is extreme, and if it is drawn out, there will be more pleasure than pain. For the man thinking these things will be happy, especially if he is content with the goods he has previously enjoyed and if he fears neither death nor the gods.” There: you have an outline of Epicurus’ happy life expressed in the words of Zeno, with the result that there is no possibility of denial.\(^{(TD \, 3.38)}\)

What is going on in this passage? Graver believes that it is implausible that Cicero remembered the exact language of a lecture some 30 years in the past and suggests that he

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\(^2\) E.g. *Att. 1.11.3 = SB 7* (Academy); *Div. 1.5, 2.3* (Lyceum).

\(^3\) On whom see Chapter II, section iii.A.
used Zeno’s treatise *On Ends* to supplement his memory. This is certainly possible. But the vividness of the elderly Zeno’s lecture and similar memorable anecdotes about him elsewhere would seem to suggest that this sharp and brilliant teacher made something of an impact of the young Cicero. Even if we grant that Cicero is probably not translating word for word a speech by Zeno, it is does not seem implausible, whether by ancient or modern capacities for memory, to imagine that Cicero is recalling one particularly vivid moment from his educational studies abroad, one which stuck with him. If this is right, then once again we have evidence of a more informal source for philosophical ideas and arguments. And once again we see that Cicero’s opposition to Epicureanism was no idle polemic against dusty books of what he regarded as the mere history of philosophy but reflected decades of study and debate with his Greek and Roman Epicurean contemporaries.

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5 *ND* 1.59 (note that the imperfect *solebat* is again used to describe the reminiscence: *Zenonem, quem Philo noster coryphaeum appellare Epicureorum solebat, cum Athenis essem audiebam frequenter…*); at *ND* 1.93 Zeno referred to Chrysippus in the feminine gender and called Socrates a *scurram Atticum*, remarkably using Latin to do so (*Zeno… Latino verbo utens…*; the code-switching into Latin is glossed by Dyck 2003: 177 as “*un bumpkin parisien*”). At *Acad. Post.* 1.46 Cicero says that he questioned Zeno about Carneades, whom Zeno had known personally.
6 For example, Cicero notoriously claims that he wrote the *Topica* during a sea voyage and recalled Aristotle’s treatise of the same name by memory (*Top.* 4). See Baraz 2012: 163 n.37 for discussion.
7 I expect that most modern academics can recall a couple of particularly memorable incidents from their own studies abroad or from a particularly interesting lecture or graduate seminar. It seems reasonable to suspect that Cicero could do the same.
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