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The Political and Philosophical Strategies of Roman Epicureans in the Late Republic

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Abstract

This thesis examines the political careers and strategies of the Roman adherents of Epicurean philosophy in the final three decades of the Republic. I offer a detailed exploration of the network of affiliates of the School, as well as their teachers and patrons, and examine how their self-presentation, social ties, and incorporation of philosophical doctrine into their career strategies enabled them to thrive in such an unstable and dangerous period.

In Part One I examine as a series of case studies the role of Epicureanism in the ascent of three individuals who attained the rank of Consul or Consul Designate (L. Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, C. Vibius Pansa Caetronianus and C. Cassius Longinus), as well as one notable failure (C. Memmius). I argue that they deliberately avoided the traditional routes to power and electoral success: military glory and public oratory, and focused on factional and individual loyalty. I then assess the extent to which the patronage and leadership of C. Iulius Caesar was instrumental in the success of these politicians, and how this benefitted him.

In Part Two I examine an alternative application of Epicurean philosophy to Roman politics, that of professed quietude and eschewal of office, as characterized by T. Pomponius Atticus. I argue that this choice was far from apolitical, but represented an alternative route to power and self-preservation, incorporating many of the same strategies employed by the politically active adherents. I explore how Atticus deliberately cultivated the image of a philosophical conscientious objector, yet wielded a significant amount of power in Rome, thanks to his wealth, his contacts, his provincial holdings and his role as financial administrator to the political elite.

This thesis posits, in conclusion, that the unique political climate of the late Republic, in particular the incipient shift from limited-term magistracies to single rule, facilitated a novel approach to the acquisition of power and personal security. Basing their actions on Epicurean teachings on society, friendship, religion and pleasure, the Roman adherents exploited their utility to those in power, Caesar in particular, to carve out a relatively stable niche in a tumultuous era.

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

Signed:

Date:

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
i. Epicureanism and its history	6
ii. Scholarship on Roman Epicureanism	9
iv. Form of the Thesis	23
v. A Note on Language	24
Part I: Senatorial Epicureans	27
1. Pig-Pen Epicurus: The Philosophical Education of L. Calpurnius Piso	
Caesoninus	28
1.i. Piso's Utility to the Epicurean School	32
1.ii. The Solicitation of Piso	40
1.iii. Piso's Epicurean Lifestyle.....	50
1. iv. Piso's Epicurean Career.....	55
1.v. A Model of Success	68
2. Flourishing under Caesar: C. Vibius Pansa Caetronianus	70
2.i. Pansa's Epicureanism	72
2.ii. Career and Oratory	77
2.iii. Military Activity	80
2. iv. A Special Relationship.....	86
2.v. Use of Political Office	89
2.vi. After the Ides.....	92
2. vii. Impious Pansa	95
2.viii. Pansa's Power	98
3. Instrumental Epicureanism: C. Cassius Longinus	100
2.i. Cassius' legacy: a problematic tradition	102
2.ii. Early life and career	105
2.iii. Caesar, civil war, and conversion.....	109
2.iv. The Correspondence with Cicero.....	112
2.v. The Assassination Plot and its Aftermath: Continued adherence?	132
2.vi. Cassius abandons the <i>Kepos</i>	142
2.vii. The Real Cassius	149
4. The Caesarian Question	150
5. An Epicurean also-ran? The curious case of C. Memmius	163
Part II: Living Unnoticed?	168
6. The 'Quietism' of Titus Pomponius Atticus	169
6.i An Epicurean by any other name: Cornelius Nepos on Atticus	171
6.ii. A Second Self: Cicero and Atticus	184
6.iii Atticus' Epicureanism in Letters	188
6.iv Atticus and the Dialogues	196
7. The Political Animal	205
7.i. The Problem of Atticus' Fortune.....	206
7.ii. The Uses of Wealth	212
7.iii. Atticus' Province	219
7.v. Atticus' Niche.....	235
Conclusion	237
Bibliography	245

Introduction

There is no doubt that, in the final years of the Roman Republic, there occurred a significant flourishing of Epicurean philosophy, the most surprising aspect of which was a cluster of adherents occupying the highest rungs of the political ladder. The apparent contradiction between the lifestyle prescriptions of the Epicurean school and the demands of the *cursus honorum* has been the focus of much scholarly attention, and for a long time classicists were preoccupied with questions about whether professed adherents took their philosophy seriously, and whether it had any bearing on their political conduct at all. Continuing work on the reconstruction and translation of the fragmentary Epicurean texts found in the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum, though, along with a persuasive article by Jeffrey Fish, have moved the consensus towards the idea that Epicurean philosophy could be, and was, adapted and reconciled with the career demands of its Roman adherents.¹

This thesis seeks to examine what this incorporation of philosophy and politics looked like in practice, the extent to which Epicurean adherence was used as a career strategy, and how successful this was. I will explore the elements that together constitute a distinctly Epicurean political style through the examination of commonalities between the Roman adherents' approaches to the oratorical, military, religious and social aspects of the traditional path to high office and to the acquisition of power. The unique political climate of the years preceding the collapse of the Republic and the establishment of the Principate will be considered, and I will place the innovations of the Epicurean politicians into context amid the emerging power structures that followed the dictatorship of Sulla, and competing influences on the stratification of the political classes. Thus, I will endeavour to shed light on the appeals of this philosophical political style both to those who attempted it, and to those with whom they associated professionally.

¹ Fish (2011), see below part ii.

i. Epicureanism and its history

Epicureanism was one of the philosophies to emerge from the tumultuous Hellenistic period, in which newly minted dynasties jockeyed to cement their power in the vacuum left by the death of Alexander of Macedon.² As Athens and its neighbours endured rapid changes in fortune and witnessed the rises and falls of individuals and factions, philosophers strove to formulate a system of thought and action in response to the new instability and danger.³ One of these was Epicurus, who knew well the precariousness of this era. His parents, Athenian settlers on Samos, were expelled from their home in 322 BC by the Macedonian faction in the first War of Alexander's successors while he was completing his ephobic service in Athens.⁴ After this brief experience of military life, Epicurus turned to philosophy and set up schools in Mytilene and Lampsacus, the first of which he was forced to abandon.⁵ He moved to Athens in 305 BC and purchased the plot of land that was to become his School's permanent base, just outside the Dipylon Gate.⁶ Here he taught until the end of his life, and wrote the three hundred or so rolls of papyrus, including the thirty-seven part *On Nature* that constituted his extraordinarily prolific literary output, almost all of which is lost.⁷

The few surviving works of Epicurus take the form of three epitomizing letters and a list of forty key doctrines quoted in book Ten of Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, as well as numerous smaller fragments preserved in other authors such as Seneca and Plutarch.⁸ These are collated in the surveys of Usener (1887), Bailey (1926) and Arighetti (1973). There are also fragments of Epicurus' writing among the

² See Sharples (2006a) 223-4 on the influence of the breakdown of the city-state on the formation of the Hellenistic philosophies and their emphasis on how to live.

³ Bryant (1996) 414.

⁴ For a full chronology of the life of Epicurus: Dorandi (1999) 43. Expulsion from Samos: Diod. Sic. 18.18.9. See also Clay (2009) 11.

⁵ Plut. *Mor.* 1090e cf. De Witt (1954) 70.

⁶ Diog. Laert. 10.10. See also De Witt (1954) 92 and (1936) 55ff.

⁷ Diog. Laert. 10.27-28.

⁸ The *Letter to Herodotus*, on physics; the *Letter to Pythocles*, on celestial phenomena, and the *Letter to Menoeceus*, on ethics.

remains of the Herculaneum Papyri (on which more below, section I.iii), of which there is a partial survey by Vogliano (1928), although the project of reconstruction is still ongoing. Several of these belong to *On Nature*, and form the basis of a partial reconstruction by Sedley.⁹ From these remains, as well as the works of later epitomizing and criticizing authors, we know that Epicurus' philosophy was fundamentally hedonistic, broadly materialistic, and massively controversial thanks to its dismissal of the value of supplicating the gods, and its emphasis on leading an inconspicuous life outside the public sphere.¹⁰

One of Epicureanism's central premises was a direct reaction to the political chaos in which its founder came of age: the characterization of public life as a dangerous arena, in which participants make themselves vulnerable to the violence of other men.¹¹ Epicurus advocated the pursuit of mental tranquillity through considered withdrawal from the fray, along with conscious efforts to rid oneself of all fear. These efforts were facilitated by his atomistic conception of the universe (an expansion of Democritean physics), his denial of divine interest in human affairs, and a set of strategies for brokering peaceable relationships with the rest of mankind.¹² He sought to free his followers from anxiety about death, to teach them to endure hardship without suffering, and to impart upon them the value of friendship.¹³

I refer frequently in this thesis to the 'Epicurean School' or the *Kepos*. By this I do not mean solely the physical property in Athens purchased by Epicurus as a place of learning and philosophical living for

⁹ Sedley (1998) 110-128; Vogliano (1928) 1-19.

¹⁰ The best overview of the teachings of Epicurus is the sourcebook of Long and Sedley (1987). Epicurean hedonism, although based on the principle that pleasure is the highest good, is not quite as shocking a precept as it might appear, since Epicurus defined pleasure as merely the absence of pain.

¹¹ Diog. Laert. 10.117 (Usener fr. 552) cf. Bryant (1996) 414.

¹² Atomic theory: *Ep. Hdt.* 40-41; the gods: *Ep. Men.* 123-124; Society: *KD.* 31-40, *Sent. Vat.* 58, 70, 79.

¹³ Death: *Ep. Men.* 124-127; Friendship: *KD.* 27-28, *Sent. Vat.* 23, 78.

his followers, known as 'the Garden,' but also something more intangible.¹⁴ 'School,' in the philosophical sense refers to the intellectual and organizational legacy of a thinker, encompassing his transmitted teachings or *diatribē*, doctrinal identity or *hairesis*, and *diadochē*, the succession of teachers who were to preserve his wisdom and teaching methods.¹⁵ Among the Hellenistic schools, a school leader typically occupied a position of primacy over these teachers. This Scholarch, who was responsible for the transmission and clarification of doctrine, was the highest authority on orthodoxy during his reign.¹⁶ The Epicureans had a notably robust tradition of Scholarchs, and a markedly consistent canon of teachings, thanks perhaps to Epicurus' elaborate preparations for his legacy in his will, so the school encountered by Romans of the late Republic would have been recognisable as the one founded three centuries earlier.¹⁷

The beginning of Epicurean contact with Rome cannot be dated with precision, but representatives of the School were certainly present in the city in the middle of the second century BC. Although the *Kepos* was not represented in the philosophical embassy of 155, in which the Academic, Stoic and Peripatetic Scholarchs pleaded on behalf of Athens for Rome's intervention in a dispute with Oropus and Sicyon, two Epicureans were expelled from the city a year or so later.¹⁸ The charge was, apparently, corruption of the youth with new pleasures.¹⁹ Any enmity incurred by this incident was not, however, enough to keep the philosophy out of Italy, and by the time of Cicero the *Kepos* had experienced an increase in prominence thanks to popularizing writers in Latin, among

¹⁴ Mitsis (2003) 469 warns that although the idea of the Garden as a sort of commune is appealing and supported by what we know of Epicurean doctrine, there is little evidence for it in practice.

¹⁵ See Bénatouil (2006) 415. Mitsis (2003) 474 suggests the 'school' of Wittgenstein and his followers as a useful parallel for modern readers, but urges caution.

¹⁶ Bénatouil (2006) 424.

¹⁷ Diog. Laert. 10.9.

¹⁸ Embassy of 155: Cic. *Tusc.* 4.5, *Orat.* 2.155, *Att.* 12.23.2 (SB 262); Pliny *NH.* 7.112; Plut. *Cato* 22.1. See also Sedley (2009) 29. Expulsion: Athenaus 12.547a. The date given is the consular year of L. Postumius, which is either 173 BC or (more likely) 154: Gruen (1990) 177.

¹⁹ See Benferhat (2005) 59-60.

them Amafinius, Rabirius and Cadius Insuper, none of whose works are extant.²⁰ Conversely, wealthy Romans had long had the ability to travel to Athens in order to hear philosophical lectures: some had even been present at lectures given by Pythagoras, and it is likely that by the time of the late Republic, several generations of philosophically-inclined elites had visited the *Kepos* and received an education in Epicureanism.²¹ We know of at least one example of this happening in the generation before Cicero: Titus Albucius, propraetor in 105 BC, had spent his youth in Athens and converted wholesale to the philosophy, earning himself the derision of at least one of his peers.²² By the last decades of the Republic, then, a relationship between Rome and the *Kepos* had been firmly established.

ii. Scholarship on Roman Epicureanism

The project of identifying the Roman adherents had an unlikely genesis in Momigliano's (1941) review of Farrington's (1939) *Science and Politics in the Ancient World*. In a lengthy digression, Momigliano posited the existence of a radical Epicurean political sect in Rome, suggested the identification of several individuals previously thought unconnected with the *Kepos*, and discussed the problems of proving the adherence of several more.²³ A more systematic approach is that of Castner (1979), whose *Prosopography of Roman Epicureans* is the definitive resource on the subject. Although her list is exhaustive, I find myself sometimes in

²⁰ Cic. *Tusc.* 4.7. Cicero mentions the death of Cadius in *Fam.* 15.19 (SB 216) of 45, from which Sedley (2009) 39 tentatively dates the movement to the end of the second century BC. Powell (1995b) 31; Leonhardt (1999) 207 both dismiss these early popularizing Epicureans as having had little to no impact. They do not, indeed, seem to have had much influence on the elite political Romans profiled here: Cassius dismisses them as "poor interpreters of the words of Epicurus" (Cic. *Fam.* 15.19.2 (SB 216); see also below Ch. 3.iv), and the other political Epicureans fail to mention them.

²¹ Diog. Laert. 8.14; Porph. *Pyth.* 22.

²² Lucil. 87-93W cf. Bauman (1983) 321. See also Castner (1988) 1-6. For more on Albucius see below Ch.1.iv.

²³ Revolutionary faction: Momigliano (1941) 151; new identifications (Hirtius, Dolabella): 152; discussion of identification: 155.

disagreement with some of her classifications (specifically those of C. Memmius and C. Iulius Caesar, see below, Chapters 4 and 5), and, while some identifications receive in-depth analysis, others are given rather less attention (e.g. Pansa, below Chapter 2.i). Erler (1994) summarizes the identifications of Castner, expands the analysis of Cicero and Lucretius, and offers augmented reading lists. Clay (2007) has also contributed to the effort with his partial census of Greek and Roman adherents active between 100 BC and AD 200.

Sedley (2009) provides a concise overview of Epicureanism and Epicurean philosophers in Rome. On the philosophy's interaction with politics, the sections on Epicureanism in Griffin's (1989) chapter "Philosophy, politics, and politicians at Rome," provide a good introduction to the most important personages and the problems for interpreting their conduct. She identifies two trends in the explanation of the apparent gap between philosophical thought and political action: dichotomy theory, in which it is suggested that Roman philosophical adherents so completely compartmentalized their philosophical leanings that they had no relevance to their careers, and frivolity theory, as characterized by Shackleton Bailey, esp. (1965–70), whereby it is posited that they failed to take the teachings of their schools seriously at all, but considered them a cultural indulgence. Benferhat (2005) explores Roman political Epicureans as a distinct group, and explores their influence on changing societal structures and attitudes to power. Roskam's (2007) exploration of the history of the maxim "live unknown" exposes a degree of flexibility in Epicurean teaching, and goes some way toward proving that Epicureanism could be sufficiently adapted to suit Roman politicians. Fish (2011) argues this point even more decisively, with examples from Lucretius and Philodemus.

Strongly represented in the corpus of scholarship on Epicureanism in Rome is exploration of Cicero's relationship to the school. Maso (2015) explores in depth Cicero's knowledge of and attitude to the philosophy, and the consequences of these for his portrayal of it. His bias is also discussed by Atkins (2000), Blyth (2010) and Hanchey (2013). Although it is not the sole focus of either, Epicureanism features heavily in Guillaumont's (2002)

survey of mentions of philosophers in Cicero's letters, and Haury's (1955) survey of his humorous interludes. Likewise McConnell's (2014) exploration of philosophy in the letters deals extensively with Epicureanism, as does Griffin's (1995) chapter on philosophical badinage in the correspondence. Recently there is a burgeoning interest in how Cicero reconciled his friendships with Epicureans with his own views on the philosophy, hence the theses on that subject of Gilbert (2015) and Evangelou (2016).

iii. Contemporary Sources

Any exploration of the Epicureanism of late-Republican politicians must rely, at least in part, on the testimony of contemporary writers who were either politicians but not Epicureans, or Epicureans who were removed from the political scene. Among these are three individuals whose writings are vital to our understanding of the political and philosophical scene, yet each flawed in a distinct and significant way.

M. Tullius Cicero

As with almost every aspect of the late Republic, the major drawback of the primary evidence is that a single source is so vastly overrepresented therein, and that source is Cicero. The study of Epicureanism in this era is no exception; eighty percent of the relevant evidentiary material in Castner's prosopography is drawn from his huge corpus of writings, which spans three genres and almost fifty years.²⁴ The enormity of Cicero's surviving works is a mixed blessing; while he has generated and preserved a great deal of information on his contemporaries

²⁴ Castner (1988). Since the scope of this work extends from the beginning of the second century BC to the end of the second century AD, I have omitted from my calculations those entries pertaining to individuals who were not active in the late Republic.

and their philosophy, his voice tends to drown out potentially conflicting narratives. This is somewhat tempered by the fact that in taking a synoptic view of this great mass of writing, we might discern the internal inconsistencies, and take a critical approach to Cicero's long and short term aims.²⁵ A level of skepticism is certainly necessary, for Cicero occupies no neutral position in relation to the *Kepos*, but finds himself alternately opposed to and entwined with the school and its adherents.

In the speeches, the philosophical works, and the correspondence of Cicero, we find an almost exclusively unfavourable attitude towards Epicureanism, and in one letter he even goes so far as to explicitly call Epicurus his enemy.²⁶ It is in the dialogues and philosophical works, though, that his hostility is most evident. In these works, the representatives of the Epicurean school put forth their views on the varying subjects, and are subsequently out-argued and dismissed by some Stoic or Academic interlocutor.²⁷ Indeed, he writes in *De Finibus* that neither the philosophy of pleasure nor its advocates pose much of a threat to their adversaries.²⁸ This comment should make us wary of his potential misrepresentation of two aspects of Epicureanism: the doctrine itself and its adherents. If he fails to accurately present the former, it is not through lack of familiarity with the philosophy; Cicero himself boasts that he studied under Phaedrus and Zeno, successive Epicurean Scholarchs in Athens, as a young man.²⁹ He certainly has the proficiency in Greek necessary for the task, as he is keen to show off in his letters, and his translations are often laudably accurate.³⁰ He also had access, through his

²⁵ Steel (2005) 13 notes that our synoptic overview gives us, at times, the ability to see beyond Cicero's aims, and to think critically about his constructed narratives.

²⁶ Cic. *Fam.* 9.20 (SB 193).

²⁷ Farrington (1939) 192 is, however, guilty of a degree of hyperbole when he claims that Cicero "sets up the ninepins for himself to knock down in the hastily-contrived philosophical dialogues with which he fed his literary vanity." See Douglas (1962) 51.

²⁸ Cic. *Fin.* 2.1.2-3.

²⁹ Cic. *Fin.* 1.16. This was likely his first exposure to philosophy.

³⁰ Powell (1995) identifies Cic. *Fin.* 2.21 and *Tusc.* 3.41 as passages in which Cicero makes an especially concerted effort to stay close to the Greek, even at the expense of style. He also points to *Fin.* 1.68 and 2.96 as

friend Atticus, to the current head of the school, and to a philosophical library far surpassing his own.³¹

Yet Cicero's hostility often overrides his scholarly aptitude and integrity, resulting in a range of unfavourable distortions. At times he proffers Latin translations that have different connotations to the original Greek, and, on occasion, he presents less than the whole of an argument.³² Against Epicureanism in particular, he utilizes his rhetorical skills to present an emotive argument, with the result that its precepts are denigrated without being disproved.³³ These are likely no mere mistakes; Cicero is far too clever for that.³⁴ Rather, his overwhelmingly negative attitude towards Epicureanism prevents him from engaging with it on the same level he does the other philosophical schools. This is a great shame, for Cicero is our most plentiful source on Epicurean ethics in particular, and one of the earliest and most important sources on the philosophy as a whole.³⁵

What then of the representatives of the school in the dialogues, the Epicurean interlocutors? We should, for a start, bear in mind the *mos dialogorum*, the set of conventions which allowed Cicero to put into the mouths of his characters views they would neither support nor understand, and even to invent conversations entirely.³⁶ He does not, though, use this freedom to impugn the characters of his Epicurean personae, even as he

accurate translations of extant writings of Epicurus (*KD* 28/Diog. Laert. 10.48 and Diog. Laert. 10.22 respectively), and *ND* 1.45 as a skillful paraphrase of *KD*. 1/Diog. Laert. 10.139.

³¹ Trouard (1942) 20. *Cic. Att.* 12.23.2 (SB 262).

³² On his overreliance on a false dichotomy between pleasure and virtue, that stems from the difference in meaning of *hedonē* and *voluptas*, see Powell (1995) 299; Gordon (2013) 109-138. See Fowler (2007) 404-5 on the tendency of critics of Epicureanism to present a 'men' clause without the answering 'de.'

³³ Smith (1995) 311 on Cicero's use of elevated and emotive language to magnify the effects of his arguments for virtue over pleasure.

³⁴ Says Maso (2015) 14: When Cicero misrepresents the philosophy, "we should perceive that he does so a) intentionally; b) to present its opponent's likely "correct" point of view.

³⁵ See Sedley (2009) and Konstan (2011).

³⁶ Cicero refers directly to the *mos dialogorum* in *Att.* 13.9.5 (SB 317); 13.12.3 (320). On giving a character unrealistically erudite dialogue: *Fam.* 9.8.1 (SB 254). See Griffin (1995) 325.

attributes to them arguments for which he cannot conceal his contempt.³⁷ There are two possible reasons for this. The first is that in treating the representatives of the school humanely, he may have hoped to "avoid the charge of partisan hostility."³⁸ Secondly, in the case of those still living at least, Cicero had *amicitiae* to preserve. To make someone into an interlocutor was to afford them a great honour, but that effort would be wasted if Cicero were to portray them in too unfavourable a light. He is, therefore, at pains to spare his Epicurean characters the vitriol he directs at their philosophy.³⁹ In the case of Atticus, as we shall see below in part II, he has a particularly deft method for enforcing this divide: his friend appears as an Epicurean, but never imparts any philosophy.

The nature of Cicero's relationships with his Epicurean peers is also an issue when considering his correspondence. It may seem too obvious to note, but the primary purpose of the exchange of letters is to facilitate a relationship between two (or more) people who are physically separated.⁴⁰ So when Cicero writes to an Epicurean, we should wonder how his remarks about their philosophy, or lack thereof, function to strengthen the relationship. We should especially ask this question when those remarks are critical: when he teases Atticus about Epicurean visual theory or accuses Cassius of divorcing virtue from pleasure, does he do so because he is secure in the relationship, or because he is willing to risk it to further some unstated aim?⁴¹ A similar issue is at play when he writes about an adherent of the *Kepos*: we must remember that, at least under the dictatorship of Caesar, Cicero could not expect his letters to be kept

³⁷ See Smith (1995) on the cordiality with which Torquatus is treated in *De Finibus*.

³⁸ Douglas (1962) 51.

³⁹ The exception is perhaps Velleius in *De Natura Deorum*. Classen (2010) 206-207 notes that Cicero subtly discredits this interlocutor by misrepresenting not the doctrine he is tasked with espousing, but his tone. Velleius is depicted as considerably more aggressive and polemic than his Stoic counterpart Balbus.

⁴⁰ White (2010) 28. Strongly represented within the corpus of the correspondence is the sub-genre of letters of recommendation, in which one party writes to another in order to impart their favourable opinion of a third.

⁴¹ Cic. *Att.* 2.3.1 (SB 23); *Fam.* 15.16 (215).

entirely private.⁴² Apart from the fact that once they were out of his hands, they could be copied by the recipient without his consent or knowledge, there was always the possibility that they could be intercepted *en route*, so Cicero could never explicitly write anything that might put him at odds with those he aimed to cultivate.⁴³ This may be why we find him to be so quiet on the subject of the Epicureanism of Pansa, one of the two consuls of 43 whose friendship he courted to great effect.⁴⁴

This does not mean, though, that Cicero refrains unduly from mentioning Epicureanism in his letters; in fact, Guillaumont's exhaustive survey of references to the philosophical schools in his correspondence shows that the *Kepos* is the most frequently cited by a long margin.⁴⁵ Cicero writes about the school in many contexts: while he sometimes goads its followers, at other times we see him intermediating in disputes on its behalf, positioning himself as a sort of unofficial protector of philosophers.⁴⁶ One trend that is pervasive in his treatment of Epicureanism, though, is humour. The correspondence features as much comedic material as all of Cicero's other written output, despite constituting less than a quarter of it.⁴⁷ And, as Haury calculates in another diligent survey, a great deal of it arises at the expense of Epicureanism and its adherents.⁴⁸ So we must here bear in mind yet another hidden agenda of Cicero: the pursuit of a punch line.

The third genre of his writing in which we find Cicero portraying Epicureans and Epicureanism is his oratory, in particular the *post reditum* speeches and those delivered in the two years following his return from

⁴² Cic. *Q. Frat.* 3.1.10 (SB 21); Nicholson (1994) 39.

⁴³ On authorial loss of control: Steel (2005) 10-11. Perhaps because of this, Cicero considered disseminating his own copies of his correspondence as a means of exerting control: *Att.* 16.5 (SB 410).

⁴⁴ A full volume of correspondence between Cicero and Pansa is unfortunately lost: White (2010) 171, but Cicero boasts of his influence in *Fam.* 6.12.2 (SB 226). His tutelage of Pansa is discussed below, Ch. 2.ii.

⁴⁵ Guillaumont (2000) 63-64. Epicurus merits fourteen mentions, Scholarchs Patro and Phaedrus five and three respectively, and Siro, and Epicurean teacher in the Bay of Naples, one.

⁴⁶ Guillaumont (2002) 70. The relevant letters are *Q. Frat.* 1.2.14 (SB 2); *Fam.* 13.1.2-5 (63); *Att.* 5.11.6 (104).

⁴⁷ Griffin (1995) 329.

⁴⁸ Haury (1955) 164; 216-22; 226.

exile in 57 BC.⁴⁹ Here, the problem is far less subtle: Cicero mentions the *Kepos* only in the context of invective.⁵⁰ There is no limitation on his hostility towards the school, as he has no concern about whether he offends or damages the reputation of the follower in question. In fact, that is his explicit purpose.⁵¹ In this period Cicero was consumed by the desire to avenge himself against the consuls who had held office when he was banished, in particular Piso, whom he vehemently criticizes for his Epicureanism. As a result, his portrayal of the school and this particular follower in these speeches is relentlessly negative. Thanks to the volume and diversity of insults Cicero flings at Piso, though, it may be the case, as we shall see in Chapter 2, that there is some valuable information on Epicureanism hidden therein.

At times Cicero's negativity towards Epicureanism is informed less by any particular aspect of the philosophy itself than by its interference with his own aims. As a source on contemporary Roman Epicurean writers, he is at his most unreliable, thanks to his need not to detract from his own project of translating the teachings of the great Greek philosophers into Latin. This is especially an issue when he is the only primary source: in the cases of the popularizing Epicureans Catius and Amafinius it is almost impossible to discern how much of an impact they had on their Roman audience, since Cicero's assertion that they "invaded Italy," drawing the masses to them with their artless expositions of the philosophy of pleasure, constitutes almost the entirety of their legacy. Were it not for the fact that Cassius also mentions them in a response to Cicero, it would be possible to believe, as at least one scholar has, that they were mere fabrications of Cicero.⁵²

A consequence of the success with which the works of Cicero have been transmitted and the fragmentary nature of the extant original works of

⁴⁹ In particular *Post Reditum in Senatu*, *De Haruspicum Responsis*, *De Provinciis Consularibus*, and especially *in Pisonem*.

⁵⁰ Cicero never employs the term *Kepos*, but uses the latinized form *hortus* in *ND* 1.93, in a passage so scathing that Clay (2009) 10 suggests that it is in itself a term of abuse.

⁵¹ See Powell (2007) 3.

⁵² Gee (2013) 14; cf. Gilbert (2015) 16.

Epicureanism, is that not only are we obliged to use Cicero as a source for his contemporary Epicureans, but at times as a source for the philosophy itself. His account of Epicurus' ethical system in Book One of *de Finibus*, for example, is the most comprehensive exposition of this subject in existence.⁵³

T. Carus Lucretius

Simultaneously an oddity and an invaluable resource, Lucretius is responsible for the longest extant treatise on Epicurean philosophy in the form of his epic didactic poem, *De rerum natura*. We know little about his life, and Jerome's salacious account of his having been driven mad by a love potion and eventually committing suicide is probably spurious.⁵⁴ He held no magistracies, and in his capacity as a poet, he inspires only the most fleeting mention in the literary discourse of Cicero and his educated friends.⁵⁵ While he was later recognised for his artistry, Lucretius seems to have left little impression on the cultural and political scene of the late Republic.⁵⁶

⁵³ Epicurus' own *letter to Menoeceus*, preserved in Diogenes Laertius, deals with the same subject matter, but is protreptic. As Striker (1996) 197 argues, however, Cicero had access to more of Epicurus' writings than we do and in all likelihood read a good proportion, even if with a less-than-open mind.

⁵⁴ Donatus *Vit. Verg.* 6 and Jerome *Chron.* Ol. 171.3 are the only two sources claiming to present facts about Lucretius' life, and are both in contradiction with each other and internally inconsistent. Consequently, we should be wary of any biographical approach to *DRN*, since it would be biographical criticism without a biography: Dalzell (1982) 213. We do not even know with any certainty when he composed his epic: Hutchinson (2001); Volk (2010).

⁵⁵ Cicero's only reference to Lucretius is in a letter to his brother Quintus, in which he acknowledges the poet's skill, but dismisses the philosophical aspect of the project as overly technical: *ad. Q. frat.* 2.10 (SB 14). Lucretius' absence is most keenly felt in the letters between Cicero and Atticus, whose manuscript copying workshop made him perhaps the most influential figure in the dissemination of late-Republican texts: Crawley (1963) 12. Horsfall (1993) notes a trend of prejudice against contemporary Latin poets in Cicero.

⁵⁶ Striker (1995) 54 attributes this partially to his missionary fervour. *Nep. Att.* 12.4 compares Lucretius' talent to that of Catullus.

In philosophical terms, the converse is true, and Lucretius' contemporary context seems to have failed to make its mark on his thinking. The doctrinal exposition of *De rerum natura* is remarkably free from engagement with contemporary debates within the Epicurean school, and appears rather to be based on a single source: Epicurus' own magnum opus *On Nature*.⁵⁷ This has led Sedley to put forth the credible argument that Lucretius was a kind of 'Epicurean fundamentalist,' whose reverence for the school's founder surpassed that which was expected of his fellow adherents. Strengthening this conclusion is the fact that his epic bears no traces of the writings of Epicurus' celebrated contemporaries Hermarchus, Metrodorus and Polyaenus, who, along with the master himself, made up *The Men*, whose teachings formed the Epicurean gospel.⁵⁸ This has two consequences for our use of the text: firstly, that we may take it as a broadly credible source on the teachings of Epicurus himself, and secondly, that we must be wary of trying to extrapolate from it contemporary orthodoxy.⁵⁹

While Lucretius operated at a remove from the philosophical debates of the late Republic, *De rerum natura* reveals that he was not likewise detached from its politics. His exhortations to step back from public life reflect not Athenian democracy but the Roman magistracies, and one of his primary arguments against attempting to secure tranquillity through politics is the short terms to which offices were limited.⁶⁰ His fears of civil unrest are illustrated with prototypically Roman military imagery,

⁵⁷ Sedley (1998) 134ff.

⁵⁸ Longo Auricchio (1978) lists the Herculaneum fragments using this designation for the founding members.

⁵⁹ A note of caution is needed however: while Lucretius does not seem to have consciously innovated in his approach to philosophy, comparison with extant texts of Epicurus shows that he does, through his use of examples, at times subtly change the emphasis of arguments. We should be particularly wary of passages for which there is no point of comparison: Sharples (2006b) 435. See also Classen (1968) 80-83. *DRN*, does, however, constitute a well-intentioned counterpart to the overtly hostile later sources on Epicureanism.

⁶⁰ *Lucr. DRN*. 3.995-1002. See also West (1969) 100-2; Fowler (2007) 420.

perhaps even based in events he witnessed himself.⁶¹ Finally, even if he did not engage with contemporary Epicurean arguments for combining the philosophy with politics, he did recognise that for his elite Roman audience, sometimes engagement with the *cursus honorum* was not just encouraged, but mandatory.⁶²

Lucretius' audience is another contentious subject. *De rerum natura* is explicitly addressed, especially in its earlier books, to Gaius Memmius, the tribune of the plebs in 66 BC, so one might reasonably hope that it will provide some evidence for the philosophical training of Roman politicians, and perhaps even Epicurean career guidance.⁶³ Memmius, however, despite being a celebrated poet and orator, had a reputation as a notorious scoundrel in both his political and sexual conduct, and it is far from certain whether he ever let Lucretius get close enough to him to gain any practical experience in pedagogy or the imparting of morality (see below Ch. 5).⁶⁴

Whatever the reality of the success of Lucretius' attempts to induce Memmius to Epicurean enlightenment, however, *De rerum natura* reads like a sincere attempt at tutelage. Memmius may not have actually applied *vacuas auras animumque sagacem* to Lucretius' epitomizing of philosophical doctrine, but within the context of the poem, he is presumed to do so: the teacher moves through the sequence of his lessons, and the pupil is mollified with the honey of poetry as increasingly complex points of doctrine are elucidated.⁶⁵ This 'implied intratextual narrative' is a resource in itself: even if it failed to guide the real Memmius into a lifestyle acceptable to Epicureans, the literary Memmius is cajoled not just to

⁶¹ Konstan (2008) 36 argues that the sea battle passage of *DRN*. 2.1-13 is explicitly tailored to a high-ranking Roman military officer, while Smith (2001) 36n6 suggests that the massing of troops in 3.40 refers specifically to exercises ordered by Caesar on the Campus Martius in 58 BC.

⁶² Lucr. *DRN*. 1.43.

⁶³ Broughton *MRR*. 2.157. Despite Lucretius' emphasis on the *Memmiadum clara propago* (*DRN*. 1.42), however, it seems that none of Memmius' forebears had attained the consulate: Boyancé (1950) 213.

⁶⁴ Wiseman (1982) 35 argues, based on the imagery used in *DRN*, that Lucretius began his work in humble circumstances, but after gaining Memmius' patronage experienced luxury for the first time as a resident of his household. Memmius' affairs: *Att.* 1.18.3. (SB 18); Suet. *Gram.* 14.

⁶⁵ As he is urged to do in the first proem: Lucr. *DRN*. 1.50.

understand atomic physics, but to consider its implications for his understanding of contemporary society and his role in it.⁶⁶ While Lucretius may not have consulted with the Scholarchs and Epicurean tutors of his day on philosophical matters, I will show that in his approach to guiding a politically active patron, he was equally aware of the potential of the philosophy to be a positive influence on a career, and a guide to surviving turbulent times.

Philodemus of Gadara

Perhaps the most useful, well-informed, wide-ranging and contextually specific source on Epicureanism in late Republican Rome is Philodemus of Gadara, a Syrian who studied under Zeno in Athens before moving to Rome.⁶⁷ Or rather he would be, were it not for the fact that his works have been transmitted as charred and solidified lumps, from which tiny fragments can be painstakingly unfurled, reconstructed and translated. These texts were simultaneously preserved for eternity and damaged almost beyond recognition by the pyroclastic surge resulting from the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79, and lay undiscovered until the excavations of 1752, when they were originally mistaken for pieces of charcoal.⁶⁸ As the technology has advanced, papyrologists have found increasingly less invasive methods of physically or virtually separating the layers of the rolls to reveal the text, but the process remains agonizingly slow.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Cf. Volk (2010) 128, who notes that the stock characters of poet-teacher and student do not necessarily need to reflect Lucretius and Memmius. See also Fowler (2000).

⁶⁷ Philippson *RE*. 19.2: 2443-2482.

⁶⁸ See Sider (2009) 305-306 on the early excavations of the villa, mostly concerned with the retrieving of valuables, and the damage done to the papyri. On the eruption of Vesuvius: Pliny *Ep.* 6.16.

⁶⁹ The first significant progress on unrolling the papyri without destroying them or rendering the text illegible was made by Antonio Piaggio, not long after they were identified, who developed a rolling apparatus on which the rolls could be separated by their own weight, with assistance from his deft scalpel: Mattusch (2005) 49-50. Many of the subsequent innovations were less successful or more destructive, but in recent years progress has been made using MSI (multi-spectral imaging). Most recently, three-letter

Once the texts have been extricated, the equally challenging task of reconstruction and translation can begin. While single scholars have edited and translated some of the shorter and less damaged treatises, others have necessitated the hard work of vast networks of philologists, papyrologists and experts in ancient philosophy.⁷⁰ The project of reconstructing the library has been ongoing for so long that there has been sufficient time for the development of debates and disagreements on everything from the identification of characters to the filling of lacunae.⁷¹ And, as the texts have emerged, their topics and style have at times subverted scholarly ideas of what an Epicurean treatise should deal with and in what manner, and questions have arisen over the orthodoxy of their author.⁷²

Yet, despite this, Philodemus remains invaluable. Firstly, as an Epicurean educated in the Garden in Athens but working in Roman Italy, he bridged the gap between the official philosophical school and the flourishing of its influence in the late Republic.⁷³ He has both the ideal education to be an authority on Epicureanism, and the practical experience to apply it to the realm of Roman politics.⁷⁴ His identification as the client of Piso is also vital confirmation of the Epicureanism of his patron, whose adherence is otherwise attested primarily by the biased Cicero, and fortunately this relationship is in itself provable in multiple ways: through the presence of his library in the country villa of the Calpurnii Pisones, through a poetic address to Piso himself, through his appearance in

sequences were identified in the still-rolled *PHerc.* Paris 4 using X-rays: Mocella et al. (2015).

⁷⁰ Even the single-scholar editions, however, are based on the work of others: Murray's (1965) reconstruction of *On the Good King according to Homer* is a refutation of Oliveri (1909). The Konstan et al. (1998) edition of *On Frank Criticism* credits twenty-five individuals with translation work in its initial stages, and five authors with the final version.

⁷¹ Such is the pace of discovery and interpretation that we cannot rely entirely on the most recent collection, currently Arrighetti (1973): Sharples (2006b) 342.

⁷² Murray (1965) 173. Another issue: the erotic verses.

⁷³ His *On Flattery* may be a transcript of lectures he attended in Athens of the then Scholarch Zeno of Sidon: Glad (1996) 22.

⁷⁴ His *On Frank Speech* even contains specific instructions for the didactic criticism of those of a higher status, including politicians and the famous: col. 18a-b cf. Glad (1996) 34-35.

Cicero's invective on Piso, confirmed by a near-contemporary commentator, and through Philodemus' dedication of the text *On the Good King according to Homer* to Piso.⁷⁵ He also had links with other identified Roman Epicureans, evidenced by his dedication of a chapter of one of his volumes to Pansa.⁷⁶ He was therefore an integral part of both the social and philosophical networks of Roman Epicureanism.

His writings, too, serve a twofold evidentiary purpose. Since they can be definitively identified as tailored to a specific audience, they give insight into the adaptations made for members of the Roman elite. At the same time, thanks to Philodemus' habit of quoting large portions of the texts upon which he bases his arguments, traditional orthodox viewpoints are preserved, as are those of his philosophical rivals.⁷⁷ Although we have a relatively small proportion of his literary output, it is clear that what is extant is part of a large corpus, much of which is dedicated to his ambitious project of mapping out the Epicurean ethical system into a quasi-Aristotelian framework of opposing vices and their corresponding virtues.⁷⁸ This provides us with invaluable insight into the dogmatic flexibility of the Epicurean school in Philodemus' day, and the contemporary concerns of the philosophical schools. Even if we could find no solid links with the Epicurean politicians of Rome, the writings of Philodemus would be vital to an exploration of their beliefs and actions.

⁷⁵ On the identification of the Villa of the Papyri as belonging to the Pisones: Capasso (2010) 92ff. (The strongest arguments are perhaps those from the fragmentary inscription *CIL*. X 8161 and the bust identified as Piso Pontifex, son of the consul of 58); on the library there being that of Philodemus: Sider (2009) 303. Poetic invitation to Piso: Phldm. *Ep.* 27; Sider (1997) 152ff. Mention in Cicero's invective: *Cic. Pis.* 68 cf. *Asc. Sen. Pis.* 68. Dedication of *On the Good King*: Murray (1965) 174.

⁷⁶ Dorandi (1996) 41-42; Gaines (2001) 268.

⁷⁷ See Delattre (1996).

⁷⁸ For example, Philodemus considers flattery the converse of invective, with frankness as the mean: *PHerc.* 1082. See Kemp (2010) 67.

iv. Form of the Thesis

This thesis will take the form of four case studies, which, combined, give insight into every stage of the Epicurean political career, from conversion to attainment of the highest offices, to the successful navigation of partisan struggles. In part one I will profile three individuals who utilized and at times exploited their philosophical affiliation to pursue the goals of the traditional career path open to Romans of the upper classes, that is, the sequence of offices known as the *cursus honorum*. L. Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, C. Vibius Pansa Caetronianus and C. Cassius Longinus all achieved the rank of Consul or Consul designate, and all did so without hiding their connections to Epicureanism, its teachers, and its adherents.⁷⁹ In the case of Piso, we have copious but flawed evidence pertaining to his introduction to Epicurean philosophy, his relationships with at least one representative of the school, and his incorporation of his adherence into his public persona. Pansa, meanwhile, serves to shed light on a confirmed affiliate's on-going relationship with the wider Epicurean community, and to illustrate a distinctively non-popular approach to the ascent of the political ladder. Finally, Cassius, representing a late conversion for strategic purposes, highlights the appeal and success of the Epicurean career path, and its divergence from tradition.

Part II focuses on an alternative lifestyle choice, that of professed quietude and lack of participation in the conventional political path of the Republican elite. The most famous of the Roman Epicureans, and yet one of the most problematic in terms of identification, T. Pomponius Atticus, serves as case study.⁸⁰ I examine his decision not to engage with the *cursus honorum* not just, as it is often assumed to be, as an act of Epicurean orthodoxy, but as a political choice in its own right, and an alternative path to both power and security. This, I undertake in two chapters: one on Atticus' incorporation of his implied Epicureanism into his public persona, and his deliberate fostering of ambiguity over the depth and sincerity of his

⁷⁹ Piso, Cos. 58: *MRR*. 2.541-2; Pansa, Cos. 43: *MRR*. 2.634; Cassius, Cos. des. 41: *MRR*. 2.543.

⁸⁰ *RE*. Pomponius 102.

adherence, and a second on how he utilized his image as a philosophical individual, removed from power struggles, to aid his navigation of contemporary politics.

For the purposes of this study, I focus on individuals for whom there exists strong evidence of their association with the Epicurean school, as well as tangible evidence of their incorporation of their affiliation with the school into their careers. Thus, L. Manlius Torquatus, whose adherence is attested only by Cicero and only in the context of a philosophical dialogue, does not feature as a case study.⁸¹ Nor does C. Matius, whose own words contain undeniable echoes of Epicurean sentiments, yet who is never explicitly named as a follower by any source.⁸² Likewise, L. Saufeius, although he left incontrovertible evidence of his enthusiasm for Epicureanism, appears incidentally but, because there is little available information on his career, also does not receive his own chapter.⁸³

v. A Note on Language

I have noted above that, thanks to Epicureanism's unproblematic succession of Scholarchs and doctrinal consistency, the term *Kepon* or Garden as a byword for the Epicurean School is thankfully uncontroversial. Rather more contentious, however, is the matter of the appropriate terminology to describe the Roman Epicureans' relationship with the School. I often use 'affiliation,' which is apt in the sense that it emphasises that the politicians who joined the Epicureans did so freely, and were also free at any time to revoke or change their affiliation.⁸⁴ I also employ 'adherence,' although, as the comprehension, orthodoxy and consistency of the School's Roman affiliates are at times under question, I often qualify this as 'professed' or 'presumed' adherence, and it should be understood in this sense throughout. When I refer specifically to the manner in which

⁸¹ Castner (1988) 40-42; *RE*. 80.

⁸² Castner (1988) 96-99; *RE*. 1.

⁸³ Castner (1988) 64-67; *RE*. 5.

⁸⁴ Glucker (1988) 34.

Piso, Pansa, Cassius and especially Atticus incorporated their Epicureanism into their self-representation, or made public or private declarations of their membership of the school, I also use the term 'identification,' to highlight that aspect of their relationship with the philosophy.

Another term whose usage may cause confusion and which therefore ought to be clarified is 'political career,' which in a modern context implies both a long-term commitment and remuneration, neither of which was guaranteed for Roman politicians.⁸⁵ In this context, a political career refers specifically to the pursuit and attainment of the sequence of offices leading ultimately to the consulship: the *cursus honorum*. While this expression is derived from a chariot-racing metaphor, the structure resembles more closely a ladder, so at times I refer to its imaginary 'rungs.' Interchangeably with 'political career,' I use 'public life,' following Cicero's conception of *res publica*.⁸⁶ Less acceptable to Cicero and his contemporaries, however, would be my usage of 'politics' and 'political power' in a more general sense, especially in discussions of the life of Atticus, who never held public office. The postmodernist conception of politics as a range of strategies by which power is distributed within a culture or society might not have fit Cicero's definition, but he certainly would have recognised it; see for example his epistolary debate with Matius over whether tacit support for a political figure can transform *otium* into *negotium*.⁸⁷

A much more minor issue for Cicero (I hope) would be my references to his 'philosophical works' and 'dialogues' (used

⁸⁵ Steel (2005) 13 notes that in the period following the dictatorship of Sulla, most men never attained political rank higher than the quaestorship and therefore only ever spent one year in office. There were no wages for the political offices, some of which necessitated the supply of banquets and spectacles from the occupant's own resources, although those who reached the rank of praetor or consul could reasonably hope to recoup their losses afterwards through the administration of a province: Beard and Crawford (1985) 55-59. See also Van der Blom (2016).

⁸⁶ Cic. *Rep.* 3.3-7; *Or.* 3.63-64.

⁸⁷ On this Foucaultian conception of politics: Habinek (1990) 166. Cicero's correspondence with Matius: *Fam.* 11.27 (SB 348) and 11.28 (349) cf. Griffin (1997) 97-103.

interchangeably). I seek here not to define a specific corpus in terms of genre or content, but only to exclude his speeches, poems and translations.⁸⁸ Since his texts on oratory are relevant to my philosophical questions about Epicurean attitudes to language, frankness, and public speaking, I include them among the philosophical works, but do not propose to argue that Cicero himself would have intended this or even agreed.

⁸⁸ Following Gilbert (2015) 2, I grant *De Officiis* honorary dialogue status.

Part I:

Senatorial Epicureans

1. Pig-Pen Epicurus: The Philosophical Education of L. Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus

As apt a starting point as any for a study of the Epicureans of the late Republic is a reconstruction of the career of Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, an individual both illustrious and securely identified as an Epicurean. A prime example of one holding an apparently dichotomous attitude, he combined patronage of an Epicurean house philosopher with a highly successful and well-documented political career, which culminated in a consulship in 58 BC. His association with the *Kepon* from his youth, attested by both his anti-Epicurean rival and his Epicurean teacher, provides insight into the recruitment strategies of the School and the mutually beneficial nature of the association between politician and philosophers, and his later words and actions demonstrate the successful incorporation of Epicurean teachings into navigation of Roman public life. His pivotal social position, as the father-in-law of the eventual dictator Caesar, allows us to trace the role of an adherent of the *Kepon* in the web of alliances through which the balance of power in the Republic was negotiated.

Evidence of Piso's Epicureanism is plentiful enough to be conclusive when taken together, though rarely straightforward. There is an elegant poem of Philodemus inviting him to an Epicurean banquet, but (unsurprisingly) no response.⁸⁹ The Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum, traced with confidence to his family, is preserved, along with its Epicurean library, yet in the state it was in several decades after Piso's own death, thanks to the volcanic eruption of AD 79.⁹⁰ There are also countless contemporary remarks of Cicero, often hostile enough to erase any semblance of objectivity, a phenomenon highlighted by the most expansive source of information on his philosophical life: *In Pisonem*. If Cicero is the great unreliable narrator of Epicureanism at the fall of the Republic, he is at

⁸⁹ Phldm. *Ep.* 27.

⁹⁰ Capasso (2010) 92.

his most biased in this polemical speech of 55 BC, yet it is still an invaluable piece of evidence for our project.⁹¹

The political context of the speech is crucial to its interpretation. Cicero's exile, engineered by his old nemesis P. Clodius Pulcher at the behest of Caesar, was effected under the consulship of Piso and Gabinius. Cicero held Piso, as holder of the highest office, to blame for not curtailing the actions of the vengeful Tribune, especially as his inaction was rewarded with the assignation of Macedonia as his consular province, a highly desirable outcome for any Hellenophile, especially as the same bill expanded the province to give him control of Athens, which had previously been a free state.⁹² He lashed out at both consular colleagues in his speech to the Senate upon his return, *Post Reditum in Senatu*, while tentatively criticizing Caesar and showing his disdain for Clodius. He was soon forced to toe the Caesarian line, however, and his next speech on the subject was 56 BC's *De Provinciis Consularibus*, in which he simultaneously recommended that Caesar be given free rein and more time in Gaul, while Piso and Gabinius be recalled for immoral behaviour in their provinces.⁹³ Although he was successful in this objective, according to Asconius, he could not let the matter of his humiliation lie.⁹⁴ Hence, after Piso delivered

⁹¹ There is a long tradition of dismissal of *In Pisonem* as empty invective, merely "derived from the anti-Epicurean polemic current in the popular philosophical literature of Cicero's time." De Lacey (1941) 49. It is a tricky proposition to pin down any anti-Epicurean polemic contemporary to Cicero, however, given that he is responsible for essentially all of it. De Lacey's closest chronological source for this sentiment is Plutarch.

⁹² Clodius' *Lex de capite civis Romani*, which retroactively outlawed Cicero's execution of the Catilinarian conspirators, was passed simultaneously with the bill assigning the consular provinces. Cic. *Pis.* 21, 57; *Sest.* 71; Plut. *Cic.* 30.1. The inclusion of Athens in the assignation: *Pis.* 37. See also Habicht (1997) 339.

⁹³ See Grillo (2015) for a synthesis of the events preceding the delivery of this speech.

⁹⁴ Asc. *In Senatu Contra L. Pisonem* 1. This first century AD commentary is an invaluable resource for the interpretation of *in Pisonem*, by an individual who, although blind, was a meticulous recorder of sources: Squires (1990) viii.

an unpreserved and barely-attested response to *Post Reditum*, he composed his invective masterpiece, *In Pisonem*.⁹⁵

By this point Cicero had honed in on Piso as the primary focus of his ire, thanks in part to Caesar's political immunity and Gabinius' lack of reaction to Ciceronian needling.⁹⁶ He had other reasons for feeling particularly aggrieved by Piso, however, the foremost being that they had once been, if not friends, then political *amici*: Cicero had publicly expressed positive sentiments about Piso's election, and Piso had awarded him positions of honour within the senate.⁹⁷ The two were also (tenuously) related by marriage; Cicero's son-in-law C. Piso, quaestor in 58 BC, who repeatedly attempted to intervene on his behalf, was a Piso, albeit from a different branch.⁹⁸ Finally, Piso's ambiguous attitude to Cicero's downfall made him a soft target. By approaching Cicero with the advice to take voluntary exile and preserve his own life he showed some concern for his fellow senator, but not enough to help save his career.⁹⁹ And for this, Cicero intended to punish him.

Cicero could not hope to deal damage to Piso's career commensurate with that inflicted on his own, but as an experienced forensic orator he was skilled in the arts of both character assassination and wordplay, and here he maximizes both to devastating effect, expecting (rightly, as it turned out) that true or not, his allegations would find immortality for their elegance and vituperation, thus compromising Piso's

⁹⁵ Piso's response (in pamphlet form): Cic. *Q. Frat.* 3.1.11 (SB 21). See also Van der Blom (2016) 194.

⁹⁶ Asc. *Sen. Pis.* 1 also points out that it was highly probable that, at the time the speech was delivered, Gabinius had not yet returned from his province.

⁹⁷ Cicero writes of his friendship with Piso in 59: *Ad Q. Frat.* 1.2.16 (SB 2); expresses pleasure at his election: *Sest.* 20. Piso makes Cicero first overseer of an electoral tribe and calls upon him to speak third in the Senate: *Red. Sen.* 17; *Pis.* 11.

⁹⁸ Attempts at intervention: Cic. *Red. Sen.* 17 and 38; *Pis.* 13; *Sest.* 54; Plut. *Cic.* 31.2-3. See Broège (1969) 8.

⁹⁹ Plut. *Cic.* 31.4; Cass. Dio 38.26.5. The brunt of Cicero's ire was borne by those who had failed to help him, rather than those who actively persecuted him: Tempest (2011) 126.

reputation for eternity.¹⁰⁰ His insults are unfocussed and wide-ranging, hyperbolic and often unverifiable.¹⁰¹ Yet this screed, I would argue, offers some of the most valuable evidence on philosophical affiliation among politically active Romans, and Piso in particular, not because of any deliberate effort on Cicero's part, but through the recurring themes brought about by his own envies and prejudices.

¹⁰⁰ Dugan (2005) 24 "Cicero crafts an ornately polished caricature designed to achieve canonical durability." His success: Cicero *Ad Q. Frat.* 3.1.ii: *meam in illum pueri omnes tamquam dictata perdiscant.* (Schoolboys are memorizing *In Pisonem* for their lessons.) Griffin (2001) 94: Cicero's emphasis on his literary success with this speech is an attempt to downplay its political failure. He certainly did not have enough of a case for a successful forensic prosecution, as his weak arguments against bringing a case (*Pis.* 83, 95) demonstrate: Claassen (1992) 39.

¹⁰¹ Kubiak (1989) 273f argues that the closing line's elaborate conceit where one would expect the speech's strongest negative sentiment suggests that "Cicero is anxious for his assault against Piso to be placed in the context of ostentatious art" rather than sincere legal allegations.

1.i. Piso's Utility to the Epicurean School

Because of the sheer volume of insults levelled at Piso, and because of the ambitious scope of his retaliatory project, *In Pisonem* offers a startling amount of biographical information, encompassing the entirety of his target's identification with Epicureanism.¹⁰² We can, therefore, mine the text for insights into how this affiliation came about, which can then be used as a basis for a reconstruction of the Epicurean recruitment strategy for elite Romans. In the case of what it was that made Piso an appealing prospect for the continuators of the *Kepon*, the invective nature of the speech is less of a problem than it might seem. This is due to the fact that Piso's most desirable features were the very things that Cicero envies most, and in attempting to paint them in an unfavourable light, he unwittingly highlights them. Three main factors piqued the interest of the Epicureans and ignited Cicero's jealousy: Piso's descent from a politically successful family and inherited influence, his statesmanlike appearance, and his vast wealth.

As a *novus homo*, Cicero bore particular resentment against Piso's apparent reliance on his illustrious family to advance his political career. The Calpurnii Pisones were an ancient plebian family, whose first member to attain the consulship did so in 180 BC, but who really came to the political fore in the years 148-133, during which four members of the family held the highest rank in the Republic.¹⁰³ Three of the consular Pisones were Piso's direct ancestors, although his father attained only a quaestorship.¹⁰⁴ Cicero held that Piso was elected almost entirely on the basis of his heritage:

Nam tu cum quaestor es factus, etiam qui te numquam uiderant, tamen illum honorem nomini mandabant tuo; aedilis es factus: Piso est a populo Romano

¹⁰² Cicero utilizes the stock themes of invective: antecedents, appearance, morals, personal habits and associates: Claassen (1992) 39.

¹⁰³ Forsythe (1990) 293. See also Broughton *MRR*. for the corresponding years. A survey by Hopkins (1983) 32-78 found that two thirds of consuls between 249 and 50 BC were themselves children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren of consuls.

¹⁰⁴ On the two branches of the Pisones: Syme (1960) 12-20.

*factus, non iste Piso; praetura item maioribus delata est tuis; noti erant illi mortui: te uiuum nondum nouerat quisquam.*¹⁰⁵

"But when you were made quaestor, even men who had never seen you conferred that honour upon - your name. You were made aedile; it was a Piso - not you who bear that name - who was elected by the Roman people. So it was upon your ancestors that the praetorship was bestowed. They were dead, but all men knew of them; you were alive, but as yet not a single man knew of you."

The value of the name 'Piso' was apparent to Cicero, and would not have gone unnoticed by the Epicurean School, or Piso himself. It was apparently so venerable that its mere appearance on a list of electoral hopefuls would garner votes, while the candidate himself languished in obscurity, and Cicero asserts that Piso coasted on his heritage in this way from his earliest magistracy. This kind of familial fame would have had two consequences for an Epicurean politician. Firstly, it would have made his success so likely that he would not have to suffer the mental disturbance of agonizing over whether he would gain the office he sought, which was an important factor in the hedonic calculus.¹⁰⁶ Secondly, it would have enabled him to bypass some of the more arduous and even dangerous aspects of the popular side of electioneering, since his name would already have been made for him (a strategy discussed in full below). A legacy candidate such as Piso would have been identifiable by the *Kepos* as uniquely paced to traverse the *cursus honorum* with *ataraxía* intact, and to do so successfully.

It was not just his name that made Piso conspicuous early in his career. The second factor that made him such an appealing prospect was his eminently electable face, and in particular his eyebrows. This one of the most prominent themes in all of Cicero's invective towards Piso, and is

¹⁰⁵ Cic. *Pis.* 2. (tr. Watts).

¹⁰⁶ Thus they could avoid becoming the frustrated politician in Lucretius' portrait, whose currying of favour has become a literally Sisyphean task: *DRN.* 3.978.

certainly the most puzzling to a modern reader. In his account of the earliest meeting between Piso and Philodemus, Cicero says:

*Est quidam Graecus, qui cum isto vivit, homo, vere ut dicam—sic enim cognovi—humanus, sed tam diu, quam diu aut cum aliis est aut ipse secum: is cum istum adolescentem iam tum hac dis irata fronte vidisset, non fastidivit eius amicitiam, cum esset praesertim appetitus: dedit se in consuetudinem, sic ut prorsus una viveret, nec fere umquam ab eo discederet.*¹⁰⁷

"There is a certain Greek who lives with him, a man whom, to tell the truth, I have found to be a very gentlemanly fellow, at any rate as long as he is in company other than Piso's, or is by himself. This man met our young friend Piso who even then wore a scowl as if he resented the existence of the gods, and was not averse to his friendship, especially as the other eagerly sought it; he so far gave himself up to his company that he absolutely lived with him and scarcely ever left his side."

Piso's angry visage may seem like a superfluous detail here, secondary to his enthusiasm for Philodemus' friendship.¹⁰⁸ Yet it is positioned as the primary reason for the philosopher's interest in him, and its importance is reinforced by repeated mentions throughout Cicero's invective triptych. "Your eyes, your brows, your forehead: it was your whole expression, which is a silent interpretation of the mind, which drew men into your deception," he asserts earlier in *In Pisonem*.¹⁰⁹ In his speech of the previous year, he asks: "with that eye (I won't say mind), that brow, but not character, and such superiority (which one cannot say is merited by your deeds), did you not get together with Aulus Gabinius to make plans to bring me harm?"¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Cic. *Pis.* 68.

¹⁰⁸ Piso's youth is an exaggeration: to meet the minimum age limitation for a consulship in 58, he would have been at least thirty when Philodemus arrived in Rome circa 71. 196 (1969) 11.

¹⁰⁹ Cic. *Pis.* 1. The conflation of physiognomy and character is more typically Stoic: Inwood (1997) 60.

¹¹⁰ Cic. *Red. Sen.* 16.

The brow here is explicitly delineated from character, implying that without Cicero's commentary there might be some conflation of the two by the audience. While the connection between the eyes and the mind might be more intuitive to us, it seems that a similar association existed for Romans between the eyebrows and forehead and a man's *gravitas*.¹¹¹ Cicero's suggestion that the countenance is the (implied) dumb interpreter of the mind goes some way towards explaining this: he is telling us that the arrangements of a candidate's facial features was an important factor in their reception by the senate and the voting public, a serious expression implying a thoughtful and dignified mind.¹¹² If Piso had cultivated this customary expression as a young man, Philodemus may have been capable of identifying it as a potential boon in the political arena, thus increasing Piso's appeal to him.¹¹³

It does seem that Piso used his face, deliberately or not (Cicero, of course, leans towards the former interpretation) to add *gravitas* to his words in the senate, including those which Cicero himself was harmed by. When called to a public meeting on Cicero's consulship by Clodius and Gabinius, he apparently refrained from hyperbolic or even specific statements about Cicero's misdeeds, but reinforced a deceptively mild-sounding verdict with an exaggeratedly serious expression:

*Idem illo fere biduo productus in contionem ab eo, cui sic aequatum praebebas consulatum tuum, cum esses interrogatus quid sentiret de consulatu meo, gravis auctor, Calatinus credo aliquis aut Africanus aut maximus et non Caesoninus Semiplacentinus Calventius, respondes, altero ad frontem sublato, altero ad mentum depresso, supercilio, crudelitatem tibi non placere.*¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ The eyes, of course, are windows to the soul in modern cliché. I am yet to see any reference to a woman's brow in this vein.

¹¹² Zanker (1995) identifies a tradition on statuary, beginning in the Hellenistic period, of depicting Stoic sages, especially Zeno, with a scowl of concentration (p. 92-97). This suggests that the supposed link between a contorted face and a hard working mind was nothing new in Cicero's day.

¹¹³ Hughes (1992) 235 suggests that Philodemus was himself taken in by Piso's customary expression, and became his tutor under the mistaken impression that he was imbued with precocious *severitas*.

¹¹⁴ Cic. *Pis.* 14.

"About two days after this you were introduced to a public meeting by the man at whose disposal you were placing a consulship so fairly divided; and when asked for your views as to my consulship you, with a sage sententious air - another Calatinus, one would have thought, an Africanus or a Maximus, instead of a Caesoninis Semiplacentinus Calventius - you made answer, with one eyebrow soaring to your forehead and the other tucked down to the level of your chin, to the effect that you "disapproved of cruelty."

It was not, then, the words spoken by Piso that allowed him to condemn Cicero so forcefully, but the arrangement of his face.¹¹⁵ Adding insult to injury was the fact that the skill of pulling appropriate expressions to bolster one's speech would have been far easier to master than the oratory itself, especially if, as in this case, it was innate. Cicero would have found this advantage of Piso's particularly galling, as he had struggled once to prevent his exemplary powers of public speaking from being diminished by his own reedy and feeble countenance.¹¹⁶

The third factor that would have identified Piso as an asset to the Epicurean school was his wealth. Even apart from his ability as a successful politician to reap financial rewards from his provinces (something Cicero characterizes as sheer rapacity), Piso seems to have been an individual of some considerable means, which is hardly a surprise considering his lineage.¹¹⁷ One of his greatest assets must have been the grand Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum, which served not only as an impressive and comfortable residence in a popular resort town, but as a repository for the family's art collection, at a safe remove from any potential turmoil in Rome. More significantly for Philodemus, it boasted two dedicated libraries, Latin and Greek, in which he was given space and

¹¹⁵ As Van der Blom (2013) 303-4 points out, there is reason to believe that Cicero is not recording Piso's words verbatim, since he reports a different, even milder, formulation of Piso expressing the same sentiment at *Red. Sen.* 17. (*dicere te semper misericordem fuisse.*)

¹¹⁶ *Cic. Brut.* 316.

¹¹⁷ *Cicero Prov. Cos.* 5. It is alleged that Piso has extracted taxes from Achaia (Greece, then probably part of the province of Macedonia (Gardner (1958) 544)) and the free city of Dyrrhachium straight into his own coffers.

permission to preserve all of his writings, alongside works of Epicurus, *the Men*, and perhaps even Lucretius.¹¹⁸

This cache of literary resources, and the protection afforded by its affluent owner, would have been of great value to the Epicurean School, whose location in (relatively) recently sacked Athens was even more precarious than that of those whose wealth was in Rome. While the *Kepon* had not suffered to the same extent as the Lyceum or the Academy, it could not be assured that this would be the case in another conflict, and perhaps the very fact that the School had emerged unscathed had caused some enmity in Athens (see below Ch. 1.iv).¹¹⁹ Here was a service that only a rich and well-connected non-Greek could provide: the preservation of the Epicurean school through the dispersal of its members and goods through the more stable regions of the ever more dominant Roman Empire. Sedley, in a paper of 2003, labeled this strategy 'the decentralization of philosophy,' and named Philodemus as one of its key architects.

Although the emphasis on frugality in depictions of Epicurean life seems to make the school an unlikely candidate for soliciting monetary donations, the fact remains that a school based around a sage committed to a life of studious contemplation and freedom from the travails of society must be supported by some form of patronage.¹²⁰ Philodemus, in his text *On Property Management*, written for a philosophically-inclined lay audience, seems to allude to some sort of financial contribution to be made to the school by wealthy followers.¹²¹ In column 15, after advising that the successful property manager share his wealth of his own initiative, he writes that: "In truth, that the wise man administers these goods in such a

¹¹⁸ Obbink (2007) 33-40; Sider (2010) 126.

¹¹⁹ Sulla's sack of Athens in 86 BC included attacks on the Academy and the Lyceum: Plut. *Sull.* 12.3; Habicht (1997) 338.

¹²⁰ Epicurus subsisted on bread and water and considered cheese a luxury: Diog. Laert. 10.19. Lucretius on the simplicity of the good life: *DRN* 2.23-36.

¹²¹ The text is fragmentary and, according to its translator, Tsouna (2012) xxvii "may or may not contain references to donations that the philosophical property manager makes to the Epicurean school, to communal administration or to both."

manner is a consequence of the fact that he has acquired and continues to acquire friends."¹²²

Piso, as Philodemus' patron at the time of composition, would have been subject to the message that the friendship offered by the Epicurean school, and particularly his house philosopher, should prompt generosity on his part. Certainly, supporting Philodemus would have been an apt manifestation of this, as would the creation of a space for his writings. Piso also seems to have fed an entertained numerous other members of the school; Cicero makes repeated mentions of his Greek friends in the plural, while Catullus complains that although there is dining and entertainment on offer for the Epicurean sounding Porci and Socraton in Piso's province, his own friends Veranius and Fabulus are excluded.¹²³ Not that these gatherings were particularly luxurious; Cicero alleges that the Greeks were forced to sit *quini in lectis, saepe plures* (five to a couch, often more!) while Piso reclined alone.¹²⁴ Yet undoubtedly Piso hosted and catered to numerous philosophical friends.

If the identification and solicitation of powerful allies seems rather cynical an approach for the notoriously high-minded Epicureans, it does have some precedent even from the earliest days of the school, particularly the period on Lampsacus. This second iteration of the school followed a rather inauspicious start: Epicurus had initially gathered his followers in Mytilene on Lesbos, but the group was compelled into an abrupt exodus by means of a treacherous winter sea journey. A poorly-preserved biographical papyrus hints at a reason for this, suggesting that Epicurus' flight was the result of invoking the displeasure of "mobs or of a monarch

¹²² Phldm. *Oec.* 15.3 (tr. Tsouna)

¹²³ Cat. *Carm.* 47. On Piso's Greek retinue: Cic. *Prov. Cos.* 14.8; *Red. Sen.* 14.8; *Pis.* 67. Socraton "little Socrates" is sometimes identified as Philodemus himself: Broège (1969) 73. For a skeptical approach to this identification, see Shapiro (2014) 385ff.

¹²⁴ Cic. *Pis.* 67.14. While something of a philhellenist in his intellectual life, Cicero was generally disdainful of Greeks themselves, and often used the perjorative *Graeculus*, which he may even have originated: Trouard (1942) 62; Petrochilos (1974) 48ff. See also: *ad. Q. frat.* 1.2.4 (SB 2); *Flac.* 57; *Tusc.* 1.86; *Fam.* 7.18.1 (37). The sketch of Piso's house offered here portrays it as deeply unwholesome.

or a gymnasiarch."¹²⁵ Whatever the motivation for the move, Epicurus set about cultivating relationships with powerful individuals in the school's new location.

One of these, Idomeneus, a prominent citizen of Lampsacus, used his wealth to help disseminate the teachings of Epicurus, and was entrusted upon the founder's death with safeguarding the next generation of the school: Epicurus implored him in a letter from his deathbed to "watch over the children of Metrodorus."¹²⁶ It was another individual, however, whose solicitation by Epicurus drew the notice and disapproval of others. Mithres, a magistrate, was pursued with such vigour that Epicurus was accused by his detractors of obsequiousness, as preserved in Diogenes Laertius: "They allege... that he basely flattered Mithres, the minister of Lysimachus, bestowing upon him in his letters Apollo's titles of Healer and Lord."¹²⁷ These new recruits provided vital security for the school, and the effects of this on the burgeoning community at such an early stage in its development may well have had something to do with the importance imbued on both friendship and physical security in Epicurean doctrine, and Epicurus' pragmatic approach to the achievement and maintenance of *ataraxia*. His preserved writings are characterized by a strong theme of using personal relationships to form a secure position in relationship to society, and of this being a prerequisite for mental harmony.

¹²⁵ Vogliano fr. 6. De Witt (1936) 55 interprets this as the "forced migration of the young sect to Lampsacus, presumably under pressure exerted by the Greek *ensor morum*, the Gymnasiarch." Diogenes of Oinoanda *New Fragment 7* refers to Epicurus surviving a shipwreck, possibly related to this journey.

¹²⁶ Diog. Laert. 10.22-25. Metrodorus was one of Epicurus' original followers, and would have succeeded him as Scholarch had he not predeceased him by seven years: Dorandi (1999) 43.

¹²⁷ Diog. Laert. 10.4.

1.ii. The Solicitation of Piso

We can, now, start to reconstruct a narrative of how Philodemus went about drawing Piso into the school once he had identified him as a suitable candidate for recruitment.¹²⁸ If we return to *In Pisonem* 68, it is clear that the initial relationship between the Roman and the Greek was one of companionship: Cicero tells us that Philodemus "did not shy away from his [Piso's] friendship."¹²⁹ That Philodemus first formed a bond of *amicitia* before attempting to impart any philosophy is a significant assertion, and one backed up by a far more reliable source: Philodemus himself, albeit through a surprising medium.

While we are now fortunate to have a large collection of fragments of Philodemus' philosophical works, from which we can, and shall, extrapolate some of the details of his relationship with his patron and sometimes dedicatee, better preserved, and in fact far more famous, are his poems, twenty-eight of which are preserved in the Greek Anthology.¹³⁰ The twenty-seventh of these is explicitly dedicated to Piso, and illustrates both an advance of friendship by the Epicurean school, and one of their cult celebrations:

αὔριον εἰς λιτὴν σε καλιάδα, φίλτατε Πείσων,
ἐξ ἐνάτης ἔλκει μουσοφιλῆς ἕταρος
εἰκάδα δειπνίζων ἐνιαύσιον. εἰ δ' ἀπολείψεις
οὔθατα καὶ Βρομίου Χιογενῆ πρόποσιν,
ἀλλ' ἐτάρους ὄψει παναληθέας, ἀλλ' ἐπακούση
Φαιήκων γαίης πουλὸν μελιχρότερα.
ἦν δέ ποτε στρέψης καὶ ἐς ἡμέας ὄμματα, Πείσων

¹²⁸ Frischer (1982) makes a strong argument for the existence of (or at least the need for) an Epicurean recruitment strategy, although he goes on to posit a highly implausible method of passive recruitment through statues of the school's great men.

¹²⁹ Cic. *Pis.* 68: *non fastidivit eius amicitiam.*

¹³⁰ A combination of the Palatine (*AP*) and Planudean (*API*) Anthologies, both of which have a far more robust manuscript tradition than the philosophical works. See Sider (1997) 46. Even Cicero openly admits an admiration for Philodemus' poetry, saying that it is *ita festivum, ita concinnum, ita elegans, nihil ut fieri possit argutius: Pis.* 70.

ἄξιον ἐκ λιτῆς εἰκάδα πιότερην.¹³¹

"Tomorrow, friend Piso, your musical comrade drags you to his modest digs at three in the afternoon,
Feeding you at your annual visit to the Twentieth. If you will miss udders and Bromian wine *mis en bouteilles* in Chios,
Yet you will see faithful comrades, yet you will hear things sweeter than the land of the Phaeacians.
And if you ever turn an eye to us too, Piso, instead of a modest feast we shall lead to a richer one."

The regular feast on the *Ikades* of the Attic month of *Gamelion*, a lesser version of which was celebrated by schoolmembers on the twentieth of every month, is a perplexing school tradition that seems to contradict the imperative to "live unknown" in that it seems to encourage the cultivation of fame.¹³² Explicitly mandated by Epicurus on his deathbed, it commemorated both himself and his protégé Metrodorus, who died before he could succeed him as Scholarch, and as such was the central event in the school's social calendar.¹³³ At the time of composition, Piso already seems to be a regular; Philodemus' reference to "your annual visit" implies that he as already attended a least once, and his relationship with his Epicurean friend has already advanced to the point where the Greek is comfortable calling him φίλτατε Πείσων: my dear Piso. He also seems to have been integrated into the school's social network; the other guests are already his "faithful comrades," and seeing them is one of the aspects of the banquet that Philodemus thinks will appeal to Piso and make up for the simple food on offer. Yet at this point, Piso is certainly not an Epicurean.

¹³¹ Phldm. *Ep.* 27 (tr. Sider).

¹³² Which may suggest that this maxim was not all that important. See Frischer (1982) 205-206; De Witt (1954) 51-52; Sider (1997) 156 and especially Clay (1998) 75-102. See also Plut. *Mor.* 14.1129.a (*Is "live unknown" a wise precept?*).

¹³³ Diog. Laert. 10.18. Epicurus requests that the executors of his will make continued provisions for the already customary celebrations as well as two other days honouring his brothers and Polyaeus.

The final line of the poem makes it clear that Piso is welcome at any time to pass beyond a merely social relationship with the school and join them, thus opening himself up to the transformative experience of realigning his worldview through study of the teachings of Epicurus.¹³⁴ He is, therefore, yet to take this major step, yet it is not a reason for the Epicureans to exclude him from their celebrations, and they already consider him their friend. Piso has probably been exposed to some philosophy; the "things sweeter than the land of the Phaeacians" are probably the more reassuring and therapeutic Epicurean maxims, hints at the peace and tranquility that will come with Epicurean enlightenment (we cannot, however, rule out the possibility that they are simply more poems from μουσοφιλής Philodemus).¹³⁵

That Piso was welcomed as a member and offered ties of friendship long before he was taught the rigours of Epicureanism or even expected to pay an interest in the philosophy is likely representative of the school's recruitment strategy as a whole. Indeed, the primacy of social networks in drawing in new members had been in effect since the days of Epicurus, whose earliest recruits came from his own family and who later, upon producing a convert, set about soliciting their friends and family as well.¹³⁶ We know that this strategy was a successful one, so it is no coincidence that it shares this feature with some of the more effective strategies defined by modern scholarship on cult conversion.¹³⁷ The most successful of these, as defined by having a long temporal duration of affiliation on the part of the converts, are those that have in common the early sequence of

¹³⁴ The process described by Lucr. *DRN.* 1.50.

¹³⁵ See Bailey (1926) 95-105 for the MS tradition of the *Kuriai Doxai*, as well as the above will, 151-155. In favourably comparing Epicurean philosophy with Phaeacian pleasures, Philodemus demonstrates that he does not accept the idea that the Phaeacians were themselves followers of Epicurus. See Gordon (1998) 190.

¹³⁶ Or perhaps "Subsequent converts also recruited within their own networks: for example, Epicurus' circle included not only his protégé Metrodorus of Lampsacus, but Metrodorus' brother Timocrates, his brother-in-law Idomeneus, and his Concubine Leontion." Eshleman (2008) 137.

¹³⁷ Used here: Lofland and Skonovd's model of Conversion Motifs (1981), critically reassessed in Snow and Phillips (1980) and Kox Meeus and Hart (1991).

participation followed by belief.¹³⁸ In particular the affective model, in which a recruit is drawn into the school with gentle social pressure and made to feel like a valued member of a social group before being convinced of the school's teaching, seems to echo the way in which Philodemus courted Piso.

The question now is how Philodemus went about introducing Piso to the actual philosophical content of Epicureanism. He would have faced two problems: for one, although Epicurean philosophy proclaimed itself to be sweetly therapeutic, it was in reality a highly technical doctrine featuring some stringent lifestyle prescriptions.¹³⁹ Secondly, if Piso were to fully take on board all of the teachings of the school, especially the maxim "live unknown" and the passage of *On Life* that says of the wise man "Nor will he take part in politics... nor make himself into a tyrant," he would have to divest himself of the very characteristics that made him such a desirable asset to the school.¹⁴⁰ He could not very well use his political promise to the advantage of the school if he were to retreat to the seclusion of the *Kepos*, nor could he feign ambition for that reason, for, as Epicurus tells us, "He who has once become wise never more assumes the opposite habit, even in semblance."¹⁴¹ Yet perhaps in the case of Piso and the other Roman Epicureans, this was never a possibility, for Epicurus went on: "However, not every bodily constitution nor every nationality would permit a man to become wise."

Epicurus taught that one's philosophical ability is dictated by *diathesis*- the physical atomic make-up of one's soul. There are degrees of aptitude and these are affected by both one's intellectual capability and tendency towards concern with appropriate or inappropriate activities.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Lofland and Skonovd (1981) 375, 379.

¹³⁹ For the therapeutic nature of Epicureanism: Usener Fr 221. "Vain is the message of a philosopher through which no man's disease is cured: for, just as no good results from a doctor's failure to eliminate bodily diseases, so, too, no good comes from philosophy if it does not expel the mind's diseases."

¹⁴⁰ Diog. Laert. 10.119.

¹⁴¹ Diog. Laert. 10.117.

¹⁴² See Erler (2011) 16. Diogenes of Oinoanda *fragment III*, 7-11 Smith (Usener 548) offers a definition of diathesis: It is not nature, which is

While only those with the right disposition could hope to attain the status of the sage, those found to be unsuitable were not neglected by the school or its teachings.¹⁴³ For those who could or would not relocate to his Athenian Garden, Epicurus developed a system of "distance learning," so that they might still benefit from and enjoy the philosophy. A preserved example of this is the *Letter to Herodotus*, in which the basics of the Epicurean physical system are explicated:

Τοῖς μὴ δυναμένοις, ὧς Ἡρόδοτε, ἕκαστα τῶν περὶ φύσεως ἀναγεγραμμένων ἡμῖν ἐξακριβοῦν μηδὲ τὰς μείζους τῶν συντεταγμένων βίβλους διαθρεῖν ἐπιτομὴν τῆς ὅλης πραγματείας εἰς τὸ κατασχεῖν τῶν ὀλοσχερωτάτων γε δοξῶν τὴν μνήμην ἱκανῶς αὐτὸς παρεσκεύασα, ἵνα παρ' ἐκάστου τῶν καιρῶν ἐν τοῖς κυριωτάτοις βοηθεῖν αὐτοῖς δύνωνται, καθ' ὅσον ἂν ἐφάπτονται τῆς περὶ φύσεως θεωρίας.¹⁴⁴

“For those who are unable to study carefully all my physical writings or to go into the longer treatises at all, I have myself prepared an epitome of the whole system, Herodotus, to preserve in the memory enough of the principal doctrines, to the end that on every occasion they might be able to aid themselves on the most important points, so far as they take up the study of physics.”

This letter, designed to be circulated among the school's less able and less committed enthusiasts for perusal in their leisure time, demonstrates that Piso would not necessarily be expected to dedicate his life to Epicureanism, even if he did decide to pursue philosophical study.¹⁴⁵ It also set a precedent that would allow Philodemus to modify his teachings to suit the ability of his pupil, to ensure that he got a grasp on the basics

common to everyone, that makes people noble or ignoble, but their actions and diathesis.”

¹⁴³ Seneca *Ep. Luc.* 52 sets out three categories of men who could aspire to becoming wise, ranging from the autodidact (Epicurus himself) to those such as Hermarchus who had to be steered with some force towards enlightenment. It follows that there are some who cannot hope to become a sage.

¹⁴⁴ Diog. Laert. 10.35 (tr. Hicks).

¹⁴⁵ On the Epicurean use of epitomes: De Witt (1954) 111-113.

without over-taxing him with technical doctrine. Cicero, whether he knew of the theory of *diathesis* or not, gleefully identifies Piso as a less than apt pupil and describes, in one of the most scathing passages of *In Pisonem*, how he only took on board Epicurus' assertion that pleasure is the highest good:

*itaque admissarius iste, simul atque audivit voluptatem a philosopho tanto opere laudari, nihil expiscatus est: sic suos sensus voluptarios omnis incitavit, sic ad illius hanc orationem adhinnivit, ut non magistrum virtutis, sed auctorem libidinis a se illum inventum arbitraretur. Graecus primo distinguere et dividere, illa quem ad modum dicerentur: iste claudus, quem ad modum aiunt, pilam retinere; quod acceperat, testificari, tabellas obsignare velle, Epicurum diserte dicere existimare.*¹⁴⁶

“And this virile specimen, as soon as he heard that pleasure was so lauded by the philosopher, enquired no further: he felt such voluptuary pleasure and greeted the pronouncement with such cries of delight that he must have thought that he'd found not a moral leader but a promoter of lust. At first the Greek began to go about distinguishing and separating the terms, but this cripple, as they say, clung on to what he could catch. He attested to what he'd grasped, he wanted to sign up, he declared that Epicurus was a clever man.”

Here Piso not only possesses the wrong constitution to aspire to sagacity: he is barely even human, rather a lustful barely-controllable stallion (*admissarius, adhinnivit*).¹⁴⁷ Like the proverbial cripple, he can only catch some of what is thrown his way, and that which he does manage to grasp, he is unable to use.¹⁴⁸ To begin with (*primo*) Philodemus is said to have attempted to maintain some philosophical rigour in the form of exact definitions of Epicurean terms, something absolutely vital for avoiding the

¹⁴⁶ Cic. *Pis.* 69. Translation mine.

¹⁴⁷ See Broège (1968) 18 for Cicero's use of animal imagery and stock invective generally as a "substitute for Cicero's lack of more specific grounds for censure of Piso" in *In Pisonem*.

¹⁴⁸ Nisbet (1961) 69 attempts to puzzle out the specifics of this oddly quoted proverb (we would expect *ut aiunt* or *quod aiunt* rather than *quem ad modum*), unique in the Ciceronian canon. However, the important sense is that of Piso's inherent ineptitude as a philosopher.

misconception that the hedonic calculus calls for a life of unbridled luxury and vice.¹⁴⁹ Yet Piso, unwilling to "fish out" any further details (*nihil expiscatus est*), thanks to his inappropriate obsession with the idea of *hedonē*, declares his allegiance without any true understanding, and Philodemus is presumably forced to give up on any pretence of delivering a comprehensive education.

Although, as with all of Cicero's testimony in this invective screed, we must be aware of the author's defamatory purpose, there is a possibility that he has some legitimate information of Piso's Epicurean schooling. Indeed, this section of the speech begins with the assertion that he knows the specifics of Piso's household through Philodemus, whom he is very careful not to tar with the same brush as his master, and whom he specifically asserts is *humanus*, as long as he is on his own or in the company of anyone other than Piso.¹⁵⁰ This suggests that Cicero has socialized with him apart from his patron, and even on a one-to-one basis, occasions on which they could very plausibly have discussed philosophy, and Philodemus' work as a house philosopher.¹⁵¹ Certainly, it seems that Cicero was at least familiar with Philodemus' literary output, and he suggests that this, too, was modified to suit the limitations of his pupil. Indeed, he seeks to lay all the blame for debauchery of the erotic epigrams at Piso's feet:

¹⁴⁹ The Epicurean definition of pleasure as simply the absence of pain is a tricky concept for Cicero too, who excoriates it in *Fin.* 2.3. Yet here he disparages Piso for apparently failing to take it on board.

¹⁵⁰ *Cic. Pis.* 68.

¹⁵¹ Cicero could be slightly exaggerating the connection, as he "prided himself with being friendly with the leading Greek philosophers." Allen and De Lacey (1939) 62. This paper also features the (not particularly convincing) argument that Piso was not the patron of Philodemus, but was only labeled as such by Cicero in an attempt to discredit him. Considering the care Cicero has taken to avoid a negative portrayal of Philodemus, it would have been far easier simply not to include him at all if his close relationship is indeed a fabrication.

*qui si fuisset in discipulo comparando meliore fortuna, fortasse austerior et gravior esse potuisset; sed eum casus in hanc consuetudinem scribendi induxit philosopho valde indignam*¹⁵²

“Had he been luckier in the sort of pupil he found, he might perhaps have turned out a steadier and more irreproachable character; but chance led him into a style of writing which was unworthy of a philosopher.”

The encounters with prostitutes and the adulterous affairs depicted in Philodemus' poetry are, according to Cicero, inspired by the daily goings-on in Piso's household.¹⁵³ What is more, he says, they are written at the request of his patron, who, despite Philodemus' best efforts, would rather read licentious tributes to his exploits than a full account of the good life, and thus pressures him to neglect the true task of a philosopher in order to pander to his tastes.¹⁵⁴ While it is unlikely that Philodemus composed in this genre solely for the sake of his patron's enjoyment (the elegance and proficiency of the finished product suggests a real passion for the form), it might be the case that he committed more time to his poetry than he otherwise would have, at the expense of his technical writing, in order to keep Piso's interest piqued.¹⁵⁵

It is probably also the case that some of Philodemus' philosophical output was tailored to his patron.¹⁵⁶ We have seen that his *On Household Management* describes the estate of a private individual connected with the school rather than an Epicurean retreat, and another of his treatises diverges even further from prescribing the ideal life of a fully-fledged

¹⁵² Cic. *Pis.* 71.

¹⁵³ *tamquam in speculo* - as if in a mirror. See Philodemus *Ep.* 22 for a depiction of prostitution, and *Ep.* 26 for adultery.

¹⁵⁴ Poetry was a particularly inappropriate endeavour for an Epicurean philosopher, for although Epicurus was not entirely opposed to the form, he mandated that "Only the wise man would be able to discourse rightly on music and poetry, but he would not actually compose poems." Diog. Laert. 10.120. See also De Witt (1954) 107.

¹⁵⁵ On the regard for Philodemus' poetry by his contemporaries: Armstrong (2004) 5.

¹⁵⁶ Most of the canon is dry in tone and irreproachable in its rigour. Cicero uses Philodemus' *On Piety* as the source of Epicurean theological doctrine in his *De Natura Deorum*. cf. Philippson (1939) 15-40.

Epicurean, instead catering explicitly to an individual in a position of power, that individual almost certainly being its dedicatee, Piso himself.¹⁵⁷ Even further than what we would expect from an Epicurean philosopher, in this text Philodemus makes his arguments not with recourse to the teachings of the master, but to the heroes of epic poetry.¹⁵⁸ *On The Good king According to Homer* is a singular work, urging a king-like figure, probably Piso as consul and proconsul, to exercise fairness and moderation, and not to stir up civil strife for the sake of profit.¹⁵⁹ Although the form is unique in Epicurean writings, the message of the importance of preserving peace and the positioning of the philosopher as adviser to the king follow the precedent set by the founder himself.

The texts and private tuition of Philodemus, along with dinner conversations with his retinue of Greek hangers-on, seem to constitute the entirety of Piso's philosophical education. There is no suggestion of his ever having gone to Athens for the purpose of studying directly under the Scholarchs, as even Cicero had, which likely accounts for the insult from which this chapter takes its title:¹⁶⁰

*Confer te nunc, Epicure noster, ex hara producte, non ex schola, confer, si audes, absentiam tuam cum mea.*¹⁶¹

"Compare yourself now, my worthy Epicurus, though product of the sty rather than the school - compare, if you dare, your absence with mine."

Piso, says Cicero, was no true Epicurean, having never experienced the lifestyle of the Garden or studied with the official continuators of the

¹⁵⁷ Gigante (tr. Obbink) (1995) 63-65 discusses the dedication, first noted in 1909 by Sudhaus, who translated it as "Therefore, O Piso, if I have treated some of the starting points, which one can take from for the correct reform of monarchies..." *PHerc. 1507* col. 743.

¹⁵⁸ See Murray (1965) 165-182.

¹⁵⁹ Philodemus *On The Good King according to Homer (P.Herc 1507)* Col 24.7.

¹⁶⁰ Cicero would surely not have failed to excoriate Piso for squandering time and state resources had he visited Athens for tuition during his proconsulship.

¹⁶¹ Cic. *Pis.* 37.

doctrine. He is a beastly mockery of a student, elsewhere an "Epicurus made of mud and clay," fabricated rather than schooled.¹⁶² Yet despite the deficiencies in his schooling, we do know that Piso, at least, considered himself an Epicurean, and attempted to apply the philosophy to both his personal and professional life.

¹⁶² *ex argilla et luto fictus Epicurus*: Cic. *Pis.* 59.

1.iii. Piso's Epicurean Lifestyle

We have already discussed Piso's propensity for stuffing his *triclinium* with Greeks at home and in his province, his attendance of the customary Epicurean days of remembrance, and his dedication of part of his Herculaneum villa to a library of philosophical works. Yet there were other ways in which he incorporated Epicurean lifestyle prescriptions into his day-to-day activities. The most obvious of these would have been his frugality. For such a wealthy individual, Piso failed to show off some of the obvious markers of economic success. Here Cicero mocks his domicile:

*nihil apud hunc lautum, nihil elegans, nihil exquisitum—laudabo inimicum—
quin ne magno opere quidem quicquam praeter libidines sumptuosum:
toreuma nullum; maximi calices, et ei, ne contemnere suos videatur,
Placentini; exstructa mensa non conchyliis aut piscibus, sed multa carne
subrancida; servi sordidati ministrant, non nulli etiam senes; idem coquus,
idem atriensis; pistor domi nullus, nulla cella; panis et vinum a propola atque
de cupa;*¹⁶³

"You will find in Piso no good taste, no refinement, no elegance; you will find in him - to give the devil his due - nothing exceptionally extravagant, save his licentiousness. Embossed ware - not a piece of it; enormous tankards - Placentine ones, too, that he might not be thought to despise his countrymen; the table piled not with shellfish or fish, but with huge joints of tainted meat, slatternly slaves do the waiting, some even old men; cook and hall-porter are one; neither breadmaker nor wine-cellar on the premises; the bread from a stall, the wine from a tavern."

Despite the context, it is possible to read this depiction of Piso's household in a positive light, at least in Epicurean terms. He shuns precisely the kind of expensive and frivolous interior decoration (in this case cornicing - *toreuma*) that is, as Lucretius tells Memmius, so easily outshone by nature, spending his money instead on huge pieces of

¹⁶³ Cic. *Pis.* 67.

earthenware to facilitate communal eating.¹⁶⁴ The food is simple, however probably not, as Cicero alleges, rancid, and the wine is picked up from a local merchant rather than produced within the household. These are sensible economies for an Epicurean; Philodemus extols the virtues of cheap wine over that made in Chios in his invitation to Piso, and Epicurus notoriously lived on bread and water.¹⁶⁵ He also saves money by limiting the number of slaves he keeps, and having them double up on their duties. Cicero is particularly incensed that some of these are old men (*senes*), but this could be interpreted as loyalty towards the members of his household on the part of Piso: rather than selling his slaves on as they age, he keeps them within the house.

Piso did spend money conspicuously on one thing: his exquisite and historically significant collection of statues, housed in the equally magnificent setting of his Herculaneum Villa.¹⁶⁶ Although Cicero claims that these were looted from Greece and Byzantium, Piso's positive portrayals by his subordinates suggests that they were probably procured legitimately.¹⁶⁷ The collection, now housed in the Museo Archaeologico di Napoli, follows a strong philosophical theme with a heavy Epicurean slant, and was likely arranged programmatically to complement the library.¹⁶⁸ It

¹⁶⁴ Lucr. *DRN.* 2.27-28: *nec domus argento fulget auroque renidet nec citharae reboant laqueata aurataque templa*, "The hall does not shine with silver, nor does it gleam with gold, nor does the cithara resonate from carved and gilded rafters."

¹⁶⁵ Philodemus *Ep.* 27; Diog. Laert. 10.11.

¹⁶⁶ A collection that does not, unfortunately, include a depiction of its owner, although the bust known as "pseudo-Seneca" was identified as such by Comparetti (1883) 15-20. This notion has been disputed since Mommsen (1880) 32-36 (confusingly, responding to an earlier, unpublished version of the theory). The bust is now thought to be a representation of a poet. See also Capasso (2010) 93-95.

¹⁶⁷ Cicero's allegations of plunder: *Prov. Cos.* 7; *Sest.* 94. Evidence of happy provincials: The Hermiasts of Delos dedicate their temple to Piso: Hatzfeld (1909) 525; Statue dedication in Samothrace: Bloch (1940) 488; (Destroyed) statue at Dyrrachium: *Cic. Pis.* 92-93; Cicero on the motivations of provincials for erecting statuary: *Att.* 5.21.7 (SB 114). See also Broège (1969) 13; 74; 77. The strongest evidence against the statues being looted, however, is the fact that material analysis suggests that the statues were locally produced: Mattusch (2005) 294.

¹⁶⁸ Pandermalis (1983) 19-50. It is worth noting that the collection may have been augmented after the death of Piso by his heirs, since it was not

features, alongside a bronze piglet identified by archaeologists as a symbol of Epicureanism, busts of philosophers from the great schools and historical figures mentioned in Philodemus' *On the Good King*.¹⁶⁹ Epicurean philosophers are overrepresented, and among the smaller bronze heads found scattered about the villa there are three duplicates of Epicurus and two of Hermarchus.¹⁷⁰ The procurement and arrangement of these artworks would have been a considered and intellectual pastime, quite appropriate for a patron of Epicureanism.¹⁷¹

That Piso's interest in the school was reflected in his household is supported by the fact that he passed on his chosen philosophy to at least one of his children. His daughter Calpurnia, the wife of Julius Caesar, was noted for her very Epicurean lack of womanly superstition, so her husband had no precedent for having to assuage her irrational fears when she approached him with her prophetic dream on the Ides of March.¹⁷² More conclusive is the funerary inscription of the child of one of her slaves, *CIL*. 6.14211:

*Calpurnia Anthis fecit
dextera fama mihi fuit et fortuna patrona
magnifici coniunx Caesaris illa dei
qua bene tutus eram caris nec vilis amicis
quis etiam mecum plurima cura fuit
Anthis causa meae vitae quae cara sepulchro
condidit ossa suo nominor Ikadium*

Calpurnia Anthis made this.

I was blessed in my fama, fortune and patroness

She was the wife of Caesar, the great divinity

submerged until some hundred years after his death. Cicero's comments suggest, however, that it was already of notable size and value in Piso's lifetime.

¹⁶⁹ Gigante (tr. Obbink) (1995) 10.

¹⁷⁰ Mattusch (2005) 294 attributes the duplication to the busts being acquired as gifts.

¹⁷¹ Frank (1928) 83 goes so far as to suggest that Philodemus advised Piso on the purchase of the statues when the two were in Macedonia.

¹⁷² Plut. *Caes.* 43; see also Armstrong (2004) 5.

And through her I was kept safe from cares
Nor was I of little value to my friends, who cared for me greatly
Anthis was the author of my life,
And laid my bones in her own dear tomb.
I am called Ikadion.

Inscribed after Caesar's deification in 42 BC, this monument was commissioned by a slave named Anthis, whose value to Calpurnia's household is demonstrated by the fact that she has been given her mistress's name. Her deceased son was evidently of value to Calpurnia too, and she has seen to it that his life was free from care, so that he could experience Epicurean tranquility.¹⁷³ His name, Ikadion, is of course a reference to the Birthday of Epicurus, the annual feast at which it was celebrated, and the day of school's monthly meeting.¹⁷⁴ As mistress of the household, Calpurnia likely had an influence on the choice of name. Even if she didn't name this child, though, she at the very least valued and protected Epicureans within her home, as did her father.

Her brother, the consul of 15 BC who is known as Piso the Pontifex to distinguish him from their father, may also have extended protection to Epicureans.¹⁷⁵ In Oinoanda in modern Turkey, which would in the second century AD become the home of the great Epicurean inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda, there is an intriguing and much older inscription lauding this younger Piso as "saviour and benefactor" of the Termessians (citizen body) of the town, and awarding him the city's highest honours, even though it lay outside of his then province.¹⁷⁶ Might there have been an Epicurean community there that predated Diogenes, and served as motivation for Piso Pontifex to go out of his way? We cannot be sure. But we do know that under the younger Piso's watch the Epicurean library and sculptures in the villa of the Papyri were kept safe, and handed on to yet another generation, who would likewise preserve them until the eruption of

¹⁷³ Ep. Sen. Vat. 81.

¹⁷⁴ Phldm. Ep. 27.

¹⁷⁵ RE. 99.

¹⁷⁶ YÇ 1009, dated to about 13-11 BC. See Milner and Eilers (2006) 65-66.

Vesuvius.¹⁷⁷ If Piso did not bring his children up as Epicureans, he certainly instilled enough respect for the philosophy in them that they preserved his legacy.

¹⁷⁷ On the continuing Epicurean character of the villa: Capasso (2010).

1. iv. Piso's Epicurean Career

Emphasis on Security

Piso's embrace of Epicureanism was not confined to his private life, compartmentalized and hidden from his political peers. Although Cicero alleges that he concealed his adopted philosophy early in his career, by the time he was serving as proconsul in Macedonia, he was apparently publicly demonstrating his adherence and openly consorting with his "greeklings."¹⁷⁸ His incorporation of philosophical doctrine into his political actions, however, predated his departure from Rome, especially his prioritization of peace and security. When Cicero faced exile for his role in the execution of the Catilinarian conspirators, Piso urged him to quietly submit to the will of Clodius rather than throw Rome into turmoil:

*In quo illi omnes quidem, sed Torquatus praeter ceteros furebat contumacia responsi tui, te non esse tam fortem, quam ipse Torquatus in consulatu fuisset, aut ego; nihil opus esse armis, nihil contentione; me posse rem publicam iterum servare, si cessissem; infinitam caedem fore, si restitisssem; deinde ad extremum, neque se neque generum neque conlegam suum tribuno plebis defuturum.*¹⁷⁹

"And have you any recollection, miserable man, of the answer you gave? - an answer the insolence of which roused all your appellants, but Torquatus above all, to fury. You said you could not rise to the courage which Torquatus or myself had in our consulships; that there was no need of arms nor a conflict; that it was in my power a second time to save the state by bowing to the storm; that my resistance would mean endless massacre; and finally you said that

¹⁷⁸ Cic. *Prov. Cos.* 14.8. *Itaque ille alter aut ipse est homo ductus et a suis Graecis subtilius eruditus, quibuscum iam in exoetra helluantur, antea post siparium solebat.* The metaphor is theatrical: Piso has previously hidden his learning behind a curtain, but now he flaunts it in the middle of the stage.

¹⁷⁹ Cic. *Pis.* 78.

neither you nor your son-in-law nor your colleague would desert the tribune of the people."¹⁸⁰

L. Manlius Torquatus, the Epicurean interlocutor of *de Finibus*, gained the title of *imperator* from his province, prosecuted Sulla, and played pivotal roles in the suppression of both Catiline conspiracies.¹⁸¹ Piso here seems to be comparing himself with this fellow professed political Epicurean, making the point that he is more committed to the school's goal of avoiding civil strife, even at the expense of being perceived as less *fortis* than Torquatus: less manly, less *Roman*.¹⁸² Through feigned self-deprecation, he highlights Torquatus' hypocrisy in asking a fellow Epicurean to defy a senatorial decision and stir up unrest among the populace, and suggests that Cicero put aside his pride and make the decision to go into voluntary exile for the sake of the public good. Of all present, Torquatus was apparently the most enraged by Piso's words (*praeter... furebat*), hardly surprising, given that his request was being denied on the grounds of his own proclaimed philosophy.¹⁸³

Piso as a rule obeyed the exhortation by his advisor to shun civil strife, even when his own son-in-law was the cause of it. When Caesar crossed the Rubicon, Piso did not risk his security by challenging him, but nor did he condone his actions, instead pointedly absenting himself from Rome.¹⁸⁴ He threatened to do the same again in the event of Antony oppressing the *res publica* after the assassination of Caesar, for which he

¹⁸⁰ There is a change from second to third person here that I have declined to translate in order to preserve continuity and clarity in this excerpt. The Tribune of the Plebs is, of course, Clodius.

¹⁸¹ Torquatus (the younger): *RE*. 80; Castner (1988) 40-42. He was an ardent Pompeian who died in 46 BC fighting for the faction, something Castner attributes to his Epicureanism, but suggests to me that he was not a serious adherent.

¹⁸² See Edwards (1993) 92-97 on accusations of *mollitia* (softness) leveled against Roman philhellenes.

¹⁸³ See also: Van Der Blom (2013) 306.

¹⁸⁴ Cic. *Att.* 7.13.1 (SB 136); *Fam.* 14.14.2 (SB 145). See also Philodemus *On the Good King*: *pHerc* 1507 col. 28.

gained the approbation of fellow Epicurean C. Vibius Pansa.¹⁸⁵ Just as drastically, he seems to have opted for a period of quietude in the years 54-50, which came to an end only when, probably under pressure from Caesar, he served as censor.¹⁸⁶ Likewise, he is unattested after 42 BC. However, whether this is because of his death or a retreat to something like the Epicurean Garden we cannot know.

Even the military aspects of Piso's career are characterized by an emphasis on security. One of Cicero's most specific (and, as Broège points out, most hypocritical) criticisms of Piso's proconsulship was his overreliance on his legates in military matters.¹⁸⁷ He apparently took great pains over choosing capable men, among them Q. Marcius Crispus, whom Cicero characterizes as an exceptionally brave man, skilled in the art of war, and a personal friend of his, and whom he alleges was responsible for any martial success.¹⁸⁸ He also took more troops than were usually allotted to Macedonia, which suggests a conservative approach, and a desire not to be personally exposed to combat.¹⁸⁹ His military actions in his province were limited to the suppression of banditry, and he went to great lengths to keep the army supplied when funds were tight, levying a ration on corn and cattle on the locals (even those outside his jurisdiction), thus demonstrating a focus on maintaining the peace.¹⁹⁰

Unusually for a Roman politician, Piso did not attempt to capitalize on his military actions by holding a triumph upon his return to Rome, and may have even defended this choice in Epicurean terms. On the subject of this subdued return from his province, Cicero says:

¹⁸⁵ Cic. *Phil.* 12.14. Griffin (2001) 90 points out that despite this vehement censuring of Antony, Piso was neither too proud nor too angry to later act as a peace envoy to him (Cic. *Fam.* 12.4.1, SB 363), and that Cicero specifically attributes this ability to remain calm to his Epicureanism (*Phil.* 8.28).

¹⁸⁶ Broège (1969) 112. Cass. Dio 40.63.2.

¹⁸⁷ Broège (1969) 74.

¹⁸⁸ Cic. *Pis.* 54. Also identified here is L. Valerius Flaccus, and C. Vergilius Balbus is named in *Prov. Cos.* 7.

¹⁸⁹ On the usual size of a provincial army see Cobban (1935) 179.

¹⁹⁰ Broège (1969) 66-69. Cicero on the *frumentum aestimatum* levied against the Byzantines: *Pis.* 86.

At audistis, patres conscripti, philosophi vocem: negavit se triumphi cupidum umquam fuisse. ¹⁹¹

“But listen, fathers and elect, a philosopher has spoken: he denies ever wanting a triumph.”

While Piso was hardly the first Macedonian governor to return in one piece without celebrating a triumph, a public celebration of one's victories abroad once safely back in Rome was simply *the done thing* if it was at all possible, and to actively reject the possibility would be to resist the *mos maiorum*, and to disappoint the populace.¹⁹² That he framed it in philosophical terms is made clear despite the sarcasm dripping from Cicero's *philosophi vocem*: these are the words of a self-proclaimed philosopher, as the senate have witnessed for themselves (*at audistis.*)¹⁹³ Piso has apparently made sarcastic comments about the triumph of a fellow philosophical Piso: M. Pupius Piso, consul of 61 BC, who triumphed in 69 after a Spanish campaign and once tutored Cicero in Peripatetic philosophy.¹⁹⁴ This was a bold stance to put forth publicly: As Cicero ripostes, the most powerful men of the day, including Pompey and Piso's own son-in-law Caesar, did not share his disdain for public celebrations of victory, and would certainly not be happy to hear their own triumphs characterized as vain, empty folly.¹⁹⁵

Yet Piso's attitude is entirely compatible with the teachings of Epicurus, who advocated that any actions attracting public attention be

¹⁹¹ Cic. *Pis.* 56.

¹⁹² Östberger (2003) 6-7 notes that the triumphator was not the sole focus of the celebration, but the primary figure in a "communal drama" consisting of the other participants in the procession as well as the spectators, all of whom would have derived enjoyment from their roles. See also Beard (2003) 28.

¹⁹³ "Cicero may have revised Piso's words to some extent, but his criticism of Piso would have had more force if he was indeed attacking Piso's actual public expressions": Van der Blom (2013) 306. Asc. *Con. Pis.* 1C points out that the speech of Piso to which Cicero is replying occurred only one month earlier. See also Griffin (2001) 91.

¹⁹⁴ Cic. *Pis.* 62. On M. Pupius Piso: *Att.* 1.14.6 (SB 14); *Fin.* 5. See also Nisbet (1961) 126.

¹⁹⁵ Cic. *Pis.* 58-59.

tempered by modesty.¹⁹⁶ He may also have been deterred from petitioning for a triumph by the cautionary tale of a Roman Epicurean of his father's generation: Titus Albucius, who was prosecuted and exiled for holding for himself a spurious triumph in Sardinia after his petition in Rome was denied.¹⁹⁷ Cicero even notes the connection between his actions and Piso's, claiming that Piso celebrated his dubious achievements in Macedonia so that his peers in Rome would be ignorant of his conduct abroad, knowing that:

*Albucius, cum in Sardinia triumphasset, Romae damnatus est*¹⁹⁸

"Albucius, after winning a triumph in Sardinia, was found guilty at Rome."

Between his philosophy's warnings against drawing undue notice, the example of Albucius and, likely, a measure of self-awareness about the lack of glory in his martial actions, Piso had good reason for not attempting to claim a triumph.

Avoidance of public speaking

Piso seems to have taken seriously Epicurus' warning that the wise man will not bring a suit to court; there is no evidence to suggest that he ever indulged in forensic oratory.¹⁹⁹ This exhortation would have been particularly applicable in late-Republican Rome, where bringing a prosecution was emerging as an effective tactic for a young man hoping to make a name for himself in politics: by targeting a prominent figure, one could access a public audience usually unavailable to those not holding office, and display daring and oratorical skill.²⁰⁰ If successful, a political

¹⁹⁶ Diog. Laert. 10.120. "He will found a school, but not in such a manner as to draw the crowd after him; and will give readings in public, but only by request." (tr. Rackham).

¹⁹⁷ Cic. *Caec.* 63; *Prov. Cos.* 15-16. See also Alexander (1990) 34.

¹⁹⁸ Cic. *Pis.* 92.

¹⁹⁹ Diog. Laert. 10.119.

²⁰⁰ Steel (2016) 211.

hopeful might, like Cicero, accrue enough fame to translate into a significant campaign advantage. On the other hand, though, if he failed he was likely to incur the enmity of a powerful individual, which Piso would have seen happen in the case of T. Albucius. Before he held the dubious Sardinian triumph for which he was prosecuted, Albucius had brought a case *de repetundis* against the governor of Asia, Q. Mucius Scaevola Augur, which proved to be groundless and was possibly motivated by Scaevola's mockery of his Epicureanism.²⁰¹ Consequently, when he committed an offence in his own province over a decade later, members of Scaevola's faction competed for the opportunity to prosecute him, in what turned out to be a very robust and successful suit.²⁰² This cautionary tale would likely have been enough to deter Piso from entering the courts, even had he needed to, and with his name he certainly did not.

Even accounting for his lack of engagement with forensic oratory, though, Piso's rhetorical record is sparse, especially for the years preceding his consulship.²⁰³ In fact, all of his attested speeches can be dated to between 58 and 43 BC, which suggests that he did not take advantage of his early offices to give impressive displays of public oratory in order to secure the next phase of his career, a notion supported by Cicero's insulting characterizations of Piso's oratorical abilities.²⁰⁴ In *post Reditum in Senatu* he claims that Piso has no *dicendi vis* - vigour of speech, and in the opening tirade of *In Pisonem* he refers to Piso's *stuporem debilitatemque linguae* - the stupor and lack of ability of his tongue.²⁰⁵ While Cicero's criticisms are almost certainly overblown, it may well have been the case that Piso's evasion of oratory in his early career made him conspicuously inexperienced and even timid, especially in comparison to Cicero himself.

²⁰¹ Lucil. 87-93 W; Cic. *Brut.* 102. See also Alexander (1990) 17; Gruen (1971) 115.

²⁰² Two Strabos compete for the role of prosecutor: Cic. *Caec.* 63, *Off.* 2.50. See also: Gruen (1964) 101-102, Bauman (1983) 333.

²⁰³ Malcovati (1976) 127 catalogues the fragments of Piso's oratory. However, she neglects several possibilities from *In Pisonem* (cf. Van der Blom (2013) 300f). Broège (1969) 19 raises the possibility that rather than being an inept orator, Piso was simply, like his tutor Philodemus, a proponent of the sparse, Attic style. See also Gaines (2001) 259-272.

²⁰⁴ Cic. *Pis.* 1.2.

²⁰⁵ Cic. *Red. Sen.* 13; *Pis.* 1. See also Van der Blom (2013) 302.

He seems to have actively avoided making speeches in the *contio*, the most ribald of public arenas (only one contional speech is attested, the one in which he weighs in on Cicero's consulship at the behest of Gabinius), and we have seen that he chose to respond to *In Pisonem* in pamphlet form, thus avoiding facing a potentially hostile crowd.²⁰⁶ Gabinius, by contrast, convened a *contio* in which to defend himself against Cicero's allegations.²⁰⁷ It seems that Piso only stood and declaimed publically when there was no other option.

Friendship

Indeed, Piso's career ascent is notable for its reliance on the "non-popular aspects of electioneering," and, in particular, the deft manipulation of bonds of *amicitia*.²⁰⁸ While his noble family and impressive bearing certainly allowed him to get a foothold on the *cursus honorum*, it was a pact of friendship, sealed by marriage, which facilitated his ascent to the consulship. Piso went from nonentity to forerunner in the elections for 58 by forming a familial bond with Julius Caesar through wedding him to his daughter Calpurnia.²⁰⁹ At the same time, Pompey married Caesar's daughter Julia, a set of negotiations that caused Cato to exclaim in horror that political primacy was now apparently gained through the arrangement of marriages.²¹⁰

We have already seen that friendship was imbued with great importance by Epicurus, and indeed he wrote that "of all the means which are procured by wisdom to ensure happiness throughout the whole of life, by far the most important is the acquisition of friends" and that "nothing

²⁰⁶ *Ad Q. Frat.* 3.I.ii. Cicero alleges that Piso was afraid of crowds: *Pis.* 65. Piso's reply is, unfortunately, almost certainly not preserved as Pseudo-Sallust's *In Ciceronem*, though this has been argued by Schwartz (1898) and Carcopino (1938). Mob violence was certainly a threat to politicians at this time: Cass. Dio. 38.6.1-3 cf. Millar (2002) 124.

²⁰⁷ Tan (2008) 183.

²⁰⁸ cf. Yakobson (2018) 17.

²⁰⁹ *Cic. Att.* 2.5.2 (SB 25) lists the candidates as Pompey, Crassus, Ser. Sulpicius and Gabinius in April 59 BC.

²¹⁰ *App. Bell. Civ.* 2.2.14; *Suet. Iul.* 21; *Plut. Caes.* 14.4.

enhances our security so much as friendship."²¹¹ So cultivating friendships for the sake of security and stress-free advancement would have been as acceptable a strategy as any for a political Epicurean. That is not to say, however, that there was no genuine feeling between Piso and Caesar. Broège postulates that they were brought together by a mutual interest in Gaul, the home of Piso's much-maligned (by Cicero) maternal ancestors and the location of Caesar's most ambitious campaign to date, while Nisbet suggests that the two grew close through their allegiance to the Marian faction (although he bases this argument on the tribal allegiances of the Pisones rather than any sentiment attributed specifically to Piso).²¹² Either way, the relationship was longstanding, and both the marriage and the allegiance survived a sustained series of actions on the part of Caesar that certainly would not have been welcomed by his quietistic father-in-law, ranging from the political: his incitement of civil war (on which more below), to the domestic: the humiliatingly public infidelities to which he subjected Calpurnia.²¹³ The two remained close allies until Caesar's death, as is evident from Piso's actions following the assassination.

For it was Piso who, despite the turmoil and confusion caused by the events of the Ides of March, and the fact that the assassins remained in Rome, insisted on the public burial of Caesar and the execution of his will.²¹⁴ In what seems like an incredibly un-Epicurean act, he defied a group of senators who insisted that the reading of the will, which made great bequests to the public, would only stir up civil turmoil, and according to Appian, made a dramatic speech in which he offered to lay down his life in service of his duty to Caesar:

²¹¹ Diog. Laert. 10.27.

²¹² Broège (1969) 32-33; Nisbet (1961) 5.

²¹³ See Valachova (2018) 150. The marriage, which conspicuously produced no issue, can not have been entirely pleasing to Caesar either, yet he remained married to Piso's daughter, despite never having any qualms about dissolving conjugal unions in the past. On his divorce from Pompeia: Cic. *Att.* 1.13 (SB 13); Plut. *Caes.* 9-10; Suet. *Iul.* 6.2. On his separation from Cossutia, to whom he may or may not have been married: Suet. *Iul.* 1

²¹⁴ App. *Bell. Civ.* 135.

ἐκβοήσας οὖν ὁ Πείσων ὅτι μέγιστον καὶ τοὺς ὑπάτους ἔτι παροῦσάν οἱ τὴν βουλὴν ἀξιώσας συναγαγεῖν, εἶπεν: ‘οἱ τύραννον λέγοντες ἓνα ἀνηρηκέναι τοσοῦδε ἡμῶν ἀνθ’ ἐνὸς ἤδη τυραννοῦσιν: οἱ θάπτειν με κωλύουσι τὸν ἀρχιερέα καὶ τὰς διαθήκας ἀπειλοῦσι προφέροντι καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν δημεύουσιν αὐθις ὡς τυράννου. καὶ τὰ μὲν ἐπὶ τούτοις αὐτῷ πεπραγμένα κεκύρωται: ἃ δὲ ἐφ’ ἑαυτῷ κατέλιπεν, ἀκυροῦσιν, οὐ Βροῦτος ἔτι οὐδὲ Κάσσιος, ἀλλ’ οἱ κάκείνους ἐς τόνδε τὸν ὄλεθρον ἐκριπίσαντες. τῆς μὲν οὖν ταφῆς ὑμεῖς ἐστε κύριοι, τῶν δὲ διαθηκῶν ἐγώ: καὶ οὔποτε ἃ ἐπιστεύθην προδώσω, πρὶν κάμε τις ἐπανελεῖ.’²¹⁵

Then Piso called out with a loud voice and demanded that the consuls should reconvene the senators, who were still present, which was done, and then he said: "These men who talk of having killed a tyrant are already so many tyrants over us in place of one. They forbid the burying of a Pontifex Maximus and they threaten me when I produce his will. Moreover, they intend to confiscate his property as that of a tyrant. They have ratified Cæsar's acts as regards themselves, but they annul those which relate to him. It is no longer Brutus or Cassius who do this, but those who instigated them to the murder. Of his burial you are the masters. Of his will I am, and never will I betray what has been entrusted to me unless somebody kills me also."

This brave gambit was successful, and Piso successfully carried out the burial and put Caesar posthumously back in public favour by honoring his bequests. But why did he take such a risk with both his own security and that of the populace? Apart from his love of his son-in-law and the weight imbued thereon by his chosen philosophy (Epicurus said that the wise man will, on occasion, die for a friend), Piso may have had another, specifically Epicurean reason.²¹⁶ Philodemus wrote in his *On The Good King According to Homer*, specifically tailored to his patron, that the just king will ensure the burial of the dead, and will, like Odysseus after his slaughter of the suitors, not allow desecration or mocking of fallen men, so Piso may have been acting on the advice of his philosophical advisor.²¹⁷ Wills in general were important to the Epicurean school, particularly as a

²¹⁵ App. *Bell. Civ.* 136 (tr. White).

²¹⁶ Diog. Laert. 10.132.

²¹⁷ Phldm. *Reg. (PHerc. 1507)* col. 13. See also Griffin (2001) 90.

means to securing a legacy; we have seen above that the founder used his own to ensure that he, his brothers, and his "great men" would be remembered and celebrated in perpetuity.²¹⁸ So Piso would have understood his son-in-law's desire to cement his legacy, and under this set of circumstances, his daring was not incompatible with Epicureanism as he understood it.

Legislation

The influence of the Epicurean School and its philosophy is discernable in the laws promulgated under Piso's consulship. While he was not the sole or even primary legislative force in 58 BC - that was Clodius as tribune of the plebs - Piso, along with Gabinius, did exert some influence over the passing of laws. The consuls created at least one eponymous piece of legislation: the *lex Gabinia Calpurnia de Deliiis*, and probably dictated the terms of another, the *lex Clodia de provinciis consularibus*, in return for their lack of resistance to Clodius' laws effecting the exile of Cicero and the appropriation of his Palatine home.²¹⁹ The first of these, intended to restore the wealth of the island of Delos after years of depredations by pirates, was of little consequence, though it did reflect Piso's characteristic philhellenism and concern for justice.²²⁰ The second, though, conferred apparently massive benefits on Piso and had significant ramifications for the province of Macedonia and the city of Athens.

As discussed above (Ch. 1.i), Cicero regarded the bill awarding Piso and Gabinius desirable consular provinces as a straightforward bribe

²¹⁸ Epicurus took great care to ensure that his will would be valid by appointing Athenian citizens to act as executors on behalf of his *metic* successors. See Leiwo and Remes (1999) 165. He may also have had his will placed in the Athenian state archive, the Metroon, see Clay (1982).

²¹⁹ The *lex Clodia de capite civis Romani*, which effectively condemned Cicero for his execution of the Catalinarian conspirators without trial, and the *lex Clodia de exilio Ciceronis*. Vell. 2.45.1; Cass. Dio 38.14.4. See also Dyck (2004) 365.

²²⁰ It was also likely influenced by Gabinius' desire to cement the island's loyalty to their liberator Pompey: Sanford (1939) 80.

for their complicity in his persecution.²²¹ He was particularly outraged that the law stipulated that Piso's governance of Macedonia would also give him command of Athens, hitherto a free state.²²² Cicero, of course, interpreted this as a mad grasp for power, but perhaps there was at least one group in the city that would have welcomed an extension of Roman influence, especially in the form of the benign and philosophical Piso. It is possible that the *Kepos*, due to the role of one of its members in Sulla's sack of 86 BC and the long reign of one of its most disagreeable Scholarchs, was at the time deeply unpopular with the Athenian institution, and in need of a foreign protector.²²³

Sulla's siege and subsequent partial destruction of the city was a direct consequence of Athens' alliance with Mithridates, a political manoeuvre effected by Aristion, the Tyrant of 88, identified by some sources as a renegade Epicurean.²²⁴ The people of Athens were harmed greatly as a result of this decision, and even though Aristion died after the storming of the city, the *Kepos* itself did not likewise suffer under Sulla.²²⁵ It is not named by Plutarch as one of the philosophical properties ransacked by the Roman troops during their advance into the city, and shortly after the sack and pardon the School became one of the main beneficiaries of the patronage of Titus Pomponius Atticus.²²⁶ It must have been galling for the rest of the populace to see the Epicureans relatively shielded from the consequences of the actions of one of their members. The Scholarch of the period, Zeno of Sidon, may not have done much to improve the School's standing: Cicero called him an *acriculus senex*.²²⁷ The *Kepos* may then

²²¹ Cic. *Pis.* 21, 57; *Sest.* 71; Plut. *Cic.* 30.1.

²²² Cic. *Pis.* 37. The province of Macedonia had been governed by a proconsul since 146 BC, but had never included Athens or Attica: Habicht (1997) 339.

²²³ Badian (1976) 513-514.

²²⁴ App. *Mith.* 28; Pos. fr. 253. Little is known about Aristion, partly because he is often conflated with Athenion, another Tyrant of the same era. The case for the two being separate individuals is argued conclusively by Bugh (1992) 111-112 cf. Santangelo (2007) 39.

²²⁵ Death of Aristion: App. *Mith.* 39.151; Plut. *Sull.* 14.11-12.

²²⁶ Plut. *Sull.* 12.3. On Atticus, see below Ch. 7.i.

²²⁷ Zeno presided over the *Kepos* until 75 BC: Clay (2007) 639, Dorandi (1999) 52. The level of hostility of Cicero's portrayal in *Tusc.* 3.38 is open

have welcomed further Roman influence, especially from one of their converts, and might even have petitioned Piso through Philodemus to assume control of the city, though this, of course, is speculation.

In Rome meanwhile, the laws passed under Piso had a theme of suppression of superstition. The Senate enacted a measure preventing the erection of altars to Isis and Serapis, in a move later hailed by Tertullian as a triumph of reason over false belief.²²⁸ More dramatically, Clodius abrogated the *leges Aelia et Fufia*, a set of laws which allowed for the closing of the *comitia* in response to unfavourable omens and on days classified by the priesthods as *nefas*.²²⁹ While Clodius was probably acting in the interests of Caesar, whose consular colleague Bibulus had invoked the law in an attempt to prevent his agrarian bill from passing a year earlier, it is Piso whom Cicero holds responsible.²³⁰ He portrays the modification of the laws as an attack on a fundamental apparatus of the Republic:

*Ergo his fundamentis positus consulatus tui, triduo post inspectante et tacente te a fatali portento prodigioque rei publicae lex Aelia et Fufia eversa est, propugnacula murique tranquillitatis atque otii,*²³¹

"On such a foundation was your consulship built; and three days later, while you looked on unprotesting, the law of Aelius and Fufius, that bulwark and rampart of security and repose, was overturned by that fatal portent and prodigy of our state."

to debate: Procopé (1998) 174 translates *acriculus* as the relatively anodyne 'sharp,' while Badian (1976) 514 chooses 'contentious,' and suggests that the Scholarch was at some point exiled for his role in the death of a Stoic, a proposal for which I have not found support in the ancient sources.

²²⁸ Tert. *ad Nat.* 1.10.14-18. This measure is, however, unlikely to have been initiated by Gabinius, as reported by Tertullian, as the cult leaders approached him early in his tenure in a bid for his support: Hayne (1992).

²²⁹ Although Cicero refers to these as a singular *Lex Aelia et Fufia*, they were in fact two distinct laws, see Astin (1964) 421.

²³⁰ Cic. *Red. Sen.* 5; *Pis.* 4.9. On Caesar's need for the bill, see below Ch. 4. Tatum (1990) 189 argues that Cicero is exaggerating when he states that the *leges* were repealed, and that they were only modified to prevent abuse. See also Sumner (1963) 339.

²³¹ Cic. *Pis.* 4.9.

Piso's crime here is not just lack of concern for the state, but impiety. He simultaneously allows Clodius to legislate against the acknowledgement of omens, and fails to recognize that Clodius himself is a portent of doom, ironically depriving the entire populace of a safeguard of the tranquility that Epicureans value so highly. In his speech *on the Consular Provinces*, Cicero exaggerates this aspect of lack of respect for omens yet further, claiming that Clodius had prevented anyone from ever acknowledging a portent.²³²

It would be fitting for a follower of the *Kepos* to care little for a law that allowed religion to dictate public policy. Epicurus denied that the gods had any interest in communicating with mortals, and Lucretius characterized perceived omens and the concept of the divine as a monster oppressing humanity.²³³ Piso is likely to have cared little about the potential undermining of the state cult, and seen the benefits of helping his son-in-law and keeping the *comitia* in action for as much of the year as possible. While this may seem to be a minor event in Piso's career, blown out of all proportion by Cicero, it marks the beginning of a theme in the reception of Epicurean politicians by ancient writers, that of impious ignorance.

²³² Cic. *Prov. Cos.* 46. Grillo (2015) 296 calls the accusation "rhetorical and absurd."

²³³ Lucr. *DRN.* 1.62: *Humana ante oculos foede cum vita iaceret | in terris oppressa gravi sub religione | quae caput a caeli regionibus ostendebat | horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans.*

1.v. A Model of Success

Piso's Epicurean political career, despite the criticism it earned him from Cicero, was characterized primarily by its success. He lived up to the potential of his great name by attaining the highest office available, and secured the continuation of that family legacy for his son, who would emulate his feat under Augustus. While this is particularly notable in a period marred by turmoil and conflict, so too is the mere fact of his survival. Even though Piso's partisan choices landed him a prominent enemy in the form of Cicero, his position was by then so secure that all that his attacker could truly hope to achieve was to associate his name with a whiff of scandal. And while Cicero did successfully ensure that Piso's legacy was tainted with imagery of bibulous belching and platters of rotten meat, he could not erase the other picture that has been preserved for eternity: that of the erudite and cultured patron of Philodemus, owner of a beautiful villa and collector of philosophical art. That Piso ensured the safety of his family's fortune and reputation through civil wars and proscriptions demonstrates that he made some very shrewd choices indeed.

One of these choices was to reject both of the obvious paths to electoral victory, military glory and forensic oratory, and to rely instead on his natural advantages. By not attempting to augment his family's legacy before running for election, Piso avoided the risk of tarnishing it should his efforts fail. At the same time, he evaded the physical and psychological risks of engaging in the most competitive arenas of Roman public life, the army and public speaking, which were truly not to be underestimated in the late Republic. Piso also did well to align himself with one of the most ambitious men of the period, and to recognise that in the coming conflicts there would be one clear winner. He was perceptive enough to see that an alliance with Caesar, who valued positive sentiment almost as much as practical help, would afford him the opportunity to be effectively neutral, and to focus on his physical security, without later repercussions. The services he did perform for his son-in-law during his lifetime, which mostly took the form of supporting Clodius' legislative efforts to support Caesar's ambitions, came at no risk to his life or health, and did not conflict

with his Epicurean beliefs. It is easy to imagine that Piso cared little about Caesar's use of the name of the Pisones to lend himself legitimacy, or his efforts to nullify the ability of the state cult to hinder his aims, and recognised that he had made a very good political deal. Others, too, would have noted the efficacy of his approach.

2. Flourishing under Caesar: C. Vibius Pansa Caetronianus

"Even a nonentity is a power when a consul at Rome."

- Ronald Syme on

Pansa²³⁴

The entry on Pansa, consul in 43 BC, in Castner's *Prosopography of Roman Epicureans* is a scant two paragraphs, compared to eight pages on Piso, and eight on Cassius, and this is characteristic of Pansa's treatment by historians both ancient and modern.²³⁵ He is barely attested by his contemporaries, and then only as a friend of Caesar, and it is likely because of this that by the time of Plutarch, if not earlier, he had been reduced to a bit player.²³⁶ Consequently, he is neglected in modern scholarship, even that pertaining specifically to Roman Epicureanism or to the year in which he held the consulship; he does not, for example, appear among Dettenhoffer's profiles of the major actors after the assassination of Caesar in her *Perdita Iuventus*.²³⁷ So it may seem that Pansa is a figure of little importance, whose impact on Roman and Epicurean history is commensurate with the brevity of his consulship, which was brought to an end by a fatal battle wound just four months into his term in office.²³⁸

Yet this cannot be the case. As one of only two consular Epicureans of the Republic, and a member of the very small group of followers of the *Kepon* whose adherence is attested beyond doubt, Pansa merits a close examination in any study of the school's presence in Rome. Nor should his

²³⁴ Syme (1939) 133.

²³⁵ Castner (1988) 80 classes Pansa among the *Epicurei certi* but offers no positive commentary on his adherence, only counters an argument of Fussl (1980) that he influenced Caesar's policies and dismisses as evidence Quintus Cicero's invective comments on the characters Pansa and Hirtus collectively.

²³⁶ Steel (2009) 120; Meulder (1995) 250.

²³⁷ Tatum (1994) 623 makes the case that he would have been an apt inclusion in Dettenhoffer (1992).

²³⁸ Both colleagues of 43 were killed in the same month. Muelder (1995) 248 calls Pansa "consul éphémère."

role in the last days of the Republic be so casually disregarded. Although the historiographical tradition has not been kind to Pansa, there is evidence that his contemporaries and close descendents regarded him as being far from a nobody. His sepulchral inscription in the *Forum Romanum* shows evidence of restoration and relocation after flooding or redevelopment, suggesting that it was viewed as an important cultural artefact, and his grand public funeral was conducted at the expense of the undertakers themselves as testament to his popularity.²³⁹ And as we shall see below, both Pansa's admirers and detractors regarded him as a desirable figure for cultivation as an ally. Even if this was only because of his proximity to Caesar, that is no reason to underestimate the importance of Pansa himself. To be a prominent Caesarian throughout the triumvirate, the Civil War, the dictatorship and the Ides is, in itself, a fascinating career path. To combine such an allegiance with an open and dedicated affiliation with Epicurean philosophy, and to do so with such success as to reach the highest rank of the Republic is an achievement matched only by Piso.

²³⁹ Sepulchral inscription: *CIL*. VI.37077. Gerding (2008) 151 says of the inscription that it was probably a monument not just of the man, but also of the lost Republic, with important symbolic connotations. On the waiving of the funeral expenses: Cic. *ad Brut.* 23.8; Val. Max. 5.2.10. See also Hope (2007) 3.9; Shackleton Bailey (2003) 477.

2.i. Pansa's Epicureanism

Pansa's affiliation with the *Kepos* is securely attested in two letters of Cicero to Trebatius Testa and C. Cassius Longinus, and the response of the latter.²⁴⁰ The first of these, dated February 53, gives us a strong *terminus ante quem* for his conversion to Epicureanism, which predated or at the very latest coincided with his election as quaestor around that year.²⁴¹ This is of great significance. Unlike Piso, who Cicero tells us concealed his affiliation until he had made significant progress along the *cursus honorum*, it appears that Pansa was overt in his adherence even before he had a foothold on the ascent to political supremacy.²⁴² In fact, he seems to have been keen to mention the philosophy, even to those hostile to it, needling Cicero with the suggestion that one of their young mutual friends has become a convert.²⁴³ Cicero wrote to Trebatius, the man in question:

*Mirabar quid esset, quod tu mihi litteras mittere intermisisses: indicavit mihi Pansa meus Epicureum te esse factum. O castra praeclara!*²⁴⁴

I was wondering why you had stopped sending me letters. Now my friend Pansa intimates to me that you have turned Epicurean. A remarkable camp yours must be!

The reason for Pansa's crowing is that Trebatius' conversion is a personal coup; the young man has come over not just to the philosophy but into his network of *amicitia* and influence, something that Cicero hopes is merely feigned for political expediency:

*Qua re si plane a nobis deficis, moleste fero, sin Pansae adsentari commodumst, ignosco.*²⁴⁵

²⁴⁰ Cic. *Fam.* 7.12 (SB 35); 15.17 (214); 15.19 (216) respectively.

²⁴¹ On the difficulty of dating Pansa's offices, see Sumner (1971) 256-7.

²⁴² Cic. *Prov. Cos.* 14.8. For comparison with Piso, see above Ch. 1.iv.

²⁴³ Gilbert (2015) 109 on Cicero's interpretation of Pansa's tone.

²⁴⁴ Cic. *Fam.* 7.12.1 (SB 35). Tr. Shackleton Bailey (adapted).

²⁴⁵ Cic. *Fam.* 7.12.2. (SB 35). Tr. Shackleton Bailey (adapted).

"Well, if you really are forsaking us, I'm put out. But if it is convenient to you to humour Pansa, you have my forgiveness."

The *castra praeclara*, as Cicero sarcastically designates them, are Caesar's camps in Gaul, where his retinue of young companions found themselves in a state of *contubernium*, a forced intimacy facilitated by constant proximity in shared tents.²⁴⁶ This was the perfect scenario in which to transmit a philosophical mode of thinking, especially one based so much on friendship and communal living as Epicureanism. While we have no testimony on Pansa's own conversion to the school, this is equally revelatory; we see him acting as a recruiter himself, and employing many of the same strategies as Philodemus in his cultivation of Piso. While the Greek sought to increase his intimacy with his intended student by moving in with him, Pansa took advantage of his already close proximity with Trebatius.²⁴⁷ Similarly, he used the affective model of recruitment to draw in his convert: friendship was his primary offer and demand, and, as Cicero noted, he would have been content with only lip service to philosophical content.²⁴⁸ It seems that Trebatius accepted the affective bond; by failing to send missives to Cicero and perhaps his other supporters in Rome, he demonstrated a transfer of his allegiance to Pansa and his friends in the camp.²⁴⁹

It was not only Trebatius who combined the adoption of Epicureanism with alliance with Pansa. In a series of letters of 45 (discussed at length in chapter 3.iv), Cicero rebukes Cassius for his conversion to the school. Although his speculation on how exactly this change of allegiance came about (his suggestion that Cassius was *delenitus illecebris voluptatis* - seduced by the charms of pleasure, is informed more

²⁴⁶ De Witt (1936) 60. Pansa's role in Caesar's retinue will be discussed more fully below.

²⁴⁷ Cic. *In Pis.* 68.

²⁴⁸ Lofland and Skonovd (1981); Eshelmann (2008) 137. See also Above Ch. 1.ii.

²⁴⁹ This was a lasting allegiance. In a letter of 48 Cicero lists Pansa and Trebatius together as Caesarians who might be useful in aiding his return to Rome: *Att.* 11.6 (SB 217).

by his own prejudice rather than any factual source), he is certain at least that Pansa had something to do with it, and thus he uses Pansa as a proxy in his correspondence for both Cassius' new philosophy and his political faction.²⁵⁰ In an attempt either to spur Cassius to action or to force him to explain his motivations, he suggests disingenuously that the success of Pansa's political actions is due to the fact that they are motivated by some Roman conception of the good distinct from that of Epicureanism.²⁵¹ Perhaps to his surprise, Cassius' response took the form of an impassioned defense of both Pansa and Epicureanism.

*Pansam nostrum secunda voluntate hominum paludatum ex urbe exisse cum ipsius causa gaudeo tum me hercule etiam omnium nostrorum ; 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 δι' αὐτὸ αἰρετὸν? esse ; ἡδονὴν 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 ἔστιν ἡδέως ἄνευ τοῦ καλῶς καὶ δικαίως ζῆν. itaque et Pansa, qui ἡδονὴν sequitur, virtutem retinet, et ii, qui a vobis φιλήδονοι vocantur, sunt φιλόκαλοι et φιλοδίκαιοι omnisque virtutes et colunt et retinent.*²⁵²

"I am glad that our friend Pansa left Rome in uniform amid general good will, both for his own sake and, let me add, for all our sakes. For I trust people will realize how intense and universal is hatred for cruelty and love for worth and clemency, and they will see how the prizes most sought and coveted by the wicked come to the good. It is hard to persuade men that Good is to be chosen *per se*; but that Pleasure and Peace of Mind are won by virtue, justice, and Good is both true and easily argued. Epicurus himself, from whom all those sorry interpreters of his terms, Catus, Amafinius, etc., derive, says: 'To live pleasurably is not possible without living rightly and justly.' Thus it is that Pansa, whose goal is Pleasure, retains Virtue; and those whom you and your

²⁵⁰ Cic. *Fam.* 15.16 (SB 215).

²⁵¹ Cic. *Fam.* 15.17.3. (SB 214). The text of this letter is reproduced and discussed more fully at Ch 2.iii, and treated again at 3.iv.

²⁵² Cic. *Fam.* 15.19.2 (SB 216)

friends call Pleasure-lovers are Good-lovers and Justice-lovers, practising and retaining all of the virtues."

Cassius' explicit identification of Epicureanism as the philosophy in question is not just a boon to modern scholars, but an overt declaration of his public commitment to the school. If Pansa's name is the byword, then, his association with the *Kepon* must be yet stronger. Cassius also denies any dissociation between Pansa's philosophy and his political actions, claiming that his expedition and career in general is motivated by both the good and justice each as a means to pleasure and a pleasure in itself. That Cassius so confidently states this about Pansa, whom he is clearly keen to maintain as an ally, suggests that Pansa himself discussed his political choices in these terms, and publicly presented himself as a political Epicurean. Cassius' reference thereafter to *ii, qui a vobis φιλήδονοι vocantur*, makes clear that he was not the only one to do so but, as the only person named here, he was foremost among them.

One of these Cicero-designated pleasure seekers was probably Piso, with whom Pansa associated even beyond their mutual status as close allies of Caesar. That they discussed philosophy is evidenced by the dedication of a book of one of Philodemus' treatises to Pansa, a move that surely would have demanded permission from the philosopher's patron.²⁵³ The two remained close throughout their careers, and we see Pansa during his consulship praising the political sentiments of Piso and facilitating his embassies between competing factions. We would likely see more evidence of the *amicitia* between the two in the writings of Cicero were it not for his enmity with Piso and his public commitment to speaking well of Pansa (his private sentiments may have been considerably less positive).²⁵⁴ Cicero did, however testify to the bond between Pansa and another Epicurean. To Atticus he wrote after the assassination of Caesar that *nil*

²⁵³ Philodemus *De Rhet.* See also Roskam (2007) 107.

²⁵⁴ A fragment of a letter of Cicero (Weyssenhoff 5.4) has him calling Pansa a *baro*, a stock insult often targeted at Epicureans. See Griffin (1989) 2n5. In a letter to Atticus of 44, Cicero despairs of Pansa as his future leader: *ad Kal. Ian. in Pansa spes? λῆρος πολὺς. in vino et in somno <animi> istorum. Att. 16.1 (SB 409).*

sine Pansa tuo volo: "I do not wish to do anything without your friend Pansa."²⁵⁵ In another letter he refers to on-going correspondence between Pansa and Atticus, which he is happy to facilitate since he has letters of his own to send along the same route.²⁵⁶

These epistolary references to Pansa's roles in the conversions of Trebatius and Cassius constitute the sum of the direct evidence for his association with Epicureanism. The style and strategies of his career, however, support the identification and moreover tally with what we learned from that of Piso.

²⁵⁵ Cic. *Att.* 16.9 (SB 419).

²⁵⁶ Cic. *Att.* 15.23 (SB 400).

2.ii. Career and Oratory

Unlike Piso, Pansa could not hope to coast through public elections on the reputation of his illustrious family.²⁵⁷ He was the son of a *proscriptus*, who only evaded the ban on the sons of the *proscripti* entering the *cursus honorum* through adoption into the Vibii, an undistinguished plebian *gens* whose most illustrious member to date had been the moneyer of 90 BC.²⁵⁸ Also unlike Piso, his appearance and bearing were not so noteworthy or enviable that anyone has recorded them for posterity, and therefore they were probably no boon in the political arena (although a letter from Quintus Cicero to Tiro accusing him and his colleague Hirtius of effeminacy can be dismissed as stock invective).²⁵⁹ We do know, however, that, like Piso, he converted to Epicureanism as a young man, and conducted his political career in a manner befitting an adherent, as far as he was able.²⁶⁰

Despite being a *novus homo*, whom one would expect to want to make a name for himself, Pansa avoided public speaking to such an extent that he and his colleague Hirtius had to be tutored in oratory as consuls elect, and Cicero, as their instructor, mockingly called them *grandis*

²⁵⁷ There is some debate as to whether Pansa can be classed as a *novus homo*, confused further by the vagueness of the term and its paucity in contemporary sources excluding Cicero: see Vanderbroeck (1986) 239ff. He was called by Syme variously a "Caesarian new man" (1939) 578, and a senatorial: 89. For even though he was of a tenuously senatorial family, this was elevated by his ascent to the praetorship. See Gruen (1971) 185. Crawford (1974) 602 argues that the absence of moneyers from the epigraphic *lex repetundarum*, the *lex Latina Tabulae Bantinae* and Cic. *Cluent.* 148 proves that the office did not confer senatorial status on its holder.

²⁵⁸ There is some confusion over Pansa's parentage, thanks to his *agnomen* Caetronianus and the fact that Dio 45.17.1, our source on the proscription, does not tell us which of the two fathers was killed. The fact that he served as tribune of the plebs in 51 (*MRR.* 2.241), before Caesar lifted the ban on the sons of the *proscripti* (*Vell. Pat.* 2.28; *Plut. Sull.* 31), rules out the Pansa as the deceased father, and to posit another Vibius Pansa (cf. Hinard (1999)) is a rather inelegant solution. I agree with Ryan (1996) 187 that the proscribed father must have been Caetronianus. See also Sumner (1971) 255.

²⁵⁹ Cic. *Fam.* 16.27.1 (SB 352). See Castner (1989) 80.

²⁶⁰ Confirmation of Pansa's Epicureanism as early as February of 53 BC: Cic. *Fam.* 7.12 (SB 35)

praetextatos in reference to the elementary material covered.²⁶¹ He avoided the path, popular among young men keen to make a name for themselves, of acting as an advocate or, more daringly, bringing a prosecution.²⁶² In 46 BC Pansa's public speaking was still so poor that Cicero sarcastically showered him with praise for a petition on behalf of defeated Pompeian Quintus Ligarius that was so inept that it only served to outline the irrefutability of the case against him:

*idque C. Pansa, praestanti vir ingenio, fretus fortasse familiaritate ea, quae est ei tecum, ausus est confiteri.*²⁶³

"...and that Gaius Pansa, a man of great ability, perhaps made bold by his intimacy with you, has dared to admit [this charge]."

The fact that Pansa is said to have boldly admitted the charges has led many scholars to suppose that he spoke on behalf of the prosecution, but Cicero's deeply ironic *fortasse*... exposes his speech as a "grievous blunder" of a defence.²⁶⁴ That he dared to publically air such a poor forensic effort was, as Cicero suggests, likely a consequence of the fact that his mentor Caesar was presiding over the court as sole judge, one of his

²⁶¹ Suet. *Rhet.* 1. The *toga praetexta* was worn not only by magistrates but also by schoolboys. The mockery inherent in this description renders unlikely the suggestion of Clarke (1996) 21 that Cicero and the consuls elect were merely practising together. Cicero uses the expression of a boy in *Verr.* 2.3.159. Several remarks of Cicero (*Att.* 14.20.4 (SB 374); *Fam.* 7.33 (SB 192), 9.6 (181), 16.18 (219) suggest that Hirtius was more competent than his colleague. See also Valachova (2018).

²⁶² Van der Blom (2010) 176 cf. *Cic. Brut.* 3.12.

²⁶³ *Cic. Lig.* 1. Watts (1931) 458: "Pansa's "courage" is dwelt on in irony." Cicero is perhaps annoyed that the inexperienced Pansa has contradicted his intended defence before he has even had a chance to deliver it. As it was, he triumphed despite the odds stacked against him and Ligarius received a pardon: *Plut. Cic.* 39.

²⁶⁴ On the scholarly debate over whether Pansa represented the prosecution or defense: McDermott (1970) 323f. On Cicero's generation of an ironic tone through the use of *fortasse* and alliteration, and the phrasing "grievous blunder": Gotoff (1993) 108. See also Montague (1992) 561 on Cicero's "unwarranted" focus on Pansa.

new dictatorial prerogatives.²⁶⁵ Was this an attempt on Caesar's part to nudge Pansa into gaining some low-stakes oratorical experience? This case would certainly have had far less scope for impinging upon Pansa's tranquillity than would many other outlets for public speech, particularly the *contio*.²⁶⁶

Perhaps in recognition of the fact that this failing would diminish Pansa's ability to aid the Epicurean school through implementation of his consular powers, Philodemus joined the effort to improve his oratorical ability.²⁶⁷ The fourth book of his *On Rhetoric*, in which the focus shifts to practical instruction, is dedicated to Pansa, which suggests at least tacit approval of his rise through the ranks on the part of Piso.²⁶⁸ The combined efforts of Caesar, Cicero and Philodemus seem to have borne some fruit: by March of 43, one year after the fateful Ides, Pansa's forceful public objections forestalled Cicero's efforts to grant extraordinary powers to Cassius in the east to deal with Dolabella, a move that would have caused further turmoil in an already precariously-unbalanced situation.²⁶⁹ Malcovati has seven fragments of Pansa's speeches, which reveal him to be an eventually competent, although never prolific, orator.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁵ Craig (1984) 194.

²⁶⁶ Morstein-Marx (2004) 165; Pina Polo (1996).

²⁶⁷ See above Ch. 1. i and iv.

²⁶⁸ Dorandi (1996) 41-42 made the identification of Pansa as dedicatee of *De Rhet.* (*PHerc.* 1007 col. XLIIa 4ff). For more on the shift to practical material in this book: Chandler (2006) 183f.

²⁶⁹ Cic. *Fam.* 12.7 (SB 367). Cicero says that he gave his own speech in favour of Cassius *tanto clamore consensuque populi ut nihil umquam simile viderim*, yet it was Pansa who prevailed.

²⁷⁰ Malcovati (1976) 160.

2.iii. Military Activity

Also like Piso, Pansa seems to have conducted an understated military career, possibly as means to preserving his personal security. Although he was frequently on campaign with Caesar in Gaul, his personal exploits were never so noteworthy as to be chronicled in the commentaries, even those continued by his close friend and eventual colleague Hirtius.²⁷¹ Despite the fact that he governed Bithynia and Pontus, and later Cisalpine Gaul, there is no record as to whether he was as over-reliant on his legates as Piso, or indeed Cicero, or if he took a more active command. He is unattested in the Civil War between Caesar and Pompey, and indeed may have even refrained from fighting, for a letter of Cicero in 46 BC (mentioned above Ch. 2.i) portrays a foray from Rome by Pansa as something both noteworthy and praiseworthy:

*Pansa noster paludatus a. d. iiii K. Ian. profectus est, ut quivis intellegere posset, id quod tu nuper dubitare coepisti, τὸ καλὸν δι' αὐτὸ αἰρετὸν esse ; nam quod multos miseriis levavit et quod se in his malis hominem praebuit, mirabilis eum virorum bonorum benevolentia prosecuta est.*²⁷²

Our friend Pansa left Rome in uniform on 30 December, an unmistakable illustration of what you have latterly begun to question – that good is to be chosen per se. He has given a helping hand to many in distress and behaved like a human being in these bad times; accordingly he went off in astonishingly good favour with honest men.

The context of this letter is puzzling; We know that Pansa set out to assume the role of governor of Cisalpine Gaul in March of the following year, and that he was certainly in Rome earlier that month.²⁷³ Yet here Cicero explicitly tells us that he set off on the thirtieth of December of 46

²⁷¹ See Daly (1951) 113ff. Caesar's legates only merit a mention in his commentaries if they perform some exceptional act. Wylie (1993) 130.

²⁷² Cic. *Fam.* 15.17 (SB 214).

²⁷³ Pansa's departure: Cic. *Att.* 12.9 (SB 246); 12.17 (255); 12.27 (266). His presence in Rome the same month: *Att.* 12.4.1 (240).

BC, to the jubilation of all good men.²⁷⁴ The *paludamentum* suggests that either he intended martial activity, or he was taking on a position of military authority.²⁷⁵ It is unlikely that he was marching to join Caesar in Hispania: his mentor was marching at remarkable speed, and it would have taken Pansa six weeks to catch up.²⁷⁶ So what was he doing?

Unfortunately, there is no clear answer to this, and Cicero and Cassius' differing interpretations further confuse the issue.²⁷⁷ Cicero thinks that Pansa has broken from his Epicureanism to perform an act of duty, to the State or perhaps to Caesar, for which he ought to be praised, while Cassius, whose reply will be discussed in Chapter 3.iv below, believes that his philosophy is the motivating force for this laudable act.²⁷⁸

Whatever Pansa set out to achieve, it must have been conspicuously out of character to attract the attention and approbation of the public, who are usually thought to be the *quivis* of Cicero's assertion. But perhaps he means Pansa, and thinks that the tumultuous state of affairs after the Civil War has made it evident even to an Epicurean that sometimes the public good has to be prioritized above the hedonic calculus.

One possibility is that Pansa was marching to Caesar, but had no intention of remaining with him, but only with furnishing him with more troops. This would make sense for a commander with little military nous, but a skill for raising armies, a talent we do see in Pansa. In a letter of 43, the assassin M. Junius Brutus asks Cicero to see to it from Rome that he be granted more money and men by the Senate, but suggests that the latter might be better accomplished through a private arrangement with Pansa.²⁷⁹ Similarly, when Hirtius with Octavian rushed to secure Bononia and face Antony later that year, he left Pansa behind to press more troops via an

²⁷⁴ Namely those who agree with him: Berry (1996) 129.

²⁷⁵ Shackleton Bailey (1977) 378 points to Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.34 as precedent for the latter interpretation of the military garb.

²⁷⁶ Gelzer (1960) 273f.

²⁷⁷ Boes (1990) 61-2 suggests that although the two are interpreting from different points of view, for each, Pansa represents humanity. I disagree: his Epicureanism, and therefore pacifism, is the crux.

²⁷⁸ Cic. *Fam.* 15.19 (SB 216).

²⁷⁹ Cic. *ad. Brut.* 2.5.3: *vel secreto consilio adversus Pansam...*

Italian levy to be used as reinforcements later in the campaign.²⁸⁰ When this strategy backfired and Pansa was forced into direct combat by Antony, he was hailed as *imperator* by the troops, even though he suffered a crushing defeat and sustained a mortal wound.²⁸¹ This suggests that Pansa's expected role did not include leading an army into battle, but he did so in service of the Republic and his friend Hirtius, who was then recovering from a damaging skirmish with Antony. This would account for his extreme popularity after his death.²⁸²

A little about Pansa's early military career can be extrapolated from the one martial engagement of his that is well attested: his final battle at Forum Gallorum. Left behind by Octavian and Hirtius to raise more troops via an Italian levy, he was to meet them with these reinforcements at Mutina.²⁸³ His preferred route blocked by Antonian partisan P. Ventidius at Ancona, he was forced to take the arduous inland *Via Cassia*, where slow progress made him vulnerable to an ambush.²⁸⁴ Learning of his position, Hirtius clearly felt that Pansa was unable to deal with this adversity alone, and sent him help in the form of S. Sulpicius Galba (seemingly an able soldier, though perhaps only because the most complete account of the ensuing battle is his), two praetorian cohorts, and the Martian Legion under one Carfulenus.²⁸⁵ Pansa left two of his four legions of recruits in his camp, and set off with this borrowed force across the marshland towards his colleague's camp. Antony, waiting under cover at Forum Gallorum, let some of his lightly armed troops be seen, and at this point Pansa lost control of the Martian Legion, and the cavalry, who plunged into the

²⁸⁰ Cass. Dio 46.36.

²⁸¹ Cass. Dio 46.38.

²⁸² cf. Gerding (2008).

²⁸³ Cass. Dio 46.36.

²⁸⁴ Cic. *Phil.* 12.20.23.

²⁸⁵ Alston (2015) 93. Galba's letter Cic. *Fam.* 10.31 (SB 368) was sent in the immediate aftermath of the battle, before he had the chance to be informed of Pansa's mortal wound. Still, it was beaten to Rome by another letter preempting even Hirtius' intervention, and thus causing the turmoil described at the beginning of Cicero's fourteenth *Philippic*.

trap.²⁸⁶ Unable to recall them (*quas sequi coepimus coacti, quoniam retinere eas non potueramus*, says Galba,) he ordered the recruits to form up, and attempted to inject some semblance of order into the now inevitable engagement. Pansa assigned commands, allotting himself the fewest men, and went into battle, but according to Appian, was little more than an afterthought to the experienced Caesarian veterans supposedly under his command:

οὕτω μὲν ἀλλήλοις ἐπήεσαν διωργισμένοι τε καὶ φιλοτιμούμενοι, σφίσι μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς στρατηγοῖς οἰκεῖον ἡγούμενοι τόδε ἔργον: ὑπὸ δὲ ἐμπειρίας οὔτε ἠλάλαξαν ὡς οὐκ ἐκπλήξοντες ἀλλήλους, οὔτε ἐν τῷ πόνῳ τις αὐτῶν ἀφῆκε φωνὴν οὔτε νικῶν οὔτε ἡσσωμένος. περιόδους δὲ οὐκ ἔχοντες οὔτε δρόμους ὡς ἐν ἔλεσι καὶ τάφροις, ἀραρότως συνίσταντο, καὶ οὐδέτεροι τοὺς ἑτέρους ὥσασθαι δυνάμενοι τοῖς ξίφεσιν ὡς ἐν πάλῃ συνεπλέκοντο. πληγὴ τε οὐδεμία ἦν ἀργός, ἀλλὰ τραύματα καὶ φόνοι καὶ στόνοι μόνον ἀντὶ βοῆς: ὃ τε πίπτων εὐθὺς ὑπεξεφέρετο, καὶ ἄλλος ἀντικαθίστατο. παραινέσεων δὲ ἢ ἐπικελεύσεων οὐκ ἐδέοντο, δι' ἐμπειρίαν ἕκαστος ἑαυτοῦ στρατηγῶν.²⁸⁷

Thus urged on rather **by their own animosity and ambition than by their generals** they assailed each other, considering this their own affair. Being veterans they raised no battle-cry, since they could not expect to terrify each other, nor in the engagement did they utter a sound, either as victors or vanquished. As there could be neither flanking nor charging in marshes and ditches, they stood together in close order, and since neither could dislodge the other they locked together with their swords as in a wrestling match. No blow missed its mark. There were wounds and slaughter but no cries, only groans; and when one fell he was instantly borne away and another took his place. **They needed neither admonition nor encouragement, since experience had made each one his own general.**

Pansa himself sustained two grievous javelin wounds, and although it belies Appian's assertion of his irrelevance somewhat that this caused his

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.* See also Frisch (1946) 271, who discounts the more "exciting" account of Appian 3.10.67, in which Pansa's men detect Antony's troops lying in wait by the gleam of their armour.

²⁸⁷ App. *Bell. Civ.* 3.9.68, (tr. White, emphasis mine).

troops to retreat in chaos, he failed to distinguish himself as a tactician or commander.²⁸⁸ It was Galba and Carfulenus who pushed back Antony's cavalry, and ultimately Hirtius who swept in and prevented a rout, yet Pansa found himself, despite the fact that he never had opportunity to enjoy it, the subject of great praise.²⁸⁹ Along with his saviour Hirtius, and Octavian, who had apparently held the forward camp, he was hailed as *imperator* by the troops.²⁹⁰ Back in Rome, Cicero spoke in favour of confirming the honour, and went so far as to propose the addition of an historically grand thanksgiving of fifty days.²⁹¹ Fulsome though his praise was for both the consul and the legions under him, he explicitly acknowledged Pansa's failure in letting the veterans advance into the ambush without his orders:

*Cuius si acerrimum impetum cohibere Pansa potuisset, uno proelio confecta res esset.*²⁹²

"And if Pansa had been able to hold in check their most keen advance, the matter would have been completed in a single contest."

²⁸⁸ App. *Bell. Civ.* 3.9.69. Although all of the troops under Pansa withdrew after his fall, it was only the Italian recruits who fell into disarray and were consequently slaughtered by Antony. Appian relates that the remnants of the Martian cohorts ranged up outside Pansa's camp, still full of fury, and were subsequently avoided by the opposing forces. This account of the panicked withdrawal also nullifies another of Appian's more outlandish claims about Pansa's ineffectiveness as a general: that the Martian Legion issued contradictory orders to the recruits, telling them not to fight lest they cause confusion with their inexperience: *Bell. Civ.* 3.9.67.

²⁸⁹ The outcome of the battle: Cic. *Fam.* 10.30.4-5 (SB 378).

²⁹⁰ Cass. Dio 46.38. It seems that praise for Hirtius was merited: C. Asinius Pollio, whose report of Forum Gallorum (Cic. *Fam.* 10.33, SB 409) was delayed until May or June, wrote that Hirtius had acted the consummate general, but reported of Pansa only that he was dead, with his legions cut to pieces.

²⁹¹ Cic. *Phil.* 14.11. Cicero, of course, had an ulterior motive for the lavishness of his praise: by encouraging a conspicuous *supplicatio*, he hoped to push the senate into declaring Antony a *hostis* (*Ibid.* 14.7). The only precedent for a thanksgiving this long was after Caesar's victory at Munda: Cass. Dio 43.42.2.

²⁹² Cic. *Phil.* 14.26.

Yet it does not seem that this diminished the praiseworthiness of Pansa's actions. He must, therefore, have done no less, and probably more, than was expected of him. That Pansa was no great general is reinforced by the sentiments expressed by Decimus Brutus in a letter to Cicero lamenting Pansa's death. While he acknowledges that Pansa is a loss to the Republic (*Pansa amisso quantum detrimenti res publica acceperit non te praeterit....*), it is as a consul and a symbol of the Republic that Decimus mourns him, rather than as a general, even though it was for Decimus' sake that Pansa was fighting.²⁹³

Pansa was, then, not a soldier by nature, and his personal bravery in exposing himself to harm in service of the Republic was praiseworthy as much for being conspicuously out of character as for its own sake. His early career, then, cannot have been built on a foundation of military ability. In the late Republic, this would have been no great problem, thanks to the shift of emphasis from soldiery to rhetoric, but we have seen that Pansa also eschewed this alternative route to office.²⁹⁴ He must, then, have ascended to the consulship via some other route and, as in the case of Piso and so many other men of that era, this meant taking advantage of the assistance of Caesar.

²⁹³ Cic. *Fam.* 11.9 (SB 380). Q. Cornificius, in a letter to which Cicero replied in may with Cic. *Fam.* 12.25a (383), expressed similar sentiments.

²⁹⁴ See Rosenstein (2011) 143-4 on the de-emphasis of military achievement in the political arena of the late Republic.

2. iv. A Special Relationship

As Caesar's power grew, so too did his ability to promote and elevate his preferred candidates. While Piso's consulship, despite being undoubtedly aided by his son-in-law, was the culmination of a traditional but understated career, others, like that of Pansa's colleague Hirtius, followed novel and previously impossible career paths.²⁹⁵ The consular appointments for 43 were almost certainly a unilateral decision on the part of Caesar, but some pretence of an election may have been upheld.²⁹⁶ Pansa, then, owed his career in its entirety to his beneficent mentor.²⁹⁷ But what did he contribute to the relationship? He was not, like Hirtius, a competent tactician, nor had he any family ties to those with the highest power. Pansa's value to Caesar was rather his unflagging loyalty and his willingness to use the positions bestowed on him to his master's advantage.

The relationship between Pansa and Caesar can be traced to as early as Caesar's Gallic campaign, during which Pansa was one of his *contubernales* or tent-mates.²⁹⁸ These young men would constitute almost the entirety of a governor's social network while on campaign and form close bonds with him and with each other, which, as De Witt has pointed out, is the perfect atmosphere in which Epicureanism can flourish.²⁹⁹ Caesar's retinue was remarkable in its time for its composition emphasizing new men and those, like Pansa, of only tenuously senatorial standing, especially those from the provinces.³⁰⁰ This was a prescient decision on the

²⁹⁵ Hirtius, a skilled envoy (Cic. *Att.* 7.4; SB 127) skipped the lower rungs of the *cursus honorum*: Rosillo-López (2013) 289.

²⁹⁶ Cass. Dio 43.51; Cic. *Att.* 14.9.2 (SB 363); Nic. Dam. fr. 130, all portray the appointments as straightforward decisions by Caesar, with the latter also mentioning appointments for the following year. Festus *Breviarum* 2, a compendium of c. AD 370, however, lists Hirtius and Pansa as the last two elected consuls. Chilver (1957) 72 suggests that Cicero's comments after the Ides that *vivit tyrannis* referred to the fact that the appointments of the consuls for 43 were allowed to stand, though his later writings suggest support for their office.

²⁹⁷ Cicero contrasts this with his own tactics *Lig.* 31.

²⁹⁸ Cic. *Fam.* 7.12 (SB 35).

²⁹⁹ See De Witt (1936) 60. On *contubernium* in the Roman army more generally: Rosenstein (2011) 139.

³⁰⁰ Gruen (1974) 115-18. Pansa himself was from Perusia.

part of the general; such a staff would be more reliant on the success of their master than earlier, more financially and politically self-sufficient officers had been.³⁰¹ They would, therefore, be better disposed towards loyalty and to doing everything necessary to ensure the favourable outcome of their commander's schemes, which would mean following orders to the letter. Pansa seems to have had a particularly high level of tolerance for performing the more mundane and arduous tasks assigned by Caesar which, along with his agreeable disposition, made him valuable as a political buffer of sorts.³⁰²

Caesar, as a diplomatic tactic, rarely engaged in direct communication with troublesome senators requesting favours, instead preferring to redirect them through his numerous surrogates, of which Pansa was one. At least two thirds of Caesar's epistolary communication with Cicero, whose political vacillations probably made him a particularly irksome petitioner, was conducted in this manner.³⁰³ In the *Pro Ligario*, Cicero relates how while he waited at Brundisium to return to Rome from Cilicia, Caesar failed to respond directly to enquiries as to whether he might keep his *lictors*, but eventually sent Pansa, after seven months of evasion, with the message that it was probably alright to do so.³⁰⁴ Pansa would have had to divert his course to Bithynia, which he was to govern, to deliver this trivial and noncommittal edict.³⁰⁵ We also see him mediating between Cicero and Caesar in the case of exiled Pompeian T. Amplius Balbus.³⁰⁶ Rather than resenting Pansa for interposing himself between

³⁰¹ De Blois (2011) 174.

³⁰² There is no direct testimony on Pansa's demeanour, save the scurrilous (Cic. *Fam.* 16.27.1; SB 352), but the cumulative effect of the almost universally positive sentiments expressed by his peers led Syme (1952) 162 to disbelieve that a meeting of 20th December 44 BC was truly for the purpose of ensuring the safety of the consuls: "as though any individual wished to strike down that worthy and innocuous pair, Hirtius and Pansa," even despite the unfocused nature of the liberators' plans to restore the Republic cf. Sumi (2005) 76.

³⁰³ White (2003) 77.

³⁰⁴ Cic. *Lig.* 7.

³⁰⁵ Wistrand (1978) 193 n3. Pansa's magistracy in Bithynia is evidenced only by coinage, see Wroth (1889) 110 and 153, cf. Jashemski (1980) 152.

³⁰⁶ Cic. *Fam.* 6.12 (SB 226).

Caesar and his petitioners, Cicero gloats that such a close associate of Caesar's is taking an interest in the cause:

*sed nihil est a me inservitum temporis causa, veteres mihi necessitudines cum his omnibus intercedunt, quibuscum ego agere de te non destiti; principem tamen habuimus Pansam, tui studiosissimum, mei cupidum, qui valeret apud illum non minus auctoritate quam gratia.*³⁰⁷

"But I have done nothing in the way of time-serving. With all of them I have friendships of long standing; and I have pleaded with them incessantly on your behalf. But my principal reliance has been on Pansa, who is most zealous for your welfare and anxious to please myself; for he has friendship with Caesar founded on respect no less than personal liking."

While Cicero seems to be suggesting that Pansa has been petitioning Caesar on his behalf, it is far more likely that Pansa has taken on the role of intermediary in order to spare his patron direct interactions with Cicero. For while the Cicero and Pansa were certainly friendly in at least the pragmatic fashion common to Roman politicians - there was once a volume of correspondence between the two, now lost, and Cicero himself identifies Pansa as one of his *necessarii* - Pansa's primary loyalty was always to Caesar.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁷ Cic. *Fam.* 6.12.2 (SB 226). Tr. Shackleton Bailey.

³⁰⁸ On the lost volume of correspondence: White (2010) 171-3; Shackleton Bailey (2002) 326. Pansa as *necessarius*: Cic. *Lig.* 1. See also Rowland (1970) 197.

2.v. Use of Political Office

While he had few natural advantages, Pansa could claim one moderately illustrious ancestor in the form of his adoptive father, master of the mint in 90 BC, in whose footsteps he followed by issuing coins of his own in 48.³⁰⁹ He showed pride in his father's precedent by continuing some of his most prevalent motifs: that of Ceres, sometimes accompanied by Liber, and the obverse type of a bearded head of Pan, a play on his *cognomen*.³¹⁰ The potential of this office for self-promotion, especially for new men who hoped to advertise themselves to the *populus*, cannot have gone unnoticed by either Pansa or his father, and it was certainly not lost on Caesar.³¹¹ One of his first actions upon crossing the Rubicon was to mint self-publicising coins with which to pay his eight legions. These, depicting an elephant trampling a horned serpent, were struck from bullion extracted with force from the temple of Saturn.³¹² He then increased the number of moneys from three to four, "for political rather than administrative reasons."³¹³ Yet of the thirty *monetarii* who served under Caesar and the triumvirate, only two attained the consulship, one of these being Pansa.³¹⁴

Pansa's ascent was facilitated, at least in part, by his willingness to subjugate his personal ambition to that of Caesar, and to use his office to

³⁰⁹ Pansa's joint issues with D. Brutus Albinus (*RRC* 451. See Dettenhoffer (1992) 183) and Cicero's testimony that he was present in Rome for this year (*Att.* 11.3.6, SB 213; *Lig.* 7) confirm Pansa as one of the moneys of this year, contrary to the assertion of Grillo (2012) 128.

³¹⁰ For the origin of the reverse type in the coinage of the elder Pansa: *RRC* 342/3a-b. Crawford (1974) 465 suggests that either the family had connections with a cult of Ceres or else sought to capitalize on the *popularis* associations of the cult. See also Spaeth (1996) 99 on the connection between Ceres and the plebs. The bearded Pan is seen on *RRC* 449/1a-c and the father's 342/1-2.

³¹¹ On the popularity of the office of *monetarius* among *novi homines*: Wiseman (1971) 149, who notes that this form of propaganda was not aimed at the elite, whose slaves and freedmen handled their cash.

³¹² *Cic. Att.* 10.4.8 (SB 195); *Caes. B. Civ.* 1.33.3; *App. Bell. Civ.* 2.41. See Nousek (2008) 293. The coin in question is *RRC* 443/1, which features an obverse image of an elephant trampling a snake. See also Crawford (1974) 89.

³¹³ Crawford (1974) 598 cf. *Suet. Iul.* 41.

³¹⁴ Wiseman (1971) 149.

benefit his patron rather than himself. In the case of *RRC* 449/4, he laid aside his cherished family imagery, and instead minted a coin to celebrate Caesar's victorious arrival in Rome, depicting the personification Roma seated on a pile of weapons, being crowned by Victory and standing on a globe with one foot.³¹⁵ Considering Pansa's lifelong desire for peace, and the danger inherent in making such a partisan move at this turbulent time, this was an act of immense loyalty.³¹⁶ It was, however, a successful gambit, and one mimicked by his eventual colleague Hirtius, who in 46 issued joint coinage with Caesar replicating in bronze the infamous elephant denarius.³¹⁷ When he ventured beyond Rome, Pansa was even bolder in his declarations of allegiance, and more willing to put himself second: governing Bithynia and Pontus in 48 or 47, he struck a coin featuring on the obverse Caesar's head and a reverse image of Nike with a wreath, an obvious parallel with his use of Victoria in his celebratory coin of the previous year.³¹⁸ So while he recognized that it was through his role as moneyer that his adoptive father had elevated the family, and clearly wished to emulate him to some extent, he was not willing to profess (or perhaps even to feel) such overt ambition, preferring instead to use his coinage to make declarations of loyalty and to advance the career of his patron.

This was not the only office from which Pansa manoeuvred to the advantage of Caesar. He held the office of tribune of the plebs in 51 BC, by which time it had become established as a role in which a junior magistrate could make his mark on Rome, either by carrying laws to gain the favour of the public, or, like Clodius in 58, using the legislative power to thwart the plans of one's political rivals.³¹⁹ Pansa, however, did not seize this opportunity to make a name for himself. Nor did he, like Hirtius in the

³¹⁵ Grillo (2012) 128 and Raaflaub (2003) 57 agree that this was the action of a supportive protégé.

³¹⁶ See also Bergmann (2010) 346 on *RRC*. 449/4, depicting crowned head of Liber on the obverse, Roma on the reverse.

³¹⁷ *RPC*. 501, see Nousek (2008) 298; Crawford (1974) 478 (no. 466) on other numismatic collaborations between Hirtius and Caesar.

³¹⁸ Wroth (1889) 153, Nicaea 8-9.

³¹⁹ See Sumner (1971) 255. See also above Ch. 1.iv.

same role, take the opportunity to promulgate any partisan laws.³²⁰ Rather he took a more conservative approach, exercising his power of veto alongside three other tribunes to suppress anti-Caesarian proposals by the Senate.³²¹ We know that he did not take advantage of entitlement to convene a *contio* while in office, as indeed he did not during any of his magistracies.³²² He was, then, a very low profile and exceedingly loyal magistrate.

Pansa would have expected to continue playing second fiddle to Caesar even as consul, despite the dictator's plans to leave the city.³²³ After all, even in what should have been his most autonomous role, serving as governor of Cisalpine Gaul, he had not been granted the privilege of *imperium*, but had rather served in effect as the deputy of Caesar.³²⁴ Thus, he had obtained all the prestige of the office, but the burden of responsibility had been lessened by the fact that he was answerable to Caesar. His mentor's continued interest in the province and his status as military expert on the terrain and locals would also have contributed to a feeling of security on the part of Pansa; if he were to find himself under attack or in danger of losing the province, Caesar would certainly have intervened.³²⁵ Thus, an Epicurean could rule, and yet know that he was supported by ties of friendship and unlikely to find himself leading the provincial army into any significant battle.

³²⁰ On the *Lex Hirtia* of 48, which limited the capacity of Pompeian supporters to stand for office: Cic. *Phil.* 13.32, cf. Sumner (1971) 256-7. See also Williamson (2005) 400.

³²¹ Steel (2009) 120 cf. Cic. *Fam.* 8.8 (SB 84). M. Caelius Rufus reports to Cicero, who is in Cilicia, that Pansa has exercised his veto over three separate proposals unfavourable to Caesar.

³²² Cic. *Fam.* 15.21.2 (SB 207) details precedence for junior magistrates calling *contiones* (Trebatius convened one as quaestor) cf. Tan (2008) 181.

³²³ On Caesar's plan to remove himself from Rome and his appointment of Dolabella and Antony in his stead: Plut. *Caes.* 68.3; Canfora (2007) 281.

³²⁴ Jashemski (1950) 76. Africa (1978) 614, on Brutus' subsequent governorship of that province, characterizes it as "a Caesarian stronghold where he could do no damage."

³²⁵ Dettenhoffer (1992) 209 asserts that Caesar and Brutus journeyed to check in on Pansa in Cisalpine Gaul, though I am uncertain how she drew this conclusion from her cited sources, Plut. *Brut.* 6.6-7 and Cic. *Fam.* 15.17.3 (SB 214).

2.vi. After the Ides

Pansa's projected easy occupation of the top rung of the *cursus honorum* was, however, not to be. Rather than occupying a symbolic role as the underling of an all-powerful dictator, he found himself, along with Hirtius, tasked with leading the Republic through yet another round of civil strife in the aftermath of the Ides of March. That he was not expecting so shoulder much responsibility during his predesignated consulship perhaps goes some way towards accounting for the huge amount of power Cicero managed to wield beneath him, even though he himself occupied no office in 43.³²⁶ In such a state of turmoil, physical and mental security were both out of the question. Yet, by all accounts, Pansa conducted himself with great bravery and responsibility. He took up the office, and took responsibility for the Senate, impressing Cicero with the timeliness with which he convened sittings to respond to new information from the various fronts.³²⁷ He was one of very few to openly denounce Antony, and in fact the only one to speak against him in public when he returned to Rome in September, and demonstrated a willingness to push allies to the point of irritation in order to bring them into line with the Senate.³²⁸ He even pushed back against Cicero, displaying uncharacteristic vigour and forcefulness in his opposition to a faked *acta caesaris* and a proposal to grant extraordinary powers to Cassius to deal with Dolabella in the East.³²⁹

³²⁶ On Cicero's rise to power after the assassination of Caesar: Plut. *Cic.* 45.3. On Cicero's influence on the consuls: Habicht (1990) 83-4.

³²⁷ Cic. *Phil.* 9.1. (Malcovati 160.4) Pansa convenes an irregular sitting of the Senate in response to a letter from Marcus Brutus.

³²⁸ Denouncing Antony: Cic. *Fam.* 12.2.1f (SB 344); *Phil.* 12.14. See also Gotter (1996) 87. C. Asinius Pollio, from Corduba in March of 43, complained to Cicero about Pansa's insistence on his formal dedication of himself and his troops to the Republican cause: *Fam.* 10.31 (SB 368).

³²⁹ Cic. *Att.* 14.19.2 (SB 372) on his response to the faked decree: Pansa *loquitur severe, si velis credere*. On his opposition to fortifying Cassius: *Fam.* 12.7. (SB 367) Cicero claims that he gave a well-received speech, and would have been successful *nisi Pansa vehementer obstitisset*. Pansa was so incensed by this issue that he delivered his only attested contional speech: Malcovati 160.5.

The commitment demonstrated by Pansa to his new role, and his eventual soldier's death has led to speculation that he at some point after the Ides of March abandoned his Epicurean affiliation.³³⁰ Yet there is ample evidence that he continued to let his chosen philosophy influence his decision-making, even in this unlikely context. For a start, he allied himself closely with his fellow Epicurean Piso, lending his consular weight to his efforts to establish communication between the opposing factions through the commissioning of a series of embassies.³³¹ He also praised Caesar's father-in-law for a passionate speech in the Senate, in which he threatened to withdraw himself from Rome should Antony subject the *populus* to another civil war.³³² It was not just friendship or their common status as close associates of the deceased dictator that brought them together; each was motivated by a genuine desire for peace. Cicero wrote to Atticus that during the time he spent with Pansa in the bay of Naples before he took up his post, the consul elect had thoroughly convinced him of the primacy of his desire to restore stability to Rome.³³³

Cassius had written in 46 BC that Pansa was motivated by the Epicurean ideals of "clemency, integrity, virtue and justice," and in 43 he continued to strive to uphold them.³³⁴ Pansa had always put great stock in individual acts of clemency; hence his intercessions on behalf of T. Amplius Balbus, and Q. Ligarius, and possibly part of his attraction to the Caesarian camp.³³⁵ He continued to grant acts of mercy to citizens, even those to whom he ought to be politically opposed, prioritizing the ethical precept of clemency above political allegiance or even the memory of his murdered mentor.³³⁶ He assured Lentulus Spinther, son of the consul of 57,

³³⁰ Gundel (1958) 1965; Boes (1990) 63.

³³¹ Cic. *Phil.* 12.13.36; Cass. Dio 46.32.3-4. Cicero was incensed that these delegations carried demands bilaterally, rather than simply issuing ultimatums from the Senate to Antony. Pansa and Piso were, of course, already friends. See Roskam (2007) 107.

³³² Cic. *Phil.* 12.14. See also Griffin (2001) 90 and above Ch. 1.iv.

³³³ Cic. *Att.* 14.20 (SB 374).

³³⁴ Cic. *Fam.* 15.19 (SB 216).

³³⁵ On Caesar's "*clementia-Politik*" see Dettenhofer (1990) 249. This will be discussed further below Ch. 3.iii.

³³⁶ For the lack of sentimentality concerning deceased friends, see below Ch. 6.i on Atticus' response to the death of Cicero.

that no one would supersede his quaestorship, even though he had rejoiced with the assassins after the death of Caesar.³³⁷ To Q. Cornificius, he promised such generous grants that the petitioner was forced to drop his pursuit of them upon his death.³³⁸ Octavian took advantage of Pansa's openness to personal appeals; when he suddenly found himself in the precarious position of being Caesar's heir his first action was to travel directly to the consuls-elect in Puteoli and petition them for advice and support.³³⁹ This was a successful move, just as it was for Cicero, who also strove to strengthen his bond with Pansa in person in this sojourn from Rome, spending long hours with him, likely engaged at least partly in oratorical training.³⁴⁰

Unlike so many others who found themselves wielding unexpected power in the late Republic, Pansa never sought to consolidate or extend his power beyond that normally granted to a consul. Rather, he acted within the confines of his office, a moderation and traditionalism that Gotter has attributed to his lack of confidence as a new man.³⁴¹ This, I would argue, reflects rather a genuine desire for stability and peace, which Pansa characteristically continued to prioritize above his personal ambition. His lack of flexibility when it came to recalibrating the balance between the opposing parties in their various official capacities, much to the frustration of Cicero, demonstrates that he chose the most predictable course, that of restoration of the Republic, in the hopes of preserving the security of the *populus*, while fully intending to pass on his office at the end of his term.³⁴²

³³⁷ Cic. *Fam.* 12.14 (405).

³³⁸ Cic. *Fam.* 12.30 (SB 417).

³³⁹ Cic. *Att.* 14.11 (SB 365); 14.10 (364). See also: Gotter (1996) 60; Syme (1952) 114.

³⁴⁰ Cic. *Att.* 14.20 (SB 374); Suet. *Rhet.* 1.

³⁴¹ Gotter (1996) 33.

³⁴² Cic. *Att.* 14.19.2 (SB 372); *Fam.* 12.7 (SB 367).

2. vii. Impious Pansa

In Pansa, as in Piso, we see (at least, according to his chroniclers) a conspicuous disregard for the state cult and its traditional role in governmental administration. If his short term in office is characterized by his concern for the *Pax Romana*, the same cannot be said for the *Pax Deorum*. One of his very first actions as consul should traditionally have been the setting of the date of the celebration of the *Feriae Latinae*, a duty that had been neglected only once before: C. Flaminius Nepos had failed to perform the ritual in 218 BC and promptly marched to his death in the battle of Lake Trasimene.³⁴³ Pansa and Hirtius did not arrange this festival, nor did they make an offering of the *vota publica* in the Capitoline temple and explain any ensuing prodigies.³⁴⁴ This was no small matter; the maintenance of the apparatus of the public cult was as much a military as a religious or civic duty and such a misstep would have been seen as putting Roman lives and glory at risk.³⁴⁵ The gods themselves, according to Cassius Dio, did not delay in making their displeasure known and explicitly foreshadowing the failure of Pansa's military endeavours. When he finally did make a sacrifice as a consul, a *lictor* dropped dead, and the messages of the entrails were concealed by unusual volumes of blood.³⁴⁶ His declaration of war was accompanied by an epileptic fit from a participant, and his statue reoriented itself spontaneously upon his departure to Mutina.³⁴⁷ Yet Pansa apparently took no notice, and his fate was sealed.

Of course, accounts of supernatural occurrences are always suspect, and here there is an obvious reason for their inclusion. The near-

³⁴³ Livy *Ad. Urbe C.* 21.64; Polybius *Hist.* 3.84. The date for this festival was usually announced the night after the consuls took office, for logistical reasons as much as cultic importance: all magistrates of the city were required to travel to Mons Albanus in order to sacrifice to Iuppiter Latianus. See Simón (2011) 116.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ Rosenstein (2011) 140 argues that the Romans believed strongly that their relationship with the gods and their unsurpassed piety was what made their republic so prosperous and powerful: Cic. *Nat. Deo.* 28; *Har. Res.* 19.

³⁴⁶ Cass. Dio 46.17; Plut. *Brut.* 39.4.

³⁴⁷ Cass. Dio 46.33.

simultaneous deaths of the two consuls, and the fact that Octavian immediately appropriated Pansa's armies, caused public opinion to turn swiftly against Caesar's young heir.³⁴⁸ At worst, some suspected that he had had a hand in the deaths, particularly that of Pansa, whose slow demise from his battle injury had prompted suspicions of poisoning.³⁴⁹ His response was twofold: first he disseminated a highly suspicious account of a purported deathbed conversation with Pansa, in which the consul conveniently gave explicit permission for all of Octavian's subsequent actions, both the usurpation of the legions and his reconciliation with Antony, and revealed them to be part of a complex master plan enacted in service of Caesar.³⁵⁰ The fact that this meeting was chronologically impossible does not seem to have entirely arrested the rumour.³⁵¹ At the same time, he attempted to portray Pansa as so impious as to be partially responsible for his own unfortunate fate.

Muelder proposes Augustus' lost autobiography, *Commentarii de Vita Sua*, published c. 27-24 BC, as the source of the tradition of Pansa ignoring a series of increasingly disturbing portents.³⁵² The attribution of impiety, and specifically the failure to heed omens, to an Epicurean politician was not, however, an innovation on either Plutarch's or Augustus' part. We have seen that among Cicero's numerous attacks on Piso, the misattribution of blame for the defanging of the *leges Aelia et Fufia* features strongly.³⁵³ The origin of Cicero's suspicion surrounding the abilities of Epicureans to properly observe the communications of the gods is likely a combination of the conflation of *religio* and *superstitio* in

³⁴⁸ Cass. Dio 46.38-9. See also Wardle (2014) 126.

³⁴⁹ Cic. *Brut.* 16.2; Suet. *Aug.* 11. Pansa's personal physician, Glyco, fell under suspicion and found his career in ruins and his life at stake. Kudlien (1986) 134 argues that as his employer's freedman and a doctor, he was highly unlikely to commit such an act.

³⁵⁰ App. *Bell. Civ.* 3.10.75. See Zucchelli (1991) 439-53.

³⁵¹ Bosworth (1982) 157-8. Decimus Brutus wrote to Cicero that Pansa died the day after the Battle of Mutina, and that he failed to meet him before his death because he was travelling from a meeting with Octavian: Cic. *Fam.* 11.13a (SB 418).

³⁵² Muelder (1995) 247.

³⁵³ Cic. *Red. Sen.* 5; *Pis.* 4.

Lucretius, and Cicero's own preoccupation with divination and foresight.³⁵⁴ In the case of Pansa, the accusation was a good fit. He had conspicuously failed to perform one of the mandatory religious duties of the consul, so it would make sense that he would display characteristically Epicurean ignorance of omens.³⁵⁵ He had also failed to distinguish himself as augur, spending most of his tenure of that office in Cisalpine Gaul. At the same time, by exaggerating or inventing the portents that haunted Pansa, Augustus could portray both his demise and the failure of the military alliance between himself as the consuls as inevitable and divinely ordered, thus absolving himself of any responsibility.³⁵⁶

It is notable that the historians who repeat the catalogue of prodigies fall into two camps: pro-Augustan and anti-Epicurean. In the latter group is Plutarch, who not only propagates the story of Pansa's bloody sacrifices, but elaborates on the trope and transfers it from Pansa, whom he considers a secondary character to the far more exciting and dynamic Cassius, subject of the following chapter.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴ Lucr. *DRN.* 1.62-5. Cicero's obsession with divination: Nep. *Att.* 16.2-5 cf. Santangelo (2013) 178. See also his poem on Marius, preserved in Cic. *Leg.* 1.1-2; *Div.* 1.106; *Att.* 12.49.2 (SB 292); concerning his hero's reaction to an omen in the form of an eagle: Van der Blom (2010) 106-7.

³⁵⁵ Also a Ciceronian obsession: *Div.* 1.81-3 cf. Santangelo (2013) 61.

³⁵⁶ Dio 46.35 writes that because of Pansa's status as consul, the omens pertained not to him alone but to the whole republic and the people of Rome. Thus, he was negligent and culpable for the ensuing civic instability.

³⁵⁷ Meulder (1995) 250.

2.viii. Pansa's Power

As a man of little means and an overt Epicurean, Pansa played a masterful game in order to reach the apex of Republican political achievement. Despite his humble beginnings, his apparent lack of piety, his unimpressive record as an orator and his failure to make a name for himself through his military endeavours, he became a consul and found himself, to echo Syme, a power.³⁵⁸ What is more, he did so without ever openly displaying his own ambition, presenting himself publically (and, we can assume, privately) as primarily concerned with the success of his mentor, Caesar. Thus, like Piso, he never became Lucretius' Sisyphian politician, engaged in undignified petitions for the symbols of power. Even had his career stalled, had the stone of office rolled back down the hill, he would have been spared the indignity of failure, for, thanks to his understated tactics, no one had seen him pushing it in the first place. And while there was clearly some desire for advancement concealed beneath Pansa's dispassionate demeanour, it did not take the form of a thirst for power, as his short tenure as consul shows.

Throughout his career, Pansa lived up to the image of himself perpetuated by Cassius: of one driven by pursuit of peace and happiness through the virtues of clemency and justice. In Caesar's camp he reinforced the policy of "*clementia-politik*" through his interventions on behalf of exiled combatants, and he continued to exercise this virtue when he found himself a head of state.³⁵⁹ He was loyal to his friends unto death, risking and ultimately forfeiting his life in an attempt to march unseasoned reinforcements to his friend and colleague Hirtius, and overtly supporting Caesar even throughout his riskiest political manoeuvres. He dedicated himself after the murder of Caesar to the restoration of peace and stability when he could just have easily made a play to extend his power. His career was, then, both successful and typically Epicurean, a conclusion that was reached by his contemporaries. In the following chapter, we shall see that two rather less successful candidates, the assassin C. Cassius Longinus and

³⁵⁸ Syme (1939) 133.

³⁵⁹ Dettenhoffer (1990) 249.

C. Memmius, dedicatee of Lucretius, sought explicitly to emulate him, not only in his political style but also its philosophical underpinnings.

3. Instrumental Epicureanism: C. Cassius Longinus

CASSIUS:

*You know that I held Epicurus strong
And his opinion: now I change my mind,
And partly credit things that do presage.
Coming from Sardis, on our former ensign
Two mighty eagles fell, and there they perch'd,
Gorging and feeding from our soldiers' hands;
Who to Philippi here consorted us:
This morning are they fled away and gone;
And in their steads do ravens, crows and kites,
Fly o'er our heads and downward look on us,
As we were sickly prey: their shadows seem
A canopy most fatal, under which
Our army lies, ready to give up the ghost.*

Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, Act 5, Scene 1.

In the cases of Piso and Pansa, we have seen the skillful and deliberate reconciliation of Epicurean adherence with lengthy political careers. There is always a lingering question, however, of how much their chosen philosophical beliefs contributed to their career decisions, and whether they would have made the same choices were it not for their association with the *Kepos*. This is not true of the case of C. Cassius Longinus, the praetor of 44 most famous for his role in the assassination of Julius Caesar.³⁶⁰ His affiliation with the school, securely attested by his own hand, corresponds with only a short period in his political career, and one that is markedly different from those preceding and following it. Thanks to excellent dating evidence in the form of correspondence with Cicero, we may link his adherence to the short-lived "Caesarian" period of his career, in which he attempted to reconcile and integrate with the faction against which he had fought under Pompey in the civil war. Perceptible in this period is a new and uncharacteristic emphasis on quietism, and on the cultivation of friendships within the Roman Epicurean network, yet also a simultaneous desire to continue making progress through the ranks of political office.

³⁶⁰ Broughton *MRR*. 2.320.

We can, then, distinguish in this individual an "Epicurean political career" distinct from the more traditional Roman path to power in which it is embedded, and, through comparison between these two phases, begin to draw conclusions about both how and why it was adopted.

2.i. Cassius' legacy: a problematic tradition

In the case of Cassius, even more than the other Epicureans profiled here, we must pay special attention to the biases and assumptions of every source. For a start, the magnitude and lasting impact of his most famous act, the assassination of the dictator Julius Caesar on the Ides of March 44 BC, has had a divisive effect on his historical reception from the moment the plot was realized. Public opinion vacillated wildly in the aftermath of the killing, and under Augustus it was solidified as primarily negative.³⁶¹ There was, however, always an undercurrent of approval, which flourished under later and crueler emperors as the tyrannicides came to be venerated as martyrs to the republican cause.³⁶² A second complicating issue is his close association with his brother-in-law and co-conspirator M. Junius Brutus, with whom he is alternatively conflated and contrasted, in the latter case usually to his detriment.³⁶³ When the two are paired, from as early as the letters of Cicero during their lifetime, the formulation is usually "Brutus and Cassius," an order that belies both the seniority and perhaps surpassing fame of Cassius.³⁶⁴ This was solidified in Imperial literature, as Cassius' military prowess slipped from remembrance, although there were always exceptions, such as Tacitus, whose insistent use of "Cassius and

³⁶¹ While Cicero reported that his speeches in favour of the "liberators" were met with uproarious applause (*Fam.* 12.7.1-2; SB 367), he had a vested interest in having them believe that the *populus* was on their side, and may have overstated his case: Hall (2002) 281. Indeed, the conspirators may have overestimated all along the strength of public approval for their cause: Yavetz (1974) 64.

³⁶² Viz. the case of Stoic martyr Cremutius Cordus, who committed suicide when accused of *maiestas* for venerating Brutus and Cassius: Tac. *Ann.* 4.34-35; Cass. Dio 57.24.2-4. See also Toynbee (1944) 43-58; Rogers (1965) 351-359.

³⁶³ On the long relationship between the two men, predating Cassius' marriage to Brutus' sister Junia: App. *Bell. Civ.* 4.65-67; Cic. *Fam.* 15.14.6 (SB 106); 1.7.2 (18); Suet. *Gram.* 3.

³⁶⁴ Rawson (1983) attributes this to Cicero's preference of Brutus, with whom he shared philosophical interests

Brutus" was seen by Syme as an attempt at "correcting the modern myth."³⁶⁵

We find, then, that among the ancient authors, either because of their distaste for Cassius' deeds or their preference for Brutus, Valerius Maximus, Velleius Paterculus, Nicolaus of Damascus and Josephus are generally hostile, while Cassius Dio is inconsistent and Tacitus and particularly Appian are rather more positive.³⁶⁶ The attitude of Plutarch, our most plentiful source outwith Cicero, is a rather more complex matter. His tendency to employ Cassius as a foil for other characters has resulted in depictions in the *Brutus* and *Caesar* that feature fabrications seemingly aimed at deliberately diminishing his reputation, while in the *Crassus* he is such a competent contrast to the titular character that it is his proficiency that arouses suspicion.³⁶⁷ Part of this dubiousness is generated by the mystery of the identity of Plutarch's source on the battle of Carrhae, in which Cassius' role is depicted so favourably that some scholars have supposed that he himself is responsible for the account.³⁶⁸

The great advantage of Plutarch as a source is the sheer volume of information he imparts about our subject. Although Cassius was not granted the treatment of a Parallel Life of his own, he is prominent in the *Crassus* and the *Caesar*, and pivotal to the *Brutus*. In the latter, Plutarch's project of parallelism yokes together not just Brutus and Dion, its paired

³⁶⁵ Armstrong (2011) 112; Syme (1958) 557n7. Rawson (1983) 101-19 comprehensively catalogues the authors who do place Cassius first in the pairing.

³⁶⁶ Tac. *Ann.* 1.2 marks Philippi as the end of the Republic, while Appian, usually notable for his objectivity, goes out of his way to give Cassius a speech through which to justify his actions before the battle: App. *Bell. Civ.* 4.90-100 cf. Gowing (1990) 162, who reads into this a "genuine respect for Cassius." See also Alston (2015) 157.

³⁶⁷ Fitzgibbon (2008) 459 calls Cassius' speech at Philippi (discussed in more detail below) an attempt to "further demean a character already flawed), while Braund (1993) 474 suggests that Cassius was used to further Plutarch's project of scapegoating Crassus: "Excellent Romans litter the narrative to make a point."

³⁶⁸ Rawson (1982) 548 discusses some potential identifications for this positive source. Frendo (2003) 75 and Sampson (2008) 190 agree with her conclusion that Cassius was in some way instrumental in its composition, but the latter argues that to posit the identity of the writer is to go too far. Retsö (2003) 393, however, suggests Cassius himself.

biography, but Brutus and Cassius as a pair with Dion, and with each other.³⁶⁹ As a consequence we find in the Brutus all the structural elements of a Plutarchan 'life of Cassius', including explicit comparison to Dion in the *synkresis* and a thematic introduction including a childhood anecdote intended to give psychological insight.³⁷⁰ The rationale is laid out in Brutus' own introduction: the statement that “even those who hated him on account of his conspiracy against Caesar ascribed whatever was noble in the undertaking to Brutus, but laid the more distressing features of what was done to the charge of Cassius, who was a kinsman of Brutus indeed, and his friend, but not so simple and sincere a character,” is not just a statement of fact but a meta-commentary on Plutarch's own treatment of the pair.³⁷¹ Cassius is used consistently as a proxy for Brutus' less admirable side, and for every ambiguous decision by the leading conspirators in the assassination plot and the ensuing war, the character of Cassius is brought in to shoulder the worst of it.³⁷² Thus, we should treat his account of these events with as much suspicion as Cassius' heroism at Carrhae.

While the sources are inconsistent and sometimes hostile, and often play down Cassius' influence and abilities, we should not forget that among his contemporaries he was a well-known and much-admired public figure. In spite of his close association with Brutus, Cassius was considered a formidable political and especially military force in his own right, far more than his erudite brother-in-law. When Antony was informed of Cassius' death at Philippi, he declared the war *fait accompli*, despite the fact that Brutus lived on, declaring simply: *vici*.³⁷³

³⁶⁹ On Plutarch's use of parallels: Tatum (2010) 1-22.

³⁷⁰ On the structure of the Plutarchan book and the significance of childhood: Duff (2011).

³⁷¹ Plut. *Brut.* 1.2 (tr. Perrin).

³⁷² See Plut. *Brut.* 40, in which Plutarch performs some logical contortions to lay the blame for Brutus' decision to face Antony at the feet of Cassius.

³⁷³ Plut. *Brut.* 29.5; Cass. Dio 44.34 cf Rawson (1986) 119.

2.ii. Early life and career

Cassius' career falls into three distinct phases, the first of which is characterized by its traditionalist focus on military achievements, rather than the increasingly popular route of deriving prestige from oratory.³⁷⁴ He was born around 86 BC into the Cassii Longinii, a plebian *gens* of "steady, but unspectacular, lineage."³⁷⁵ They had perhaps a reputation for resistance to tyranny; family coinage shows a devotion to *libertas*, but Cicero's assertion that they were a family *quae non modo dominatum, sed ne potentiam quidem cuiusquam ferre potuit* - "who could not bear, I do not say domination, but even the superior power of another" likely has little foundation.³⁷⁶ As a boy he was pugnacious and disdainful of social hierarchies, as illustrated in Plutarch's depiction of a schoolyard spat with Faustus Sulla, the son of the dictator:

ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐν τοῖς παισὶ μεγαληγορῶν τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς ἐπὶ μὲν μοναρχίαν: ὁ δὲ Κάσσιος ἐπαναστὰς κονδύλους ἐνέτριβεν αὐτῷ. βουλομένων δὲ τῶν ἐπιτρόπων τοῦ Φαύστου καὶ οἰκείων ἐπεξιέναι καὶ δικάζεσθαι Πομπηίου ἐκώλυσε, καὶ συναγαγὼν εἰς ταὐτὸ τοὺς παῖδας ἀμφοτέρους ἀνέκρινε περὶ τοῦ πράγματος, ἔνθα δὴ λέγεται τὸν Κάσσιον εἰπεῖν ἄγε δὴ, ὦ Φαῦστε, τόλμησον ἐναντίον τούτου φθέγξασθαι τὸν λόγον ἐκεῖνον ἐφ' ᾧ παρωξύνθη, ἵνα σου πάλιν ἐγὼ συντρίψω τὸ στόμα.³⁷⁷

For when he [Faustus] was boastful among the boys and promoted his father's single rule, Cassius stood up to him and gave him a knuckle sandwich. The stewards and family of Faustus wished to prosecute and pass judgement, but

³⁷⁴ On the lessening importance of military activity in Roman politics see above Ch. 2, Rosenstein (2011) 143-4.

³⁷⁵ Sampson (2008) 153, who puts his birthdate somewhere in the late 80s BC, ignoring the fact that he was older than Brutus (born 85BC) cf. Ryan (1996b) 41. Tac. *Ann.* 6.15.1 on the reputation of the *Cassii*.

³⁷⁶ Cic. *Phil.* 2.26, repeated at Livy 2.41. See Syme (1939) 59 and Africa (1978) 617 on its probable baselessness. Coinage: Rawson (1986) 118-9; Crawford *RRC* 452.

³⁷⁷ Plut. *Brut.* 9.1 (tr. Perrin). To decry Sulla's dictatorship was a brave but not unpopular action. Says Brunt (1988) 463, "we may think that the boy Cassius vented opinions which his elders discreetly reserved for talk in private."

Pompey stopped that. Having brought the boys together, he asked them both about the event. Then, it is said, Cassius said “Come on Faustus! Dare to say before this man the words that spurred me on and again I'll make mush of your mouth!””

While we know little of his entry to the *cursus honorum*, save that it followed a sojourn to Rhodes for tuition under Archelaus, there is much evidence for Cassius' continuing bravery, forthrightness and lack of respect for authority in accounts of his proquaestorship under Crassus, whose ill-fated Parthian campaign of 53 BC was either a bold move on behalf of Rome or a folly of monumental scale.³⁷⁸ Playing Cassandra to the expedition, Cassius was, according to Plutarch, outspoken in his condemnation of the poor decisions of his general, and the duplicity of their tribal escorts, which culminated in an incident in which he bawled out a barbarian guide for having "persuaded Crassus to pour his army into a yawning desert."³⁷⁹ Perhaps as a result of his consistent refusal to submit to Crassus, and his attention to the army's morale, the troops turned to him amid the confusion of the crushing defeat at Carrhae, and all who survived did so under his guidance.³⁸⁰ He led a small detachment of five hundred men back into the city as Crassus capitulated, and thence to Syria.³⁸¹ While

³⁷⁸ Rhodian education: App. *Bell. Civ.* 4.65. Plut. *Crass.* 18.4 identifies him as a quaestor and Broughton *MRR.* 2.320 takes this as sufficient proof of his holding that office at the time of Carrhae. Linderski (1975), however, points out that this is unlikely given Cassius' age and the fact that there were no magisterial elections in 54 and, even if there had been, Cassius would have been in Syria. A proquaestorship makes far more sense given Cassius' absence from Rome.

³⁷⁹ Plut. *Crass.* 22.4: τίσι δὲ φαρμάκοις καὶ γοητείαις ἔπεισας Κράσσον εἰς ἐρημίαν ἀχανῆ καὶ βύθιον ἐκχέαντα τὴν στρατιὰν ὁδὸν ὀδεύειν Νομάδι ληστάρχη μᾶλλον ἢ Ῥωμαίων ἀτοκράτορι προσήκουσας; Other occasions on which he quibbled with strategy: Plut. *Crass.* 18.4; 20.2; 23.3-4;

³⁸⁰ Plut. *Crass.* 18.2-4: Cassius asks Crassus to reconsider strategy in light of the demoralization of the troops, cf. Frenzo (2003) 74. On the willingness of the troops to follow Cassius: Cass. Dio 40.28.

³⁸¹ Plut. *Crass.* 24.4-5.

this was a daring and ultimately successful move, it was over the course of the following two years that Cassius truly made his name as a soldier.³⁸²

With Crassus and his son dead, the proquaestor was left as the sole authority in a Syria now bordered by aggrieved and newly emboldened Parthians.³⁸³ Yet he managed to form two legions from the remnants of Crassus' army, with which he fended off border incursions for two years, thus securing the province; crushed an insurrection in Judea; and filled Rome's coffers with the wealth of those he defeated.³⁸⁴ He exhibited not just rapacity but great military and political nous; his authority was largely *de facto*, and only retroactively confirmed by the Senate in light of the success of his command.³⁸⁵ He had laid his hopes on the prospect that his restoration of Rome's glory in the East would win the approval of those in authority, and indeed the gamble paid off; Cicero wrote to him that he was being praised in the city for his opportunism as much as his success:

*pro rerum magnitudine quas gessisti tum pro opportunitate temporis gratulor, quod te de provincia decedentem summa laus et summa gratia provinciae prosecuta est.*³⁸⁶

"Yes, I congratulate you upon the magnitude of your success, and no less upon its timeliness, for you are leaving for Rome with the enthusiastic thanks and plaudits of your province ringing in your ears."

³⁸² Among modern scholars only Sampson (2008) 148 threatens the consensus that Cassius showed exceptional martial prowess at Carrhae, asserting that his "military abilities had been seriously called into question." He suggests that the siege of the town was only possible because Cassius gave away his general's whereabouts in response to a false treaty attempt: Plut. *Crass.* 28.3-4 cf. Sampson (2008) 139.

³⁸³ Bellinger (1944) 61.

³⁸⁴ Cicero (*Fam.* 15.14; SB 106), then governing Cilicia, attempts to take credit for Cassius' repulsions of the Parthians, see Retsö (2003) 396. On his harsh but successful methods in Judea: Jos. *Ant.* 14.272, see also *Ant.* 14.119-122; *War.* 1.180-81; 1.218 cf. Yoder (2014) 213.

³⁸⁵ Gray-Fow (1990) 182-3.

³⁸⁶ Cic. *Fam.* 15.4.2 (SB 110). See Hall (2009) 52-54 for Cicero's motivations. Cassius was abruptly relieved of his command by Bibulus, a move of questionable legality: Cass. Dio. 40.31.

Upon his return to Rome in 49 BC, Cassius would have found himself in a prime position for continued ascent of the *cursus honorum*. Thanks to his military exploits, public opinion would have been overwhelmingly positive, and he could now rely on a boost in name recognition to enhance his visibility in future elections (these factors perhaps sealed for him the tribuneship of the plebs in that year).³⁸⁷ Even before his departure to Syria, he had augmented his familial respectability by marrying Junia Tertia, the half-sister of the immensely popular Brutus and daughter of Servilia, one of Rome's most influential matrons, and he counted among his friends and benefactors not just Cicero, whom he had courted since boyhood, but a number of other senators.³⁸⁸ Such was his *existimatio* that it must have seemed to him that every door in Rome stood open, and to obtain the ultimate prize, a consulship, all he had to do was follow the steps of the *cursus honorum*.³⁸⁹ Yet one thing stood in his way: the struggle between Caesar and Pompey to fill the power vacuum created by the death of their former *triumvir* Crassus.

³⁸⁷ Broughton *MRR*. 2.320. See Waller (2011) 18-38 for a survey confirming the strong effects of military victories and defeats on subsequent elections. See also Van der Blom (2016) 57.

³⁸⁸ Cic. *Fam.* 15.14.3 (SB 106) mentions the family tie to Brutus and lists "Paullus, Curio and Furnius" as allies of Cassius. Yakobson (1999) 110 on networking; Means and Dixon (1974) 212n7; Africa (1978) 607-9 on the influence of Servilia.

³⁸⁹ Dettenhofer (1992) 129: "Mit diesen Voraussetzungen und der mit seinem Namen verbundenen *existimatio* müßten ihm in Rom alle Türen offenstehen."

2.iii. Caesar, civil war, and conversion

Confronted with the prospect of civil war, Cassius committed himself with gusto to the Pompeian cause, distinguishing himself so much as a naval commander that unlike the loyal but unremarkable Pansa, he was eventually to find his exploits catalogued in Caesar's commentaries.³⁹⁰ He had, however, chosen the losing side, and although he personally escaped defeat at the hands of Caesar, by the August of 48 BC, the faction had already suffered a devastating loss from which it would not recover.³⁹¹ After Pompey's flight from Pharsalus, Cassius found himself at a crossroads. It was obvious that there was to be no decisive end to the conflict, and soon after Pompey was killed and his faction taken over by his son Gnaeus, a man Cassius resented for his arrogance and cruelty.³⁹² After a pause to consider his position at Rhodes, he followed the example of his brother-in-law Brutus and put himself at the mercy of Caesar, against whom he had so boldly fought.³⁹³

This was not so reckless a move as it might seem: Caesar had gone to great lengths to promote himself as a merciful forgiver of those who had wronged him. He had, at the outset of hostilities, dramatically spared the defeated L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, the first to make a military stand against him, and by his own account restored to him the six million sesterces he had brought on campaign.³⁹⁴ After Pharsalus, he had his soldiers seek out Brutus to ensure he had escaped unharmed, and when he heard of Pompey's cruel death at the hands of those he considered friends,

³⁹⁰ Caes. *Bell. Civ.* 3.101. See above Ch. 2.iii.

³⁹¹ His armies crushed at Pharsalus, Pompey fled to presumed allies in Egypt, only to perish at their hands: Plut. *Pomp.* 79.

³⁹² Cic. *Fam.* 15.19 (SB 216): *scis Gnaeum quam sit fatuus, scis quo modo crudelitatem virtutem putet*. Shackleton Bailey (1977) 382 asserts that *virtutem* here is closer to "manly courage" than to virtue.

³⁹³ Cic. *Att.* 11.13.1. (SB 224) Or perhaps he was encouraged by his brother and cousin, who had both taken the Caesarian side: Caes. *Bell. Alex.* 51.1 cf. Gelzer (1968) 241; Brunt (1988) 469n100. There is some confusion about the exact sequence of events surrounding Cassius' pardon, thanks to his conflation in some sources with L. Cassius (see Dettenhoffer (1992) 214n18), and contradictory reports on his location in Cic. *Att.* 11.13.2 (SB 224) and 11.15.2 (226).

³⁹⁴ Caes. *Bell. Civ.* 1.23. On the stand at Corfinum: Burns (1966) 74-95.

he is reported to have wept.³⁹⁵ With a keen sense of the popularity this policy earned him, he would go on to mint coins depicting a planned temple to the personified *Clementia*, which was to have borne the legend *Clementia Caesaris*.³⁹⁶ Some scholars see the Epicurean hand of Pansa in this tactic, due to his later work restoring the defeated Pompeians to Rome, and it is certainly in keeping with the *Kepos'* teachings on the treatment of potential allies.³⁹⁷ This is perhaps a stretch in terms of evidence, yet what cannot be denied is its importance and impact for Caesar's career. After the Ides, Pansa's colleague Hirtius would lament that: *clementia illi malo fuisse, qua si usus non esset, nihil ei tale accidere potuisse* - "clemency was his undoing, but for which nothing of the sort could have happened to him."³⁹⁸

Cassius obtained his pardon thanks to this policy of mercy, no doubt aided by his reputation as a military commander, which would have made it clear to Caesar that it was much safer to have him as an ally than an enemy (although there would always be whispers that the way was smoothed by Brutus and his rumoured status as the illegitimate son of Caesar).³⁹⁹ His new master made him a military legate, but did not assign him a major command, perhaps out of "lingering distrust."⁴⁰⁰ It was now, among those against whom he had been fighting, deprived of martial autonomy, watching the cause for which he had battled so hard in disarray and facing defeat, that his old outlook could no longer serve him. In need of a drastic change of approach, he turned to philosophy.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁵ Plut. *Brut.* 5.1; *Pomp.* 80.5.

³⁹⁶ Plut. *Caes.* 57; App. *Bell. Civ.* 2.106.443. On the importance of *clementia* in Caesar's propaganda generally, see Balázs (1986) 243-244.

³⁹⁷ Fussl (1980) 68-9, see also Castner (1988) 71.

³⁹⁸ Cic. *Att.* 14.22 (SB 376).

³⁹⁹ The pardon: Cass. Dio 42.13.5; Cic. *Marc.* 21. Caesar's appreciation of Cassius' military skills: Dettenhofer (1992) 213. Brutus' paternity: Plut. *Brut.* 5.1.

⁴⁰⁰ Frölich *PW* s.v. Cassius (59) col. 1729; Epstein (1987) 567; Armstrong (2011) 111. Rawson (1983) 119 argues that he may have only been made a legate in 46, and therefore not seen combat at all, but her source (Cic. *Fam.* 6.6.10) is not necessarily referring to recent events.

⁴⁰¹ Among the scholars who approach Cassius' Epicureanism, only Frendo (2003) 75n25 posits adherence on his part during his early career, and this

seems to be a genuine mistake by a scholar for whom philosophy is not of much concern.

2.iv. The Correspondence with Cicero

Cicero and Cassius had been exchanging letters since at least the latter's proquaestorship in Syria, but almost all of the preserved correspondence between the two, five of the six letters, dates to the period after the latter's pardon from Caesar.⁴⁰² We have one letter from Cicero to Cassius in 47 BC, and another in 46, each musing on their mutual status as non-combatants, and the latter referring obliquely to philosophy.⁴⁰³ It is unclear how Cassius responded to these, but the two do seem to have been in touch. Then, in January of 46, there is a flurry of activity, mostly on the older man's part. Cassius has stopped responding, and Cicero laments this fact in two letters penned one after the other in quick succession. Here his tone becomes much sharper as he moves his focus to criticisms of Cassius' philosophy, which he now makes explicitly clear to be Epicureanism.⁴⁰⁴ Cassius' prompt response, the only extant letter in which one of Cicero's Epicurean correspondents acknowledges and defends his own philosophy, dates to the same month and deals systematically with the jibes from both.⁴⁰⁵

The historical context of this sequence of letters and their conspicuously heavy emphasis on Epicurean philosophy has made them a source of much interest and puzzlement for modern scholars. The only consensus is that the exchange must be something more than it seems on the surface. Shackleton Bailey, in his commentary, points out that an important contextual reference is the death of Cicero's beloved daughter Tullia in the February of 45 BC, which had plunged him into deep mourning.⁴⁰⁶ Yet the letters place a heavy emphasis on humour, and several scholars identify this as the primary purpose of the exchange. A

⁴⁰²Cic. *Fam.* 15.14 (SB 106) is the earliest surviving letter, dating to October of 51 BC. The ancient editors disregard chronology in order to group the Cassius letters together: White (2010) 55; Gilbert (2015) 175.

⁴⁰³ Cic. *Fam.* 15.15 (SB 174) and 15.18 (213), respectively.

⁴⁰⁴ Cic. *Fam.* 15.17 (SB 214) and 15.16 (215).

⁴⁰⁵ Cic. *Fam.* 15.19 (SB 216). Gilbert (2015) 17 on the letter's unique status. Gordon (2013) 134 on the Epicurean epistolary tradition.

⁴⁰⁶ Shackleton Bailey (1977) 378. Tullia died from complications of childbirth, leaving Cicero inconsolable: *Att.* 12.14 (SB 251); *Fam.* 4.6 (249).

prime example is Griffin's categorization of these letters as "philosophical badinage," based on Haury's identification of Epicureanism as one of the primary sources of irony in the correspondence, as is Clay's remark that Cicero is "twittering" Cassius.⁴⁰⁷ Assertions that this is a straightforward discussion of philosophical precepts likewise seem insufficient, however Maso is certainly right that this fits well with the narrative of Cicero's retreat into the intellectual precepts of his youth in the face of political impediment.⁴⁰⁸ Likewise, Baldwin is perceptive to note that both parties use the exchange as an opportunity to exhibit their command of the Greek language, yet this cannot be its primary objective.⁴⁰⁹ Hall and White are somewhat closer to a satisfying explanation with their observations of Cicero's attempts to affirm and solidify his relationship with Cassius, but it is Dettenhofer, whose radical interpretation of the letters as a "*philosophical code*" for current political affairs, who gets, I think, the closest.⁴¹⁰ I shall demonstrate that the primary concern of the letters, particularly those from January 45, is Cassius' commitment to the Caesarian camp, but that philosophy is no arbitrary signifier, but a fundamental part of his allegiance.⁴¹¹

47-46 BC

In the first letter postdating Cassius' reconciliation with Caesar, sent in Sextilis (August) of 47, there is a presumption on the part of Cicero that

⁴⁰⁷ Griffin (1995) 342; Haury (1955) 221-2; Clay (2007) 641.

⁴⁰⁸ Maso (2015) 17. Armstrong (2011) 113, Fowler (2007) 408-9 and Benferhat (2005) 264 are characteristic of the former approach.

⁴⁰⁹ Baldwin (1992) 3.

⁴¹⁰ Hall (2009) 29-77 on "affiliative politeness" as Cicero's strategy for cementing *amicitiae*, *Ibid.* 68 and 52-6 on Cassius specifically. White (2010) 67-76 on Cicero's decreasing formality and Cassius' refusal to follow suit. Dettenhoffer (1990) 249-256 and (1992) 221 posits that Epicureanism here stands for loyalty to Caesar.

⁴¹¹ Also deserving mention is the idea of Gilbert (2015) 201-217 that Cicero invokes a philosophical discussion with Cassius as research for his treatises, primarily *De Finibus* books 1 and 2. Although there is certainly some echo of this correspondence as an intermediary between Cicero's source Lucr. *DRN.* 4.779-85 and 4.794-99, there is nothing to suggest that this was deliberately solicited rather than arising organically.

he and Cassius are of the same mind regarding their current situation.⁴¹² Such is Cicero's anxiety over the choices that led him there, however, that he reiterates his, and what he perceives to be Cassius' motivations for seeking pardon after Pompey's defeat at Pharsalus. He wanted to find a decisive end to the drawn out conflict, he says.⁴¹³ He did not want to further enfeeble the Republic by fighting the inevitable.⁴¹⁴ He takes credit for the choice of both men to withdraw from the Republican cause, but acknowledges that Cassius has played the better hand and now finds himself in a more tenable position:

*Nos tamen in consilio pari casu dissimili usi sumus. tu enim eam partem petisti ut et consiliis interesses et, quod maxime curam levat, futura animo prospicere posses; ego, qui festinavi ut Caesarem in Italia viderem (sic enim arbitrabamur) eumque multis honestissimis viris conservatis redeuntem ad pacem currentem, ut aiunt, incitarem, ab illo longissime et absum et afui... Qua re velim pro tua perpetua erga me benevolentia scribas ad me quid videas, quid sentias, quid expectandum, quid agendum nobis existimes. magni erunt mihi tuae litterae. atque utinam primis illis quas Luceria miseris paruissem! sine ulla enim molestia dignitatem meam retinuissem.*⁴¹⁵

"We thought alike, but we fared differently. You made for a position in which you would be present at the making of decisions and able to foresee events to come, the best comfort for an anxious mind. I made haste to see Caesar in Italy (so we thought), on his way home after sparing many valuable lives, and to

⁴¹² I.e. that neither is any longer fighting for the Pompeian cause, and both have sought reconciliation with Caesar. Cassius, however, has been far more successful in this endeavour, as we shall see.

⁴¹³ Cic. *Fam.* 15.15.1 (SB 174): *ut uno proelio putarem, si non totam causam, at certe nostrum iudicium definiri convenire.* Lintott (2008) 310 suggests that Cicero refers here to "the conversations they had at the outbreak of the civil war," yet these sentiments, if expressed so early in the conflict, would have betrayed an oddly dispassionate and mercenary attitude. It is more likely that this exchange took place in Cassius' correspondence from Luceria, or as Shackleton-Bailey (1977) 309 theorizes, in a meeting at Patrae after Pharsalus.

⁴¹⁴ The only people who criticize their choice are those who would prefer the Republic to *imminutam et debilitatam manere (ibid.)*

⁴¹⁵ Cic. *Fam.* 15.15.3 (SB 174) tr. adapted.

urge him to peace - spurring a willing horse, as they say. The consequence was that I have been, and still am, at a vast distance away from him...

So I would ask you, in virtue of your unfailing kindness toward me, to write to me about what you see and feel, what you think I have to expect and ought to do. A letter from you will mean a great deal to me. I only wish I had followed the advice from you in that first letter from Luceria. I should have kept my standing and avoided all unpleasantness.

There is no indication as yet that Cassius has adopted quietism. Rather, he seems to have manoeuvred himself to such a position as to be privy to Caesar's coming moves, perhaps in his capacity as a military legate.⁴¹⁶ He has apparently shown great *benevolentia* to Cicero, and even advised him in a letter from Luceria as to how exactly to gain Caesar's favour. Now Cicero presses him for inside information, in the hope that he can plan accordingly to regain his position and banish lingering unpleasantness.

A little over a year later, Cicero writes again, this time betraying some impatience with Cassius. His letter carriers have apparently demanded the note just as it was started, and again Cicero finds himself in what he perceives to be a worse situation than Cassius:

*Longia epistula fuisset nisi eo ipso tempore petita esset a me cum iam iretur ad te, longior autem si φλόαρον aliquem habuissem; nam σπουδάσειν sine periculo vix possumus. 'ridere igitur' inquires 'possumus?' Non mehercule facillime; verum tamen aliam aberrationem a molestiis nullam habemus. 'ubi igitur' inques 'philosophia?' tua quidem iucunda, mea molesta est; pudet enim servire. itaque facio me alias res agere ne convivium 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.*⁴¹⁷

“This would have been a longer letter, had it not been begged of me just as one to you was going out. Longer even, if it had featured some banter – speaking seriously, though, is something we can hardly do without danger. Is joking possible then, you will ask. Well it certainly isn't very easy, but we have no

⁴¹⁶ Cic. *Fam.* 6.6.10 (SB 234).

⁴¹⁷ Cic. *Fam.* 15.18 (SB 213). Text and tr. adapted, see below n419.

other means of diversion from our troubles. Where then is philosophy? Yours is pleasurable, but mine is a scold - to be a slave makes me ashamed of myself. So I make believe to be otherwise occupied, so as not to have Plato's reproaches in my ears.

Of Spain, there is nothing 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 love me, as you have from boyhood."

Cicero, in Rome while Cassius has apparently found safety elsewhere, still presumes that Cassius shares his negative sentiments about Caesar, and would be plotting his downfall were it possible to do so *sine periculo*. Cassius, Cicero alleges, is able to find levity amid the current situation, a possibility he himself rejects as impossible with the oath *mehercule!* In the same category he puts the pursuit of philosophy. His own Academic leanings shame him for his willingness to submit to a dictator, for to do so is, in the school's terms, *servire* - to be a slave.⁴¹⁸ Cassius' choice of adherence, however, is altogether more compatible with his role under Caesar, and is pleasurable to boot.⁴¹⁹ It seems clear from this point that Cassius' chosen philosophy for the situation is Epicureanism, and that Cicero perceives him to have converted at least partly as a means for distracting himself from his hatred of Caesar and his need to submit to him.⁴²⁰ The tone, generally, is less sure than in the last letter. Cicero no longer has cause to thank Cassius for his kindnesses, and the parting

⁴¹⁸ Plato *Rep.* 386b; 387b argued that slavery was worse than death, and that the worst form of slavery was submission to tyranny: *Rep.* 564a. See McConnell (2015) 22. On *pudor* in this context, see Kaster (2005) 47; 169n73.

⁴¹⁹ Unfortunately the text here is significantly corrupt. I have followed Cary and Mendelssohn in their formulation of *Tua quidem iucunda* (yours is pleasurable), but Shackleton Bailey (1977) 376 proposes the substitution of *in culina* for *iucunda*, rendering the fragment "though yours [your philosophy] is based in the kitchen..." Both reconstructions are based on what we perceive to be contemporary folk prejudices against Epicureanism, *iucunda* of course evoking allegations of empty hedonism and *in culina* referring to the false charges of gluttony sometimes levelled against Epicureans (as in Cicero's own *In Pisonem*).

⁴²⁰ Belliotti (2009) 110: "Such action is consistent with Epicureanism: minimize political involvement, accept governments that nurture relatively tranquil conditions"

entreaty to "continue to love me" has a note of desperation, especially in light of how Cassius has let his messengers behave towards Cicero. The distance between the two men seems to have increased, and Cicero seeks to close it even as he reproaches his correspondent.

45 BC

When next Cicero writes to Cassius, the relationship between the two seems to have cooled yet further. Cicero is still plagued by letter carriers who make demands of him while carrying nothing from their master, a fact he bemoans while maintaining an air of friendliness:

praeposteros habes tabellarios ; etsi me quidem non offendunt ; sed tamen, cum a me discedunt, flagitant litteras, cum ad me veniunt, nullas adferunt. atque id ipsum facerent commodius, si mihi aliquid spati ad scribendum darent ; sed petasati veniunt, comites ad portam exspectare dicunt. ergo ignosces ; alteras iam habebis has brevis ; sed exspecta πάντα περὶ πάντων. etsi quid ego me tibi purgo, cum tui ad me inanes veniant, ad te cum epistulis revertantur?

421

"Your letter-carriers have behaved preposterously; for while they have not personally insulted me, they do however demand letters when they leave me, and when they come to me, they bring none. And on that note, they would have made things easier if they had given me some delay in order to write, but they come to me in their travelling robes, saying that their companions are waiting at the gate. Therefore, forgive me, you are going to have a second short letter, but expect full amends. Anyway, why am I making apologies, when your men come to me empty handed, and return to you with letters?"

Although he does not say so explicitly, Cicero resents Cassius for making him shoulder the entirety of the risk inherent in their correspondence, and for failing to maintain the pretence of intimacy while doing so. Cassius clearly doesn't want long musings on their mutual

⁴²¹ Cic. *Fam.* 15.17 (SB 214). Translation partially adapted from Shackleton Bailey (1977) 377.

affection, as Cicero is prone to, so he sends messengers dressed in the *petasus*, the robe of the traveller, to harry him for brief updates from Rome. Cicero effusively and pointedly apologizes for the length of the note, but cannot hold back from pointing out that the fault truly lies with his correspondent, who is the only one actually receiving letters. He does not say whether his own messengers have visited Cassius, but if they have, they have been sent along without letters, a massive snub.⁴²² The *non offendunt*, then, is disingenuous, and the pretence of an apology merely a face-saving exercise for both parties.

Cicero then goes on to impart some snippets of information about current events in Rome. One of these is the mysterious departure of Pansa from Rome, discussed above in Chapter 2.i and iii as evidence for both his adherence and his lack of military prowess (I have not reproduced the translation here, but repeated the Latin for ease of reference).⁴²³ There are, however, further layers of meaning pertaining to the relationship between Cicero and Cassius, their philosophies, and their factional loyalties:

*Pansa noster paludatus a. d. iii K. Ian. profectus est ut quivis intellegere posset, id quod tu nuper dubitare coepisti, τὸ καλὸν δι' αὐτὸ αἰρετὸν esse. nam quod multos miseriis levavit et quod se in his malis hominem praebuit, mirabilis eum virorum bonorum benevolentia prosecuta est.*⁴²⁴

There is, of course, a jibe buried in this flattering account of Pansa's exit. Cicero is accusing Cassius of adopting a policy of self-interest that even Pansa, an overt Epicurean, has seen fit to abandon in response to the current political climate.⁴²⁵ He is suggesting that Pansa is following the moral precepts of the *boni*, rather than the exhortations of the *Kepos*, and that the public approbation signals that he has finally made the right choice. The question implicit is: if even Pansa is willing to put himself in

⁴²² White (2010) 14.

⁴²³ Above Ch. 2.iii.

⁴²⁴ Cic. *Fam.* 15.17.3 (SB 214).

⁴²⁵ Again, like Shackleton Bailey, I am at a loss as to what it was Pansa was setting out to do, but it was clearly risky enough to preclude self-interest as a motivation.

danger for the public good, why are you following such a risk-averse strategy, and how can you justify it in philosophical terms? Cicero is, if not criticizing, at least questioning Cassius' political tactics, which had been gradually tending more towards quietism. In 47 we saw that he was active in Caesar's councils, giving advice to other ex-Pompeians, and possibly acting as a source of information for Cicero. By 46 he was declining to discuss such serious matters, preferring to joke or discuss philosophy. Now, sequestered at Brundisium, he is failing even to do this. Cicero's concern is that he has become sincere in the loyalties that he had previously been feigning, to the Caesarian faction and the Epicurean school.

The choice of Pansa as *exemplum* highlights the innate connection between these two allegiances. He is for his contemporaries, as discussed above, emblematic of both the coterie of loyal Caesarians, and the group of Epicureans therein and, as we have seen, the latter helped to facilitate a successful career under the former.⁴²⁶ If Cassius has truly "gone native," Cicero can no longer trust him, and this is a suggestion he cannot bear, so he seeks to provoke his former ally into revealing that his original loyalties still hold.

This concern for the preservation of the relationship is also evident in Cicero's sign-off, in which he returns to the theme of the inequality of their correspondence. He asks Cassius not to forget him when next he sends letters back to Rome (*cum dabis posthac aliquid domum litterarum, mei memineras*), prefacing this request with the formal and ingratiating *amabo te*.⁴²⁷ He himself, he says, will never neglect to do the same, even though Cassius has clearly long been taking this for granted. Reciprocity

⁴²⁶ This dual allusion is therefore not, as supposed by Dettenhoffer (1990) a "philosophical code," which would necessitate an arbitrary connection between the frame of reference and the true subject. See Valachova (2018) 157.

⁴²⁷ Cic. *Fam.* 15.17.4 (SB 214). While Hall (2009) 80-81 supposes that this formulation is used here to appeal to Cassius as an "urbane younger man," I think that it has the same air of self-abasement as when he uses it to beg Atticus to handle his affairs in Rome in *Att.* 16.2.2 (412) (*sed amabo te, mi Attice - videsne quam blande?*). As Hall himself points out, MacCary and Willcock's (1976) 200 survey of the phrase in Roman comedy finds its use to be "limited almost exclusively to female characters".

between the two has been a concern of Cicero's since their earliest correspondence: his instruction to Cassius to write to him regularly upon his return to Rome led White to remark that "nowhere does Cicero make more explicit that the ultimate point of engaging in correspondence was to keep a relationship active while two people were separated."⁴²⁸

Cicero's next letter has a surface levity that belies its author's desperation. Composed almost immediately after its predecessor, it continues the project of probing Cassius on his commitment to Caesar and his new philosophy, but here the former is concealed while the latter is made more explicit. It is here that Cicero finally names Epicureanism as his correspondent's chosen school:

*Fit enim nescio qui ut quasi coram adesse videare cum scribo aliquid ad te, neque id κατ' εἰδώλων φαντασίας ut dicunt tui amici novi, qui putant etiam διανοητικὰς φαντασίας spectris Catianis excitari; nam ne te fugiat, Catius Insuber, Επικόρειος, qui nuper est mortuus, quae ille Gargettius et iam ante Democritus εἰδῶλα, hic 'spectra' nominat. His autem spectris etiam si oculi possent feriri, quod quae velis ipsa incurrent, animus qui possit ego non video; doceas tu me oportebit cum salvus veneris. in meane potestate sit spectrum tuum, ut, simul ac mihi collibitum sit de te cogitare, illud occurat? neque solum de te, qui mihi haeres in medullis, sed si insulam Britanniam coepero cogitare, eius εἰδώλον mihi advolabit ad pectus?*⁴²⁹

"I don't know how it is, but when I write something to you, I seem to see you here in front of me. I am not speaking according to the doctrine of appearances of images, to use the terminology of your new friends, who think that even mental appearances are aroused by Catius' *spectres*. For in case you have not noticed it, what he of Gargettus, and Democritus before him, called 'images' are termed 'spectres' by the late lamented Catius, Insubrian and Epicurean. Now, even granting that those spectres could strike the eyes, because they run upon the pupils of their own accord, I for one don't see how they can strike the mind – you will have to teach me when you are safely home again. Are we really to suppose that my spectre is in your control, so that as soon as I take a

⁴²⁸ White (2010) 28.

⁴²⁹ Cic. *Fam.* 15.16 (SB 215).

fancy to think about you, up it comes? And not only you, who are in my heart all the time, but if I start thinking about the island of Britain, will its image fly into my brain?"

The attack on Epicurean physics is not as arbitrary as it might seem. Cicero has already criticized Epicurean self-interest, the aspect of the philosophy that he finds most morally repugnant, and, having failed to elicit a response, he has turned to the aspect he considers most ludicrous.⁴³⁰ It is easy to see how Epicurean visual theory gained this honour: the account whereby thin films of the primary particles constantly emanate from objects and drift into the eyes of their beholders must have seemed absurd two millennia before the discovery of photons.⁴³¹ We see Cicero summarily dismiss this notion in Book One of *De Finibus*, and joke about it in a letter to Atticus on the subject of architecture.⁴³² Here he questions how these films can also be responsible for the imagination – a valid objection, the perceptiveness of which has led Gilbert to believe that Cicero was here trying to elicit an Epicurean response from Cassius as research for *De Finibus*, the Epicurean section of which he finished in May of 45 BC.⁴³³ More likely, he was at the time researching for that treatise and had detected in Lucretius' special treatment of the issue a weakness in the Epicurean physical system, and an amusing one, to boot.⁴³⁴

⁴³⁰ In *Fam.* 15.18 (SB 213)

⁴³¹ Usener Fr. 282; Lucr. *DRN.* 2.67-76; 4.143-167; Diog. Laert. 10.46-52.

⁴³² Cic. *Fin.* 1.23-24; *Att.* 2.3.2 (SB 23) - Atticus has accused Cicero of putting too-narrow windows in his new villa; Cicero responds that surely the *eidola* can fit through anyway. See also Griffin (1995) 332n31.

⁴³³ On *eidola* and the imagination: Usener Fr. 317; Lucr. *DRN.* 4.777 cf. Gilbert (2015) 203. In *Att.* 13.5 (SB 312) from June that year Cicero writes that he is sending Atticus 'Torquatus,' the book of *De Finibus* in which the Epicurean argument is laid out. In May (*Att.* 13.32; 305) he mentioned that the manuscript was in Rome.

⁴³⁴ Lucr. *DRN.* 4.777-778: *Multaque in his rebus quaerentur multaque clarandumst, plane si res exponere avemus.* In this passage, continuing to line 822, Lucretius poses some questions similar to that of Cicero (a parallel first noted by Lambinus: Smith (1992) 338na). Do the images wait around for our imagination to summon them? (Yes, apparently.) How do they move? (They don't, but merely lurk like the pages of a flipbook, numerous and diverse, and always close at hand.) It is unsurprising that Cicero found the answers as ludicrous as the questions.

Simultaneously, Cicero launches an attack on the intellectual merits of Cassius' new school. He expresses disdain for the Latin rendering of the Epicurean and Democritean term εἰδῶλα as *spectra*, an innovation he attributes to Catus Insuber, likely one of the popularizing Roman Epicureans to whom he depicts the multitudes flocking in the *Tusculan Disputations*.⁴³⁵ While the expression of Greek philosophical precepts in the Latin language is one of the great projects of this phase of Cicero's life, this particular term is one he leaves in its original form, clearly feeling that *spectra* is beneath him as a philosopher and a linguist.⁴³⁶ He is, then, denigrating Cassius' new school for its inurbanity, challenging his correspondent to either defend or rebuke it, to state where he stands in relation to his *amici novi* and their creed.

Cicero takes a condescending tone when introducing this point: *nam ne te fugiat*, he writes, as if the language and the doctrine might have actually escaped Cassius. This demonstrates awareness on his part of the participation-belief sequence of Epicurean conversion, which he also uses as a weapon against Velleius in *De Natura Deorum*, where he challenges: "For you had decided that you had to be an Epicurean before knowing these theories; thus you must either admit in your heart these outrageous notions or surrender the title of your school of adoption."⁴³⁷ The same allegation, we have seen, was leveled at Piso in *In Pisonem*; Cicero claimed that he had only the merest notion that Epicureanism was a philosophy based on pleasure when he threw himself wholeheartedly into his affiliation (*quod acceperat, testificari, tabellas obsignare velle, Epicurum diserte dicere existimare* – He attested to what he'd grasped, he wanted to sign up, he declared that Epicurus was a clever man.")⁴³⁸ As the letter continues, Cicero suggests that Cassius has followed the same path into Epicureanism:

⁴³⁵ Cic. *Tusc.* 4.6-7. Catus is attested only here and possibly Horace *Sat.* 2.4.1, where he is credited with a work of four books entitled *de rerum natura et de summo bono*. See also Castner (1988) 32.

⁴³⁶ Cic. *Fin.* 1.21. He lays out his project in *Fin.* 1.4-10.

⁴³⁷ Cic. *Nat. Deo.* 1.66, see also Maso (2015) 55; above Ch. 1.ii.

⁴³⁸ Cic. *Pis.* 69.

Sed haec posterius; tempto enim te quo animo accipias. si enim stomachabere et moleste feres, plura dicemus postulabimusque, ex qua αἰπέσει 'vi hominibus armatis' deiectus sis, in eam restituare. in hoc interdicto non solet addi 'in hoc anno.' qua re, si iam biennium aut triennium est cum virtuti nuntium remisisti delentus illecebris voluptatis, in integro res nobis erit.

Quamquam quicum loquor? cum uno fortissimo viro, qui, postea quam forum attigisti, nihil fecisti nisi plenissimum amplissimae dignitatis. in ista ipsa αἰπέσει metuo ne plus nervorum sit quam ego putarim si modo eam tu probas.

439

"But that's for later. For I am merely testing in what spirit you take it. For if you grumble and take it with vexation, I shall have more to say later, that you must be restored to that school from which you have defected "by the force of armed men". To this kind of interdiction is not usually added the condition "within the year", so even if it is two or three years since you divorced virtue and were charmed by the allurements of pleasure, it is still valid. But with whom am I speaking? With a very brave man who, having obtained office, has done nothing that has not enhanced his dignity. There must be more energy in that school of yours than I had thought, if you now esteem it."

Here Cicero accuses Cassius, like Piso, of being tempted away from virtue by pleasure, happily using *voluptas* as the equivalent of *hedonē*, despite the obvious difference in connotation between the two words, since it suits his purpose.⁴⁴⁰ This is to subtly paint Cassius as being driven by lust, an image reinforced by the term he uses for his abandonment of his previous values: *nuntium remittere*, usually used in the context of putting aside an unwanted wife.⁴⁴¹ This is quite a serious insult; when Cicero suggested that Piso was motivated by pleasure he did so as part of a deliberate attempt to harm his opponent's *existimatio* in response to what

⁴³⁹ Cic. *Fam.* 15.16.3 (SB 215).

⁴⁴⁰ Powell (1995) 299. This false equivalence is also employed in the philosophical dialogues, e.g. *Fin.* 2.12-13.

⁴⁴¹ Lewis and Short (1980) 1229b cf. Cic. *Att.* 1.13.3 (SB 13); *Or.* 1.40.183

he considered a grievous attack on himself.⁴⁴² Yet here, sandwiched between flamboyant expressions of affection, the barb seems designed only to provoke a response, an aim Cicero makes clear when he writes *tempto enim te quo animo accipias*.⁴⁴³ He is desperate to know how Cassius feels about him, and hopes that a wound to his pride will spur him into retaliation, thus reopening the lines of communication.

The insult is softened yet further by Cicero's injection of bombastic legalese. *vi hominibus armatis* (by the strength of armed men) and *in hoc anno* (within this year) are evocative of legal inscriptions, and the fact that Cicero is in no position here to prosecute Cassius even if he wished to gives them an air of hyperbole, and his show of ordering Cassius about only emphasizes his fear that he has lost influence over his young friend.⁴⁴⁴ A happy side effect of this stylistic choice (for the modern scholar) is that in his continuation of the theme, Cicero gives us a firm *terminus ante quem* for Cassius' conversion of two or three years before the writing of the letter (*biennium aut triennium*), when he jokes that the order to obey within a year still stands. This is significant not just as the most exact extant dating of a Roman Epicurean conversion, but because it puts his adoption of the philosophy in the same range of dates as his pardon from Caesar,

⁴⁴² Powell (2007) 3 on the aims of late-Republican invective. Cicero's assertion that Piso converted to Epicureanism for pleasure (*Pis.* 69) is discussed above Ch. 1.ii.

⁴⁴³ The tension between Cicero's flattery of Cassius and his criticisms of his philosophy has the effect of rendering the tone of the letter quite humorous, another way in which Cicero masks the seriousness of his inquiry into Cassius' loyalties. Humour plays a much greater role in Cicero's correspondence than in the rest of his work, and Epicureanism is often the butt of the joke (Haury (1955) esp. 164, 221-2, 226 and Griffin (1995) 333), but it should not be mistaken for the main purpose of this missive.

⁴⁴⁴ Shackleton-Bailey (1977) 381 Suggests that *vi hominibus armatis* is evocative of the civil war and implies that Cassius' conversion was spurred by the conflict. The surrounding phrases, e.g. *in integro... erit* – our case will be uncompromised – make clear that the context is legal. Significant too is the fact that Shackleton-Bailey's only parallel for his suggestion is from a passage by Tacitus, writing a century after Cicero. The phrase *vi hominibus armatis* also appears in Cicero's forensic speeches (e.g. *Cic. Caec.* 23; 89) and the similar *de vi armata* in property laws such as *Ulpian Edict* 69, lending further credence to the idea that he is here deliberately using legal imagery.

supporting the notion that his move to Epicureanism was prompted by his new political position, a notion that his own response only confirms.

Cassius' response

Cicero's strategy of alternate needling and flattery was clearly a success; Cassius' speedy response was dispatched from Brundisium towards the end of January 45. Probably to Cicero's dismay, however, it took the form of a comprehensive defense of both his philosophical and political allegiances.

Non me hercule in hac mea perigrinatione 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.

Pansam nostrum secunda voluntate hominum paludatum ex urbe exisse cum ipsius causa gaudeo tum me hercule 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 δι' αὐτὸ αἰρετόν esse; ἡδονὴν 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 ἔστιν ἡδέως ἄνευ τοῦ καλῶς καὶ δικαίως ζῆν.' itaque et Pansa, qui ἡδονὴν sequitur, virtutem retinet et ii qui a vobis φιλήδονοι vocantur sunt φιλόκαλοι καὶ φιλοδίκαιοι omnisque virtutes et colunt et retinent.⁴⁴⁵

"You may be sure that nothing I do in this sojourn of mine abroad is done more willingly than writing to you. It is as though I was chatting and joking with you in the flesh. That does not, however, come about because of Catius' spectres – in return for him I'll throw so many clodhopping Stoics back at you in my next letter that you'll declare Catius Athenian born!

⁴⁴⁵ Cic. *Fam.* 15.19.1-2 (SB 216).

I am glad that our friend Pansa left Rome in uniform amid general good will, both for his own sake and, let me add, for all our sakes. For I trust people will realize how intense and universal is hatred for cruelty and love for worth and clemency, and they will see how the prizes most sought and coveted by the wicked come to the good. It is hard to persuade men that Good is to be chosen *per se*; but that Pleasure and Peace of Mind are won by virtue, justice and Good is both true and easily argued. Epicurus himself, from whom all these sorry translators of his terms, Catius, Amafinius, etc. derive, says: 'To live pleasurably is not possible without living rightly and justly.' Thus it is that Pansa, whose goal is Pleasure, retains Virtue; and those whom your friends call Pleasure-lovers are Good-lovers and Justice-lovers, practising and retaining all the virtues."

Cassius begins by at once assuring Cicero of his continued affection and intention to maintain their relationship, blaming his lack of correspondence on his *perigrinatio* – his wanderings. He is out of Rome and moving from place to place, so it is, he implies, difficult for him to coordinate correspondence. This is a mere platitude; Cicero knows full well that Cassius has managed to find a way to facilitate letters going in the opposite direction. It could, of course, also be a reference to his political disfavour in the Caesarian camp – he had, at this point, been appointed in a unilateral move by the dictator as praetor peregrinus for the following year, the lesser office of that rank, a fact that we will see became more and more unbearable for such an accomplished man.⁴⁴⁶ He would then be inferring that his position made it risky to communicate with other former enemies of Caesar. Having reassured Cicero and made his (feeble) excuses he goes on, just as his correspondent had hoped, to counter the insults leveled at him and his new philosophy.

The first Ciceronian attack to be parried is the one of least consequence – the dismissal of Epicurean cultural capital. To show that he is unbothered by being associated with Catius, Cassius invokes Amafinius, another of the popularizing Epicureans, then casually disavows both as *mali verborum interpretes* – simultaneously bad conveyors of

⁴⁴⁶ Appointment as *praetor peregrinus*: Plut. *Brut.* 7.2; Cass. Dio. 43.51.2-9.

Epicureanism and poor linguists (they are not just incapable of putting across the Master's message, but even his words – *verborum* – themselves).⁴⁴⁷ The retort is in good humour, although Cassius acknowledges Cicero's slight, teasing that '*pro quo*' he will generate his own list of Stoics who would fail to meet his correspondent's high standards of literary merit.⁴⁴⁸ Catius, he says, will look like a native Athenian – *Athenis natum*, by comparison, perhaps a reference to Cicero's most dear and most cultured friend, the Epicurean Pomponius Atticus, whose cognomen reflected his urbanity, philhellenism and linguistic ability.⁴⁴⁹ Then, in a move that should come as no surprise to Cicero, who, having known him since boyhood, would be aware of his studies on Rhodes, Cassius displays his own aptitude for Greek, quoting liberally and somewhat freely from Epicurus' *Letter to Menoecus*.⁴⁵⁰

In doing so, he simultaneously defends two more aspects of his adherence to Epicureanism: his friendship with Pansa and the ethical framework of the philosophy. He is explicit about the former, echoing Cicero's report and its details of Pansa's dress and his reception, and adding that he rejoices in it – *gaudeo*. He then demonstrates how unthreatened he is by Cicero's attack on Epicurean morality by reinforcing and even strengthening its first premise – that Pansa's recent actions have earned him enormous goodwill from his peers. Pansa is not just the object of *benevolentia*, as in Cicero's formulation, but his *clementia* and *probitas*

⁴⁴⁷ Amafinius: Castner (1989) 7; Cic. *Tusc.* 4.3.7; *Acad. post.* 1.2.5. Canfora (2003) 43 suggests that Cassius' failure to name Lucretius here suggests that he was unaware of him.

⁴⁴⁸ This comment raises the possibility that Cassius' previous affiliation was to the Stoa, for Cicero's own preference is the Academy. Sedley (1997) 41, however, argues that Cassius was also an Academic. Possibly he is simply teasing Cicero for his favourable attitude to Stoics, especially Panaetius, the inspiration for *de Officiis*: Rosillo-López (2018) 256.

⁴⁴⁹ Cic. *Att.* 2.1.3 (SB 21); *Fin.* 5.4. See also Shackleton Bailey (1965) 3-4.

⁴⁵⁰ Baldwin (1992) 4 calculates that Cassius is "equal to Cicero's raillery and Graecisms." His inference that Cassius learned Greek as part of his conversion (*ibid.* 3) however, does not take into account Cassius' aforementioned schooling on Rhodes (*App. Bell. Civ.* 4.65, see also above). On Cassius' quoting (or misquoting) of the *Letter to Menoecus* (= Diog. Laert. 10.132; Usener fr. 64) see Griffin (1995) 344-5, Shackleton Bailey (1977) 382.

earn him *amor*.⁴⁵¹ Cassius is just as aware as Cicero of Pansa's Epicureanism and the flourishing of his career under Caesar; in praising him so effusively in this semi-public letter he both cements the relationship and states his intention to follow in his footsteps.⁴⁵² He subtly emphasizes his willingness to do so by echoing Cicero's statements about the popularity of Pansa with the slightly superfluous phrasing *secunda voluntate*, each of these words, especially *secunda* from *sequor* – to follow, having connotations of consent and submission. Similarly, he reflects Cicero's usage of *Pansam nostrum* – our Pansa.

Cassius lays out his philosophical argument in a lengthy passage of Greek, overshadowing any claim to intellectual superiority inherent in Cicero's usage of single terms.⁴⁵³ The point argued is that according to Epicurus, actions that are good and just are in themselves pleasurable, and not just a means to obtaining pleasure through the goodwill of others. Therefore, even though Pansa has been performing praiseworthy actions, his aim has been to derive pleasure from the good and the just, not just the reactions of others to it.⁴⁵⁴ Cassius acknowledges that this point is difficult to accept, but to save Cicero's face he uses the impersonal *difficile est enim persuadere hominibus*.⁴⁵⁵ This is an astute observation, and one Cicero himself acknowledges in *De Finibus* with the remark that in his own

⁴⁵¹ Armstrong (2011) 113 points out that "Cassius actually trumps Cicero's own claim," citing Lewis and Short s.v. *amor* that "*amor* is related to *benevolentia* as the cause is to the effect, since *benevolentia* designates only an external, friendly treatment, but *amor* a **real, internal love**." (Emphasis his.)

⁴⁵² On the public nature of Cicero's correspondence, see Cic. *Q Fr.* 3.1.10 (SB 21) in which he laments that everything he writes to his brother is reported to Caesar. See also Nicholson (1994) 39, Valachova (2018) 154.

⁴⁵³ Gilbert (2015) 60 notes that Cicero takes issue with this approach in *Fin.* 1.4-10 - perhaps in response to this? Gordon (2013) 109-38 points out another advantage of citing a long passage of Greek - evading Cicero's aforementioned false dichotomy between *virtus* and *voluptas*.

⁴⁵⁴ Armstrong (2011) 113 infers "a deeper note in Cassius' Epicureanism, a theory that one should do good to all men, not merely to secure their protective goodwill, but because their friendship and goodwill is a pleasure in its own right."

⁴⁵⁵ I do not take this phrasing, as does Fowler (2007) 430 as an indication that Cassius is suggesting a project of effecting mass conversion to Epicureanism.

Epicurean schooling alongside Atticus *neque erat umquam controversia, quid ego intellegerem, sed quid probarem* – there was never any dispute over what I could understand, only what I could believe.⁴⁵⁶

In discussing Pansa's actions in the terms of their shared philosophy, Cassius lays claim to some insight into his motivations, thus again emphasizing to Cicero the strength and depth of the bond between himself and his new ally. He goes on, later in the letter, to explore his own motivations for seeking out this bond, and the simultaneous one with Caesar:

*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 Gnaeus quam sit fatuus, scis quo modo 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. me, ut facis, ama. si Caesar vicit, celeriter me exspecta.*⁴⁵⁷

"Now, back to public affairs: do write back to me with what is happening in Spain. For I am worried sick; I'd rather have the old and clement master than try out a new and cruel one. You know what an idiot Gnaeus is, how he thinks cruelty is courage, and how he always thinks we are laughing at him. I'm afraid he might respond to our banter bluntly – with a sword. About what is happening, if you care for me, write back! Oh, how I'd like to know how you feel as you read this, whether calm or anxious, then I would know what I ought to do. To keep it brief, I bid you goodbye. Keep up your affection for me! If Caesar has conquered, expect me very soon."

Cassius here signals to Cicero that he is no longer ambivalent about Caesar's fortunes; he now sincerely hopes that his new master will triumph and return to Rome, because he now understands living under a benevolent dictator is far preferable to being at the mercy of a scorned and vicious

⁴⁵⁶ Cic. *Fin.* 1.5.

⁴⁵⁷ Cic. *Fam.* 15.19.4 (SB 216)

former ally.⁴⁵⁸ This is an attitude thoroughly in keeping with an Epicurean outlook; the stability offered by a victorious Caesar will be for more conducive to *ataraxia* than the power vacuum that would be renewed by his failure.⁴⁵⁹ In the meantime, he intends to absent himself from Rome until Caesar's power is fully cemented, and he asks Cicero to keep him abreast of relevant news.⁴⁶⁰ Whether he truly needs Cicero to fulfill this role or is simply trying to make him feel necessary is uncertain, but he does here make some effort to reassure his correspondent that their relationship is undamaged, even acknowledging that he has given him cause for concern, or at least that he realizes that Cicero might be reading *sollicito animo*. His casual *me, ut facis, ama*, does not, however, betray the same level of concern for mutual affection as Cicero's preceding *igitur meque, ut a puero fecisti, amabis*.⁴⁶¹ And the final line of the letter, the one that has the most structural impact, makes clear that Cassius values another alliance over that with Cicero. When he says *si Caesar vicit, celeriter me exspecta*, he makes clear that the two are now a package deal: when Cicero deals with him in future, he warns, he will be talking to a Caesarian.

So, to conclude: in one relatively brief missive, Cassius manages to convey a number of sentiments that together constitute a full response to Cicero's probing. Through his politeness and reassurances of affection, he expresses to his old friend that he does not wish for there to be a breach between the two of them, yet through his restraint and professions of loyalty to others he hints that this is not of primary importance to him. These new allegiances, to Caesar and Pansa, he cements through direct statements of obedience and defence of ethical principles respectively. He overtly confirms Cicero's suggestion that he has become an Epicurean by

⁴⁵⁸ I disagree with Gilbert (2015) 169 that Cassius is here "deliberating apprehensively over who will be their new master." His overt criticisms of the younger Pompey suggest that he sees no hope of reconciliation on that front and has thus fully thrown in his lot with Caesar.

⁴⁵⁹ See Belliotti (2009) 110.

⁴⁶⁰ In withdrawing from the present combat and political machinations, Cassius is perhaps not just sparing himself bloodshed - he is, after all, a fearsome warrior. McConnell (2014) 26 suggests his actions stem from "a humane concern to avoid wanton bloodshed."

⁴⁶¹ Cic. *Fam.* 15.18 (SB 213).

naming the philosopher, and demonstrates sincerity in this endeavour by showing off his ability to aptly quote the *Letter to Menoecus* and arguing in favour of the philosophy's ethical framework. By stating his desire for *clementia* and expressing his intention to stay away from Rome until peace is established, Cassius makes clear his intention to attempt an Epicurean career, one that will privilege quietism over intervention, and philosophical and strategic friendships over historical ones. In short, he confirms Cicero's fear: that he has committed himself to his new faction and philosophy, and will not risk that even to assuage the fears of his old *amicus*.

2.v. The Assassination Plot and its Aftermath: Continued adherence?

There is, of course, an immediate problem for the interpretation of Cassius' correspondence with Cicero as evidence for his sincere commitment to Epicureanism and the Caesarian faction, and that is his role as one of the instigators – in some sources *the* instigator – of the conspiracy against Caesar and his murder on the Ides of March just a year later.⁴⁶² While Cassius' loyalty to Caesar cannot be defended against his actions in 44 BC, some scholars, including Sedley, have sought to reconcile his adoption of the quietistic philosophy of the *Kepos* with the peril and violence of his role in the assassination. This, if true, constitutes a problem for my argument linking his adoption of Epicureanism and integration into Caesar's network of friends. I propose that Cassius broke ideologically from both the philosophy and the political group sometime before he began plotting against Caesar, and will thus endeavour to disprove his Epicureanism beyond this point.

A view that has perhaps gained more currency for its dramatic nature and radical approach than for its scholarly rigour is that of Arnaldo Momigliano, who took the opportunity to posit in his influential review of Farrington's (1939) *Science and Politics in the Ancient World* a kind of radical Epicureanism that was not only compatible with the assassination of tyrants but called for it, and attributing to this Cassius' decision to murder the dictator.⁴⁶³ On this interpretation Lucretius' idealization of systems of magistracies and laws over kingships serves as the basis for a call to action against dictatorships.⁴⁶⁴ Apart from the dearth of any Epicurean writing that explicitly justifies such extreme political action as

⁴⁶² Plut. *Brut.* 8-10; App. *BC.* 2.113; Suet. *Caes.* 80.3. Cassius Dio (44.13-14) credits Brutus with the origination of the plot.

⁴⁶³ Momigliano (1941) (noted above as an important forerunner of Castner's prosopography) 151: "There is a conspicuous date in the history of Roman Epicureanism: the date (46 BC) at which Cassius turned Epicurean, not to enjoy the *hortulus*, but to reach quickly the conclusion that the tyrant had to be eliminated." Brunt (1988) 301 accepts this supposition.

⁴⁶⁴ Belliotti (2009) 111: "Magistracies and laws, not kings, are able to ensure durable peace." Lucr. *DRN.* 5.1145-5.1155 cf. Momigliano (1941) 157.

assassination, or even killing for any reason, there is a major problem with this theory: one of chronology.⁴⁶⁵ Momigliano takes the date of the letter in which Cicero first accuses Cassius of Epicureanism (December of 46) as the date for his conversion, ignoring Cicero's comment in January of 45 BC that it has already been two or three years since Cassius went over to the *Kepos*.⁴⁶⁶ A causal relationship between Cassius' adoption of the philosophy and his decision to kill Caesar seems far less likely in light of the fact that there was a period of at least two years between the events, and the conversion corresponds far better with the decision to reconcile with Caesar.⁴⁶⁷

While this Epicurean "doctrine of emergency action" bears little scrutiny, the idea that Cassius may have still identified as an Epicurean even as he sought to overthrow the dictator is not entirely unfounded.⁴⁶⁸ Even though Cassius' adherence goes unmentioned in almost every ancient source on the events of the Ides and its aftermath, there is one writer for whom his Epicureanism is apparently of great importance during this period, and that is Plutarch. Between the *Brutus* and the *Caesar*, he incorporates three episodes in which Cassius' continued Epicureanism is explicitly referenced, and his actions are interpreted in relation to his philosophy. The first of these, chronologically, occurs in the depiction of the assassination itself:

καὶ γὰρ οὖν καὶ λέγεται Κάσσιος εἰς τὸν ἀνδριάντα τοῦ Πομπηίου πρὸ τῆς ἐγχειρήσεως ἀποβλέπων ἐπικαλεῖσθαι σιωπῆ, καίπερ οὐκ ἀλλότριος ὢν τῶν

⁴⁶⁵ Lucr. *DRN*. 5.1136-1144, however, treats the death of kings and tyrants as an inevitable consequence of their ambition and status. The following state of affairs is one of chaos and anarchy, suggesting that this passage is descriptive rather than prescriptive. The founding Epicureans apparently placed explicit prohibitions on killing: Hermarchus' words on the detrimental effects of violence to a society are preserved in Porphyry *De Abst.* 1.7-10. See also Armstrong (1997) 328.

⁴⁶⁶ Cic. *Fam.* 15.18 (SB 213) and 15.16 (215) respectively. Griffin (1994) 726 highlights the temporal disparity.

⁴⁶⁷ Rambaud (1969) 434 makes the same mistake of dating, but correctly associates the conversion with Cassius' Caesarianism: "Cassius fut en 46 épicurien et césarien."

⁴⁶⁸ cf. Fowler (2007) 406.

Ἐπικούρου λόγων ἄλλ’ ὁ καιρὸς, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἤδη τοῦ δεινοῦ παρεστῶτος ἐνθουσιασμὸν ἐνεποίει καὶ πάθος ἀντὶ τῶν προτέρων λογισμῶν.⁴⁶⁹

“In fact, it is said that before the attack Cassius looked over to the statue of Pompey and silently invoked his aid. Now, Cassius was no stranger to the doctrines of Epicurus, but apparently in the heat of the moment, with danger looming, he was flooded with religious sensibility instead of relying on his rational faculty as usual.”⁴⁷⁰

Here Plutarch relates some thoroughly un-Epicurean behaviour on Cassius' part, but through the lens of his adherence. The choice of the *curia* of Pompey, adjoining his theatre, as the venue for the killing is affirmed by numerous other sources, but Plutarch goes the furthest in exploiting the symbolism of the statue there.⁴⁷¹ In the *Brutus*, he claims that the conspirators considered the location providential because of the presence of an image of Pompey, and thus seized upon a senate meeting called there by Caesar as the perfect opportunity to commit the murder.⁴⁷² In both accounts, he has Cassius address the statue, and in the *Caesar* it is splashed with the blood of the slain man as his body is pushed against the pedestal.⁴⁷³ Thus, more so than any other source, Plutarch emphasizes the importance of avenging Pompey in the assassination, perhaps a little disingenuously.⁴⁷⁴ After all, as many, if not more, Caesarian partisans from

⁴⁶⁹ Plut. *Caes.* 66.2.

⁴⁷⁰ Tr: Waterfield (1999) 355. See p. 298 for a discussion of the role of the statue in the theme of rivalry between Caesar and Pompey.

⁴⁷¹ Cass. Dio 44.13-14, Nic. Dam. *Vit. Caes.* 23.81, 26.96, and Suet. *Iul.* 84.3 offer rather more prosaic explanations of the choice of venue, including the hope on the part of the conspirators that the gladiators presently based there would take their side if further violence ensued, and the fact that Caesar would be relatively isolated from his supporters in his position in his curule chair. See also Horsfall (1974) 195.

⁴⁷² Plut. *Brut.* 14.2. It is worth noting that Epicureanism is not mentioned in this account.

⁴⁷³ Above and Plut. *Brut.* 17; *Caes.* 66.7.

⁴⁷⁴ Augustus did not, apparently, see the statue as being closely linked to the assassination: when he declared the *curia* a *locus sceleratus* and blocked off, he preserved the statue and relocated it in the theatre itself, an unlikely action if it had been drenched in the blood of his adoptive father. Suet. *Iul.* 88; *Aug.* 31.5; Cass. Dio. 47.19.1.

the civil war were involved in the plot. The image of Pompey presiding in statue form over his own posthumous vengeance is, however, one with a great deal of dramatic appeal, something Plutarch never fails to exploit, and Cassius, who fought so valiantly on Pompey's behalf makes the perfect focal character through which to highlight the pathos.⁴⁷⁵

The elaboration on Cassius' Epicurean wavering, present here but not in the Brutus, reads as a quick fix on the part of Plutarch. It is as if he has here remembered Cassius' Epicureanism as a troubling inconsistency for his desired narrative, and incorporated a slightly clumsy disclaimer to safeguard against any accusations that such behaviour would be out of character.⁴⁷⁶ At the same time, he allowed himself to indulge his own interest in philosophy. The actual consequence, however, is that Plutarch inadvertently highlights the fact that his account of the invocation of the statue is both secondhand and problematic.

Cassius' Epicureanism is evoked twice again in Plutarch's treatment of the run up to Philippi, when the liberators were reportedly plagued by omens of doom. In the first of these incidents, he attempts to calm Brutus after a visitation from Caesar's ghost:

ἀφανισθέντος δ' αὐτοῦ τοὺς παῖδας ἐκάλει: μήτε δ' ἀκοῦσαί τινα φωνὴν μήτ' ἰδεῖν ὄψιν φασκόντων, τότε μὲν ἐπηγρύπησεν: ἅμα δ' ἡμέρα τραπόμενος πρὸς Κάσσιον ἔφραζε τὴν ὄψιν. ὁ δὲ τοῖς Ἐπικούρου λόγοις χρώμενος καὶ περὶ τούτων ἔθος ἔχων διαφέρεσθαι πρὸς τὸν Βροῦτον, 'ἡμέτερος οὗτος,' εἶπεν, 'ὦ Βροῦτε, λόγος, ὡς οὐ πάντα πάσχομεν ἀληθῶς οὐδ' ὀρῶμεν, ἀλλ' ὑγρὸν μὲν τι χρῆμα καὶ ἀπατηλὸν ἢ αἰσθησις, ἔτι δ' ὀξυτέρα ἢ διάνοια κινεῖν αὐτὸ καὶ μεταβάλλειν ἀπ' οὐδενὸς ὑπάρχοντος ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἰδέαν. '... τοιοῦτοις μὲν ὁ Κάσσιος ἐπράϋνε λόγοις τὸν Βροῦτον.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁵ Castner (1989) 29 classes Plutarch as a source on Cassius as "less authoritative, because of his chronological distance, his free and selective treatment of his sources, and his desire to produce dramatic narrative."

⁴⁷⁶ Sedley (1997) 41 attempts to argue that Cassius' invocation of the statue was in keeping with Epicurean doctrine, based on the work of Frischer (1982), who argues for the centrality of sculpture to Epicurean transmission. This act is, however, heterodox in another way: thanks to their belief that there is no suffering in death, followers of the Garden placed little value on vengeance: Diog. Laert. 10.124-126.

⁴⁷⁷ Plut. *Brut.* 37 (tr. Perrin).

“When the shape had disappeared, Brutus called his servants; but they declared that they had neither heard any words nor seen any apparition, and so he watched the night out. As soon as it was day, however, he sought out Cassius and told him of the apparition. Cassius, who belonged to the school of Epicurus, and was in the habit of taking issue on such topics with Brutus, said: ‘This is our doctrine, Brutus, that we do not really feel or see everything, but perception by the senses is a pliant and deceitful thing, and besides, the intelligence is very keen to change and transform the thing perceived into any and every shape from one which has no real existence.’ ...With such discourse did Cassius seek to calm Brutus.”

This lengthy injection of putatively Epicurean physics is somewhat superfluous to the plot, especially in light of the fact that the event is almost certainly a complete fabrication.⁴⁷⁸ Apart from the inherent implausibility of any supernatural occurrence, the episode bears all the hallmarks of Augustan propaganda: the inevitability of the failure of his enemies, the reinforcement of the divinity of the deceased Caesar.⁴⁷⁹ So why does Plutarch insert this technical elaboration on perception? The answer may lie in the other passage on this period in which Cassius' philosophy is mentioned, a more generalized recounting of omens befalling the liberators before their final fateful battle:

ἔτι δ' ὄρνεά τε σαρκοφάγα πολλὰ καθ' ἡμέραν ἐπεφαίνετο τῷ στρατοπέδῳ,
καί μελισσῶν ὄφθησαν ἔσμοι συνιστάμενοι περὶ τόπον τινὰ τοῦ χάρακος
ἐντός, ὃν ἐξέκλεισαν οἱ μάντιες ἀφοσιούμενοι τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν ἀτρέμα καί
τόν Κάσσιον αὐτὸν ὑποφέρουσαν ἐκ τῶν Ἐπικούρου λόγων, τοὺς δὲ
στρατιώτας παντάπασι δεδουλωμένην.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁸ One potential motivation for this invention not discussed at length here is Plutarch's need for a parallel with *Dion.* 60.2, in which Brutus' counterpart meets his own death omen.

⁴⁷⁹ Sedley (1997) 41n.6. Val. Max. 1.8.8 employs a similar episode to further the Augustan cause, in which Cassius himself is visited by the *Divus Julius*. As Rawson (1983) 106 points out, his level of accuracy can be determined by the fact that he makes Philippi a night battle.

⁴⁸⁰ Plut. *Brut.* 39.3 (tr. Perrin).

“And besides, many carrion birds hovered over the camp daily, and swarms of bees were seen clustering at a certain place within the camp; this place the soothsayers shut off from the rest of the camp, in order to avert by their rites the superstitious fears which were gradually carrying even Cassius himself away from his Epicurean doctrines, and which had altogether subjugated his soldiers.”

Two out of three of the passages in which Plutarch insists on Cassius' Epicureanism throughout the assassination plot and beyond are, we see, attempts to explain and qualify specific incidents of un-Epicurean behaviour. Here, the soothsayers under his command rearrange the camp to assuage the fears of the army, but Plutarch feels it necessary to add the commentary that Cassius is not quite so afraid as the others, because of his philosophy, even though he is being drawn gradually away from it. It would be easier, surely, for Plutarch, like so many other historians, to simply forego any mentions of Cassius' philosophy, thus evading the need to exposit chunks of information about the present state of his adherence at any given time.⁴⁸¹ Did Plutarch have some source, lost to all others, or some other reason for such a sincere belief in Cassius' ongoing ties to the *Kepos*, that he felt it necessary to preserve that fact for the sake of historical accuracy? Are Cassius' reactions invented episodes genuine attempts at reconstructing what an Epicurean might have done?⁴⁸² Or did he have some other motivation for portraying Cassius as an inconsistent but committed Epicurean in the final months of his life?⁴⁸³

Considering the fact that Plutarch's references to Epicureanism don't exactly paint the school or its follower in the best light, their

⁴⁸¹ Appian (*Bell. Civ.* 4) explores in great detail Cassius' motivations and state of mind during this period, but never mentions his putative Epicureanism.

⁴⁸² This is the view of Brenk (1988) 118, who goes so far as to suggest that Plutarch seeks to showcase an aspect of Epicureanism to which he is sympathetic.

⁴⁸³ An interesting possibility is raised by Pelling (2009) 276, who notes that Cassius' superstition echoes the earlier misgivings of Calpurnia, reinforcing a sequence whereby Pompey's ghost destroys Caesar, and Caesar's ghost destroys Brutus in turn. It is probably not irrelevant that both were Epicureans.

inclusion fits well with three well-established aims of the author: the denigration of Epicurean philosophy, the minimization of the heroism of Cassius, and the desire for the greatest possible dramatic impact. The first of these is evident across much of the Plutarchan canon; multiple volumes of the *Moralia* are dedicated to arguing specific points against the school, and there is evidence in the Lamprias catalogue of even more polemical works on this subject.⁴⁸⁴ Of those works still extant, the most relevant here is *Against Colotes*, a critique of one of Epicurus' favoured disciples, whose dogmatism and attacks on rival philosophers made him a tempting target for Plutarch.⁴⁸⁵ One of the most vehement attacks made by the author is that on what he perceives to be Epicurean impiety, especially when it comes to the observation of omens.⁴⁸⁶ This line of invective is no innovation: we have seen that Cicero accused Piso of letting his philosophy obstruct the proper observation of omens, and laid at his feet the blame for Clodius' emendations to the *leges Aelia et Fufia*.⁴⁸⁷ Augustus and Dio attributed similar religious failures to Pansa.⁴⁸⁸ Knowing, then, that Cassius was also an adherent of the Garden, Plutarch would have seen an opportunity in the tyrannicides' ill-fated campaign to indulge in this polemical tradition.

The most full realization of this aim is, of course, the episode at *Brut.* 37 in which Cassius counsels Brutus after his encounter with the ghost of Caesar (reproduced above). Cassius, very much wrongly, urges Brutus to dismiss his experience, thus depriving him of an opportunity to see the error of his ways before they are both killed at Philippi. The physics he imparts sounds like nonsense, and the explanation that "perception by

⁴⁸⁴ The catalogue is reproduced in Sandbach (1969) 3-29. Other titles include *A Reply to Epicurus' Lecture on the Gods* and *That one cannot even live pleasantly by following Epicurus' Doctrine*. See also Kechagia-Ovseiko (2014) 104, who points out that, unlike in the cases of other schools, "the only treatises that are wholly dedicated to a discussion of Epicurean philosophy are polemical."

⁴⁸⁵ Plut. *Adv. Col.* 2; Dorandi (1999) 51.

⁴⁸⁶ Plut. *Adv. Col.* 31. Epicurean impiety is also hinted at in *Non. Poss.* 1130- C-E.

⁴⁸⁷ Cic. *Red. Sen.* 5; *Pis.* 4. See above Chs. 2 and 3.

⁴⁸⁸ Cass. Dio 46.35, see also Muelder (1995) 247 for a reconstruction of this aspect of *de Vita Sua*.

the senses is a pliant and deceitful thing" is especially bad advice between generals, for whom reconnaissance was vital for a successful campaign.⁴⁸⁹ It is not just poor soldiery, but poor Epicureanism: the infallibility of the senses and the truth of all impressions is a central tenet of the school's epistemology and physics.⁴⁹⁰ Plutarch is well aware of this fact, so Cassius' poor counsel cannot be an honest mistake.⁴⁹¹ He must, then, want Cassius and his philosophy to look bad.⁴⁹²

If Plutarch's grudge against Epicureanism is based on genuine indignation, his need to disparage Cassius is far less personal. Indeed, we have seen that his treatment of the young proquaestor in the *Crassus* is overwhelmingly favourable.⁴⁹³ In the *Brutus*, however, he cannot be allowed to overshadow the protagonist, an aim that seeps into the *Caesar*, a *Life* with which there is a great deal of overlap. I have already interpreted Plutarch's comment that critics of the assassination "ascribed whatever was noble in the undertaking to Brutus, but laid the more distressing features of what was done to the charge of Cassius" as a statement of intent, but there is an even more explicit admission of the need for this in the *synkrisis*.

πολλῶν τοίνυν τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ὑπαρξάντων καλῶν, ἐν τοῖς πρώτοις δὲ τοῦ μεγίστους ἐλαχίσταις ἀφορμαῖς γενέσθαι, τοῦτο τῷ Δίῳ κἀλλιστόν ἐστιν. οὐ γὰρ εἶχε τὸν ἀμφισβητοῦντα, καθάπερ ὁ Βροῦτος Κάσσιον, ἄνδρα πρὸς μὲν ἀρετὴν καὶ δόξαν οὐκ ὁμοίως ἀξιόπιστον, εἰς δὲ τὸν πόλεμον οὐκ ἐλάττονας τόλμη καὶ δεινότητι καὶ πράξει συμβολὰς παρασχόμενον,⁴⁹⁴

"We see, therefore, that both men had many noble traits, and especially that they rose to the greatest heights from the most inconsiderable beginnings; but

⁴⁸⁹ Indeed, Cassius' keen observations had served him well both on Crassus' Parthian campaign and in the assassination plot. See Velz (1973).

⁴⁹⁰ Lucr. *DRN.* 4.496-521; 353-63; 379-86; Diog. Laert. 10.31-2; *PHerc.* 19/698 fr. 21; Sex. Emp. *Prof.* 7.206-10 (Fr. 247 Usener). See Sedley and Long (1987) 78-86.

⁴⁹¹ Plut. *Adv. Col.* 1109 C-E (Fr. 250 Usener).

⁴⁹² FitzGibbon (2008) 458 makes an astute observation about the contrivance of this episode. Why, he asks, would Cassius need to calm Brutus if he was merely reporting the incident the next day?

⁴⁹³ See Retsö (2003) 393.

⁴⁹⁴ Plut. *Syn. Dion-Brut.* 1.1-3. (tr. Perrin.)

this is most to the credit of Dion. For he had no one to dispute his eminence, as Brutus had in Cassius, a man whose virtue and fame did not inspire confidence in like degree, but who, by reason of his boldness, ability, and efficiency, contributed no less than Brutus did to the war."

Although this passage seems to imply some degree of acceptance of the fact that Brutus' reliance on Cassius makes him a less-than-ideal hero, Plutarch still has to make him one worthy of his audience's attention.⁴⁹⁵ To achieve this, he denigrates Cassius to the advantage of his brother-in-law. Here Brutus' spirituality is contrasted with Cassius' brash insistence on ploughing ahead. The former is rightfully awed by the visitation, while the latter's arrogance and misplaced faith in his creed prevents him from appreciating the divine message.⁴⁹⁶ From this point in the narrative, Cassius' judgment is fatally clouded, the culmination of this being his inability to recognize Brutus' troops joyfully embracing his messenger Titinius after his counterpart's success at Philippi, and his subsequent decision to end his life.⁴⁹⁷ This, notably, is a far less valiant suicide than that of Brutus, who, in full possession of the relevant facts, makes a considered farewell to his friends before falling on his sword.⁴⁹⁸ It is also, as an irreversible act performed under a misapprehension, excellent dramatic fodder.

So skillful and effective is Plutarch's treatment of Cassius' misguided commitment to and eventual break from his philosophy in terms of dramatic impact, that much of much of it is imported wholesale by Shakespeare into his *Julius Caesar* (cf. the epigraph of this chapter).⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁵ On Brutus' inferiority to Dion: Larmour (2014) 411. Also Tatum (2010) 2 on Plutarch's parallelism.

⁴⁹⁶ Fitzgibbon (2008) 459 on the denigration of Cassius' character.

⁴⁹⁷ Plut. *Brut.* 43.5-6. App. *BC.* 4.15.113 gives a contrasting account in which Cassius is fully aware of his brother-in-law's victory and opts to take his own life out of shame of being the lesser general. This is one of two different versions, which "suggests that he was dealing with accounts that had been developing in ancient literary imaginations." Alston (2015) 157.

⁴⁹⁸ Plut. *Brut.* 51.1-8.

⁴⁹⁹ Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, Act 5, Scene 1. The transmission is not direct: Shakespeare had no Greek and relied on North's translations of Plutarch, which were in turn based on a 1559 translation by Amyot in

While it is not unusual for Shakespeare to emulate the theatrical techniques of the lives, themselves influenced by Greek tragedy, it does seem unusual that such a niche philosophical interest should gain such prominence in a popular Elizabethan play.⁵⁰⁰ That Cassius' purported crisis of faith could have such an impact on such a wildly different audience supports the idea that it needed no basis in fact to be of use to Plutarch. Seen in combination with the facts that it gave him an opportunity to critique his least favourite philosophical school and bolster his protagonist through favourable comparison, it provides ample evidence that Plutarch's "insistence" on Cassius' Epicureanism after the Ides does not, contrary to the assertion of Sedley, carry any weight.⁵⁰¹

French: Pelling (1988) 37. No major misunderstandings seem to have arisen from this tradition, however Pelling (2009) 267 does note some "oddities," mostly pertaining to Brutus' views on suicide.

⁵⁰⁰ The most outspoken proponent of the idea that Plutarch is the mediating factor between Greek tragedy and Shakespearian theatre is Pelling: (1980); (1988) 37-45; (1997) 387-411; (2009) cf. Whittington (2017) 121.

⁵⁰¹ Sedley (1997) 41.

2.vi. Cassius abandons the *Kepos*

While the arguments for Cassius' continued adherence to the Epicurean school are based on flimsy evidence, his behaviour in the final stage of his life provides a far more robust foundation for a narrative in which he had abandoned that philosophy. Quite apart from the daring and dangerous plot to murder Caesar in public with the help of a great number of co-conspirators, his actions in 44 BC and beyond resemble those from his early political career far more than those from his period of quietude. Just as when he took command of Syria as a mere proquaestor, Cassius showed little regard for the authority of the Senate in the aftermath of the assassination. When a request on his behalf for extraordinary powers in the East in order to confront Dolabella was denied, he defied an order to go to Sicily instead, and levied his own troops for the confrontation.⁵⁰² Just as he did after the death of Crassus, Cassius mustered an army on his own initiative and with recourse to no higher authority than his own.⁵⁰³ To fund this force he plundered the eastern provinces, exhibiting the same rapacity he had shown last time he raised funds in those lands.⁵⁰⁴ Particularly egregious to his fellow Romans was his seizure of the independent state of Rhodes in 42 BC and extraction of some forty-eight million *denarii*, while Josephus records him "venting his wrath" against the cities of Judea when only Herod was able to meet his unreasonably large quotas.⁵⁰⁵

Other actions demonstrate Cassius' intention to pick up where he had left off with his glorious military career in the East. Again he assumed

⁵⁰² Cic. *Att.* 15.11 (SB 389): *Cassius (Martem spirare dices) se in Siciliam non iturum. egone ut beneficium accepissem contumeliam? quid ego agis?* Cicero's request for the extraordinary powers is preserved in Cic. *Phil.* 11, Cassius' defiant departure is mentioned in *Fam.* 12.11.2 (366); *ad Brut.* 2.3.3 (2). See Arena (2012) 263 on the autonomy displayed here by Brutus and Cassius.

⁵⁰³ App. *Bell. Civ.* 4.133. See Welch (2012) 131 on the size of the force amassed, including naval units.

⁵⁰⁴ Aur. Vic. *Vir. ill.* 83.

⁵⁰⁵ Bringmann (2007) 297 describes the severity with which Cassius and Brutus collected their funds in the east with the horror of proscriptions. On Cassius' "extraction of heavy tribute": Jos. *Ant.* 14.272. His enslavement of four cities who could not match Herod's celerity in raising tribute: Jos. *War.* 1.221; *Ant.* 14.276 cf. Yoder (2014) 213.

governance of Syria, and again he sought retrospective ratification by the Senate.⁵⁰⁶ Cassius brought over to his side a unit of Parthian archers, whose loyalty he had earned during his last tenure of that post.⁵⁰⁷ Showing none of the desire to avoid bloodshed evident in his Epicurean letter to Cicero, he proposed the use of this deadly force, which had proved so effective against his former master Crassus, against Roman citizens.⁵⁰⁸ He was confident in the direction he intended to take, and already had in mind his plans and justifications, unlike Brutus, who interrupted his own journey to the East to "check in" with the Platonic school and discuss his situation with the Peripatetic Cratippus.⁵⁰⁹ There is no evidence to suggest that Cassius visited the *Kepos* at this time. In fact, in detailing this period, Appian uses his military ability as a contrast for Brutus' affinity for philosophy.⁵¹⁰ All of the above is symptomatic of a privileging of Cassius' former ideals over any Epicurean orthodoxy, and is particularly inconsistent with the idealization of *ataraxia*.⁵¹¹

It is not just Epicurean doctrine that Cassius had abandoned by this point; there is evidence of a rift between him and the *amici novi* of Cicero's letters.⁵¹² When Cicero proposed that he be granted the authority and forces to deal with Dolabella, it was Pansa, an Epicurean known for his mildness and one to whom Cassius had professed loyalty in his correspondence, who denounced the suggestion with uncharacteristic vituperation.⁵¹³ Despite the

⁵⁰⁶ Broughton *MRR*. 343.

⁵⁰⁷ App. *Bell. Civ.* 4.8; 4.63. Keaveney (2003) 233: "Appian characterizes these men as allies of Cassius, which suggests they have a certain independence, an impression strengthened by the remark that they joined Cassius out of admiration for his martial prowess." See Sherwin-White (1984) on the possibility that these men were Arabs rather than Parthians.

⁵⁰⁸ Vell. 2.78.1; Just. 42.4.7. See Rawson (1983) 105 for the hostility this engendered in historians. He was not, however, wantonly cruel: Cass. Dio 47.32 records that he sent away safely those loyal to Dolabella after his death.

⁵⁰⁹ Plut. *Brut.* 24.1. On Cratippus' Academic background: Plut. *Cic.* 24; Cic. *Fam.* 12.16 (SB 328); 16.24 (350). See Dillon (2010) 98.

⁵¹⁰ App. *Bell. Civ.* 4.133.561; 4.123.518 cf. Gowing (1990) 177.

⁵¹¹ Ep. *Men.* 127-32; *Sen. Vat.* 58; 70; 79.

⁵¹² Cic. *Fam.* 15.16 (SB 215).

⁵¹³ Cic. *Fam.* 12.7 (SB 367): The powers would have been granted *nisi Pansa vehementer obstitisset*. As noted, this was the subject of Pansa's only attested contional speech: Malcovati 160.5.

fact that this response was unusually vehement for Pansa, it was not entirely unexpected; Cicero mentions that Servilia had advised him against the proposal for just that reason: *mulier timida verebatur ne Pansae animus offenderetur* – "the woman is timid and afraid lest Pansa's spirit be offended."⁵¹⁴ It was not, as one might expect, the fact that Cassius had been instrumental in the killing of his beloved mentor Caesar that made the consul hostile to him – remember, after the Ides, Brutus, who was just as responsible for the assassination, petitioned Cicero to furnish him with troops through some secret arrangement with Pansa.⁵¹⁵ It could have been his pacifistic principles that raised Pansa's ire; certainly he was committed to the preservation of peace and the restoration of balance, but Servilia's comment suggests some personal affront. Perhaps he was gravely offended by Cassius' abandonment of both his professed Epicurean principles and their philosophical friendship. Maybe Pansa suspected that Cassius had never been sincere in either.

If Cassius' alliance with Caesar was intimately tied to his adoption of Epicureanism, it stands to reason that the assassination must be connected to his abandonment of the *Kepos*, perhaps to the extent that they stemmed from a common motivation. The reasons posited by scholars ancient and modern for Cassius' decision to commit tyrannicide are various, ranging from (as we have seen) his Epicureanism to a lifelong hereditary hatred of dictators.⁵¹⁶ The most plausible, however, is one that seems at first glance to be dismissible for its pettiness: the thwarting of his ambition to be appointed to the role of praetor urbanus. While Cassius was eminently qualified for the role, Caesar, after dangling the possibility in front of him, allotted it instead to his younger and less accomplished brother-in-law.⁵¹⁷ Plutarch relates:

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.* We should not take Cicero too seriously about Servilia's disposition: Att. 15.11 makes clear that there is a degree of *inimicitia* between the two. See also Shackleton Bailey (1977) 367.

⁵¹⁵ Cic. *ad Brut.* 2.5.3 (SB 5).

⁵¹⁶ Plut. *Brut.* 9.1. There is also the theory that he was drawn into the plot by Brutus because of their mutual affection: Cass. Dio (44.13-14)

⁵¹⁷ Plut. *Brut.* 7.2.

Καῖσαρ δ' ἀκούσας καὶ βουλευόμενος ἐν τοῖς φίλοις εἶπε: 'δικαιότερα μὲν λέγει Κάσσιος, Βρούτῳ δὲ τὴν πρώτην δοτέον.' ἀπεδείχθη δὲ Κάσσιος ἐφ' ἑτέρα στρατηγός, οὐ τοσοῦτον εὐνοίας ἔχων δι' ἣν ἔλαβεν ὅσον ὀργῆς ὧν ἀπέτυχε.⁵¹⁸

“But Caesar, after hearing the claims of each, said, in council with his friends: “Cassius makes the juster plea, but Brutus must have the first praetorship.” So Cassius was appointed to another praetorship, but he was not so grateful for what he got as angry over what he had lost.”

While this seems no particularly grievous hardship – Cassius was instead granted the title of praetor peregrinus – it is an expression of distrust on the part of Caesar and just one entry in a catalogue of similar indignities.⁵¹⁹ He never became an aedile, and he would have had to wait until 41 BC before he could wield the consulship, a delay that Velleius Paterculus claims caused him great offence.⁵²⁰ It is worth remembering that Cassius' heroism in the aftermath of Carrhae had earned him such popularity that, had he been able to navigate the *cursus honorum* himself in the traditional fashion, he would have had every chance of triumphing in any election he saw fit to stand for. Under Caesar, however, this was impossible. As dictator, he had the Senate grant him permission to name half the magistrates for the next three years, an ability he utilized to the greatest degree possible.⁵²¹ Although he did use his power to advance the pardoned Pompeians, of which Cassius was one, in many cases this was no more and probably less than they would have been able to achieve by themselves in a normally-functioning Republic, and thus inevitably

⁵¹⁸ Plut. *Brut.* 7.3 (tr. Perrin).

⁵¹⁹ The role of praetor peregrinus gave Cassius jurisdiction only between non-citizens, or in cases where a citizen was in conflict with a non-citizen: Daube (1951) 66. He would, then, wield less power in the city than Brutus, and was less likely to influence factional politics. He also had to suffer the indignity of having his name positioned second in joint issues from himself and Brutus, e.g. Cic. *Fam.* 11.2 (SB 329); 11.3 (336). On the introduction of this office to relieve strain on the praetor urbanus: Brennan (2000) 87.

⁵²⁰ Vell. Pat. 2.56.3 cf. Cic. *Fam.* 12.2.2 (SB 344); *Phil.* 8.27. See Epstein (1987) 567-568.

⁵²¹ Cass. Dio 43.51.2-9.

insulting.⁵²² And as we have seen in his adoption of Pansa as a role model, Cassius had no intention of letting his Epicureanism get in the way of a high-flying political career, and now there was a disparity between his personal expectations and the means by which they might be satisfied, a phenomenon called by Storch "relative deprivation."⁵²³ It makes sense, then, that he would harbour a great degree of resentment against Caesar after being passed over in favour of Brutus.⁵²⁴

The Epicurean wise man, of course, would have weathered this setback with equanimity. But Cassius was no sage, nor was he ever necessarily under the illusion that he could be one; his *diathesis*, like that of Piso, was that of a Roman dynast primed for public success, and his Epicurean tutors, if he had any, would have understood this and modified their teaching.⁵²⁵ His adherence to Epicureanism was an attempt on his part to mediate his ambition in his new circumstances, and to conspicuously demonstrate that he was doing so in order to make himself appear less threatening to his new master.⁵²⁶ Even were he as sincere as he professes to be in his correspondence with Cicero, it would be unrealistic to expect that his conversion would erase every contradictory aspect of his established personality, in particular the drive that led him to declare himself *de facto* military governor of an imperiled province and continue hostilities without

⁵²² As Africa (1978) 616 puts it: "Caesar was generally an indulgent "father" but some of his "sons" considered gifts from a former peer demeaning. Even his famed clemency alienated Caesar from the men who owed their lives to him - the debt was too great and gratitude turned quickly to hatred."

⁵²³ Storch (1995) 45.

⁵²⁴ Likewise Epstein (1987) 566: "Caesar, through the powers he exercised as dictator, generated enormous *inamicitiae* against himself. No Roman had ever exerted such control over the lives of his fellow aristocrats." There was almost certainly some specific turning point, probably this one, where Cassius became hostile enough to Caesar to consider killing him; Balsdon (1958) 82 discounts an apparent earlier attempt against Caesar's life by Cassius in Cilicia recorded in Cic. *Phil.* 2.26.

⁵²⁵ See Erler (2011) 16. Diog. Oin. *fr.* III, 7-11 Smith (Usener 548). Fish (2011) 73.

⁵²⁶ As Belliotti (2009) 115 notes: "Epicureanism attracted idealistic, refined people in a world ruled by militaristic, competitive strongmen." Cassius' conversion was an attempt to shift both himself and his reputation from the latter category to the former.

the permission of the Senate. Nor could it entirely suppress the violent urges that led him to a physical confrontation with the son of a dictator as a youth. As hard as Cassius tried to be an Epicurean, he was always himself, and the insult inherent in his appointment as *praetor peregrinus* angered him to the extent that he could no longer pretend to himself that he was either a true adherent of the *Kepon* or a lover of Caesar.⁵²⁷

I do not wish to imply, however, that the assassination of Caesar was *entirely* motivated by self-interest, or indeed that Cassius and his co-conspirators would have seen it that way.⁵²⁸ The tyrannicides as a group behaved entirely in keeping with the role of ideological activists, committing the murder in public, sharing the blows between themselves, and thereafter designating themselves "liberators."⁵²⁹ They may have truly believed that they were performing a public service, and that the populace as a whole wished for Caesar's removal.⁵³⁰ That Cassius possibly proposed putting Antony to the sword as well does not contradict this; as Cicero later groused, it was failure to do so that prevented the restoration of the Republic.⁵³¹ Likewise his aversion to Caesar's public funeral and the reading of his will.⁵³² His numismatic output post-Ides shows perhaps more commitment to the ideal of *libertas* than that of Brutus; unlike his brother-

⁵²⁷ Plutarch suggests another reason for Cassius' hatred of Caesar: the appropriation of some lions he had been storing in Megara for games during his presumed future aedileship after Pharsalus: Plut. *Brut.* 8.3-4; *Caes.* 43.1. If this was the cause of his ire, though, he took a very long time to act on it. I suspect that Plutarch only includes this detail because he couldn't resist the dramatic ending in which the Megarans free the lions, only to have them rampage through the city, slaughtering the people.

⁵²⁸ Cassius in particular was seen as "self-interested and devious": Wyke (2007) 211.

⁵²⁹ Richardson (2012) 11 asserts that they did so in order to demonstrate that they were motivated by a threat to the state rather than any personal concern.

⁵³⁰ There was certainly a great deal of ill-sentiment developing towards Caesar, which even the man himself had not failed to notice. His planned expedition to Parthia was perhaps an attempt to escape this: Cic. *Att.* 14.1.1 (SB 355). See also Yavetz (1974) 55-64.

⁵³¹ Cic. *Att.* 14.21.3 (SB 375).

⁵³² Plut. *Brut.* 20. Rawson (1994) 470 writes that this policy revealed "shrewdness... greater energy and military experience."

in-law, Cassius does not feature his own image, giving pride of place to the ideal of freedom.⁵³³

⁵³³ Rawson (1986) 118-9; Crawford *RRC*. 500.

2.vii. The Real Cassius

Unlike Piso and Pansa, Cassius never managed to fully reconcile himself with the quietistic nature of Epicureanism. Several factors suggest some degree of sincerity to his short adherence: his knowledge of the teachings of the Master, in particular the *Letter to Menoeceus*, as revealed in his letters to Cicero; his cultivation of a relationship with Pansa; his absence from the political arena between Pharsalus and the *Ides*; and his willingness, unlike so many others, to publicly profess himself an Epicurean. All of this, however, is overshadowed by the obvious utility of a conversion at this point. Cassius' foray into the Garden corresponds with the period in which he found himself subject to the greatest amount of political and personal peril. After the defeat of Pompey, Cassius had two choices: fight on, against increasing odds under leadership in whom he had little faith, or submit to his former enemy. He opted for the latter and, to smooth his way, adopted the philosophy and career strategy of one of Caesar's most trusted and successful subordinates.

By imitating Pansa, Cassius hoped to present himself as something other than what he was: a dangerously ambitious and often ruthless individual who had as little concern for authority as for danger. By making a sincere effort to study his chosen philosophy, he might even have hoped to make steps towards becoming like his chosen role model: faithful rather than self-interested, peace-loving rather than bellicose, contemplative rather than impulsive, all qualities that would have made him less threatening to his new master and erstwhile enemy. At the very least he may have hoped that the teachings of the *Kepon* would help him reconcile himself to his new situation. He found, however, through a series of small disappointments and snubs, that a leopard truly cannot change his spots. At heart, Cassius did desire autonomy and authority, did resent restrictions placed on him by his superiors, and really was more at home in combat than in peace, and no philosophy could curtail these intrinsic aspects of his nature. Thus, his conversion, sincere or not, never really took, and his Epicureanism was cast off as an afterthought when he found himself a new, more fitting identity: that of a tyrannicide.

4. The Caesarian Question

A common thread in the career narratives of the politically active Roman Epicureans, as we have seen, is the patronage, or at least goodwill, of Julius Caesar. Caesar publically announced his approbation for Piso by marrying into his family, which in turn bolstered his bid for the consulship, and ensured his safety when he opted for neutrality in the Civil War with Pompey. In the case of Pansa, he used his powers as a dictator to appoint his friend as a provincial governor and then a consul, and doubtless used his influence to aid him into the lower magistracies as well. Cassius he pardoned at his own personal risk after his vigorous efforts for the Pompeian cause, and afforded a second chance at a political career after the defeat of his faction. It follows that we should question why it was that he exerted himself to such an extent on behalf of these adherents of the *Kepos*. A temptingly neat solution, and one that is not without its proponents, is that Caesar himself was an Epicurean.

In the 1960s, André, Seel and Rambaud all argued that Caesar was an adherent of the philosophy, with Bourne and Fussl continuing the trend into the 70s and 80s, respectively.⁵³⁴ In 1989 Castner classed him among the *Epicurei Incerti* in her *Proposopography of Roman Epicureans*, and as recently as 2009 Belliotti has asserted that there are at least seven pieces of evidence strongly supporting the identification.⁵³⁵ This theory has not, however, gained mainstream traction, and one of the primary reasons for this is that a common feature of the arguments put forth is their weakness to the counterargument that Caesar was not necessarily an Epicurean himself, but may have merely had beliefs and a disposition compatible with the philosophy and its followers. This alternative explanation is not as trivial as it may seem. How it was that Caesar's ideals and personality allowed him to so easily forge working and personal relationships with

⁵³⁴ André (1966); Seel (1967); Rambaud (1969); Bourne (1977); Fussl (1980).

⁵³⁵ Castner (1989) 83-86. This means that he is classed as more likely to have been an adherent than Memmius, addressee of Lucretius and owner of Epicurus' house: Valachova (2018) 153. Fish (2011) also allows for the possibility of Caesar's Epicureanism.

adherents of the *Kepos* is in itself an important avenue of investigation, and one for which I will repurpose the main arguments of the Caesar-as-Epicurean school of thinking. I will show that Caesar welcomed Epicureans in his camp because of their beliefs about the nature and value of friendship, their candour, their capacity to endure hardship, their sceptical attitudes to death and religion, and their pragmatic acceptance of the shifting social order and their place therein.

Against the Epicureanism of Caesar

Before exploring Caesar's compatibility with Epicureans, it is worth noting two of the most persuasive arguments against his identification with the philosophy: the silence of contemporary sources on the matter, and the importance of ambition in his self-presentation and as a guiding principle for his conduct. The former has more vigour than might be expected from an *argumentum ex silentio*, due to the survival of the works of a number of authors who would certainly have not been quiet about the matter had they believed that Caesar was an adherent of the *Kepos*. Foremost among these is Cicero, by far the most prolific voice on Epicureanism of the time. While he may have refrained from linking Caesar with the philosophy in his public speeches due to fear of recriminations for linking such a powerful individual with a school of thought he was intent on denigrating, the same cannot be said of the correspondence.⁵³⁶ Two of the most pervasive themes of Cicero's corpus of letters are his hopes and fears about Caesar's relationship with him and with the Republic, and mockery of Epicureanism.⁵³⁷

It is therefore telling that when Cicero agonizes at length in 49 BC over what stance to take in the burgeoning Civil war, in an exchange with Atticus, whose education in Epicureanism and ties to the *Kepos* he was well aware of, Cicero never mentions the philosophy, even when he

⁵³⁶ For an example of Cicero avoiding criticism of Caesar in a situation where he surely must have thought him deserving of censure: *Prov. Cos.* 8.18, in which he actively defends his extended command of Gaul.

⁵³⁷ Epicureanism was Cicero's favourite subject for humour in his correspondence: Haury (1955) 221-1; Griffin (1995) 333.

considers appealing to Caesar for permission to be neutral.⁵³⁸ When he sounds out Cassius on the related matters of his conversion to Epicureanism and his defection to the Caesarian cause, it is Pansa he chooses to be emblematic of the philosophy rather than Caesar himself.⁵³⁹ And for someone whose scathing verdict on the outcome of the Civil war was surprise that such an effeminate individual could triumph, Cicero would have had to exercise an uncharacteristic degree of restraint to avoid linking Caesar's perceived *mollitia* with Epicureanism.⁵⁴⁰ Overall, it seems unlikely that Cicero would never have tried to exploit a connection between a philosophy on which he considered himself an expert, and the man whom he feared perhaps more than any other.

A second author who would have leapt at the chance to incorporate Epicureanism into his portrayal of Caesar was Plutarch. The dictator's decision to attend the senate on the Ides of March despite the warning of Spurinna and the portentous dream of Calpurnia would have given him the opportunity to expand on his theme of Epicurean impiety and ignorance.⁵⁴¹ He finds time in his *Life of Caesar*, in the dramatic climax that is the assassination, no less, to pause for an interjection about Cassius' adherence to the *Kepos* and its insufficiency as a guiding principle.⁵⁴² In the *Brutus*, he returns repeatedly to the idea that Cassius' Epicureanism has blinded him to divine warnings that he and his cause are doomed.⁵⁴³ Had he seen the possibility of blaming the philosophy he reviled so much for the downfall of one of the most influential men in his series, he certainly would have exploited it to the fullest.

Finally there is the definitive source on Caesar: the man himself. Part of his campaign of self-promotion was his control of the narrative of his military endeavours through the production of a series of

⁵³⁸ Cic. *Att.* 9.2a (SB 169).

⁵³⁹ Cic. *Fam.* 15.17.3 (SB 214).

⁵⁴⁰ According to several sources, Cicero expressed incredulity that one who made the effeminate gesture of scratching his head with one finger could win a war: Plut. *Caes.* 4.9; Macr. *Sat.* 2.3.9; Cass. Dio 43.43.5. See also Corbeill (1996) 164-165; Corbeill (2004) 135.

⁵⁴¹ Suet. *Iul.* 81.2-4.

⁵⁴² Plut. *Caes.* 66.2.

⁵⁴³ Plut. *Brut.* 37; 39.

commentaries, none of which feature any mention of Epicureanism.⁵⁴⁴ While the publicity-generating nature of the project constitutes a good explanation for the absence of references to the *Kepon* – the Roman public is unlikely to have seen Epicureanism as a positive attribute in a leader – the dearth is still worth noting, especially as Caesar's portrayal of himself is entirely at odds with the ideals of the philosophy. Even the concept of autobiographical writing is incompatible with the exhortation to live unknown, especially when it arises from ambition such as Caesar's. The aim of the commentaries was to support his campaign to be the most powerful man in Rome, a role no Epicurean would covet.

The contrast between Caesar's ambition and the less covetous approach of his Epicurean *amici* was not lost on Cicero, who made an explicit comparison as part of his attack on Piso. He challenges his target to justify his apparent disdain for triumphs, as evidenced by his understated return from Macedonia, to his celebrated son-in-law, whose competition with Pompey over who could hold the most glorious celebration of their own might must have generated enormous costs for both parties, and was an enormous source of pride for Caesar.⁵⁴⁵ This alone would be sufficient to cast doubt over any identification of Caesar himself as an Epicurean, as would the bare facts of his career: every action he undertook from boyhood was informed by the pursuit of supremacy rather than security, acquisition over quietism, power over pleasure.⁵⁴⁶ So what was it about Epicureans that made them such a welcome addition to his retinue, and what attracted them there in the first place?

Friendship

At every stage in his career, from his youth to the height of his power, Caesar relied heavily on his personal relationships and popularity to

⁵⁴⁴ Bourne (1977) 422 detects hints and allusions, but nothing definitive.

⁵⁴⁵ Cic. *Pis.* 59.

⁵⁴⁶ Even when in 81 BC Caesar was sent from Rome by Cinna and Marius, who hoped to protect him from Sulla, he took the opportunity to distinguish himself as a soldier, playing an active role in the siege of Mytilene and receiving a civic crown for his efforts. Suet. *Iul.* 2.

ensure his personal safety. When, in his twenties, he spent thirty-eight days as the prisoner of Cilician pirates, he cultivated such regard for himself that his captors laughed and joked with him, solicited his advice, and even ensured that he slept well.⁵⁴⁷ When his toxic rivalry with Pompey started to become a threat, he endeavoured to limit the animosity by forming between them a bond of marriage. The union between Pompey and Caesar's daughter Julia was so successful in dampening hostilities that upon her death, Caesar sought to recreate the tactic with his grand-niece Octavia, and even offered to put aside Calpurnia in favour of Pompey's daughter.⁵⁴⁸ This proposed arrangement was flagrantly instrumental, and must have involved the weighing up of the merits of his marriage alliances with Piso and Pompey, and the ultimate conclusion that the latter was more important. Yet this cynical juggling of spouses and allies, which ultimately failed, does not seem to have damaged the relationship between Caesar and Piso, who remained one of his staunchest supporters even beyond his death.⁵⁴⁹

Piso's understanding may have stemmed from the fact that he and his fellow Epicureans accepted the utilitarian basis of human relationships, and, although Epicurus celebrated friendship as one of the greatest pleasures in its own right, the school taught that its purest form, totally divorced from service and need, was only possible between the gods, or between a mortal and the memory of a deceased friend.⁵⁵⁰ The greatest form of friendship available to humans was one based on the mutual, enthusiastic and affectionate exchange of goods and services, and eventually augmented with opportunities for self-expression.⁵⁵¹ In the late Republic, where the same word (*amicitia*) was consistently applied to political alliances and to the most enduring and intimate friendships, and where the goodwill of one's peers was vital to the success of any public

⁵⁴⁷ Suet. *Iul.* 5; Cass. Dio 44.47.4. See also Canfora (2007) 9.

⁵⁴⁸ Suet. *Iul.* 27.1; Potter (1934) 666.

⁵⁴⁹ App. *Bell. Civ.* 135.

⁵⁵⁰ Philod. *Gods* 3 col. 1 and fr. 85; Diels (1917) 16-17 cf. Armstrong (2016) 189.

⁵⁵¹ Philod. *Gods* 3 cols. 2.11-15 and 14.6; Diels (1917) 17 and 37 cf. Armstrong (2016) 190.

career, this would have constituted a refreshingly open and pragmatic assessment.⁵⁵² That the adherents of the *Kepos* could simultaneously value Caesar's friendship for its own sake and accept the need for reciprocal utility would make them valuable allies, whose company could be enjoyed without suspicion about their motivations.

Caesar may have welcomed Epicurean reasoning when it came to incorporating his views on friendship into his policies. He knew, for example, that his actions in the Civil War would incur great enmity, but hoped that his popularity would help to shield him from harm.⁵⁵³ His commitment to granting mercy to his defeated foes, or the *clementia Caesaris*, was an effort towards securing sufficient goodwill to ensure his safety, and bears more than a passing resemblance to the principal Epicurean teaching that the wise man, if he cannot make all around him his friends, will at least avoid letting them become enemies.⁵⁵⁴ The influence, or at least approbation, of the *Kepos* on this policy is evidenced by the fact that Pansa was one of its primary agents, working tirelessly to secure pardons for defeated Pompeians after Caesarian victories.⁵⁵⁵ Even if the Epicureans did not help to develop Caesar's *clementia*-politik, they would certainly have appreciated it and seen it as an opportunity to obtain at least some small measure of peace of mind.⁵⁵⁶

Frank Speech

Another reason for Caesar's appreciation of Epicureans among his followers may have been a shared attitude to communication, and a fondness for plain speaking. He once remarked, upon hearing a speech of Brutus, that he did not know what the young man wanted, but that he

⁵⁵² Cicero attempts to draw a distinction between political *amicitia* and his relationship with Atticus in *Att.* 1.18 (SB 18), the closest he gets to acknowledging the benefits of friendship: Williams (2012) 49.

⁵⁵³ Plutarch compares Caesar's positive reputation with a magic amulet: *Caes.* 57.8 cf. Pelling (1997) 223.

⁵⁵⁴ Diog. Laert. 10.154 (*KD* 39).

⁵⁵⁵ *Cic. Lig.* 1.

⁵⁵⁶ See Paratore (1973) 189-190.

certainly wanted it very much.⁵⁵⁷ His own oratory, on the other hand, was notable for its lack of ornament, as was his written output; Cicero remarked in the *Brutus* that the *Commentaries* were so devoid of elaboration as to appear naked.⁵⁵⁸ Bourne sees here sympathy for a particularly Epicurean focus on simplicity of language, as mandated by the founder.⁵⁵⁹ While his own style is certainly compatible with the teachings of Epicurus, Caesar may have had other reasons for embracing starkness.⁵⁶⁰ He was, after all, a military man, and effective communications are vital to a successful campaign. It is likely, however, that he valued in his staff the ability to convey information clearly and rapidly, and would have found this among his Epicurean followers.

The Epicureans in Caesar's camp would also have found themselves well placed to navigate a distinct feature of his retinue: its diversity in terms of social status thanks to his policy of including a conspicuously high proportion of non-Senatorials in his military retinue, and his willingness to promote individuals of low status but high ability.⁵⁶¹ Caesar was often surrounded by his social inferiors, an effect only magnified by his rise to the rank of dictator. Yet he still needed advisors, and ones who could be trusted to give their honest opinion.⁵⁶² The adherents of the *Kepos* would have received a number of useful teachings relevant to this need. One of these is outlined in Philodemus' *On Frank Speech*, which, while primarily concerned with pedagogical relationships, does delve in some detail into the particular challenge of communicating when there is a significant disparity in power between two individuals. The author even gives specific advice on criticising politicians and famous men, both of which applied to

⁵⁵⁷ Plut. *Brut.* 6.7.

⁵⁵⁸ Cic. *Brut.* 262 cf. Batstone (1990) 348. Hirtius, as continuator of the project, also praised his predecessor's plain style: *Bell. Gall.* 8 praef. 4-7. See also Gotoff (1984) 2, Fantham (2009) 144.

⁵⁵⁹ Epicurean theory of language: Diog. Laert. 10.13.31; Usener fr. 478; Lucr. *DRN.* 5.1028-1029.

⁵⁶⁰ Bourne (1977) 422.

⁵⁶¹ Gruen (1974) 118; Wylie (1993) 130.

⁵⁶² Plut. *Brut.* 7.4 depicts Caesar mulling his appointments for praetorships with a council of his friends.

Caesar.⁵⁶³ They would also have been warned against flattery, and taught that it was the vice corresponding to hostility, and that the virtuous mean, friendship, is facilitated only by free exchange of views.⁵⁶⁴

Caesar, who was notoriously honest and straightforward about his own controversial actions, would have appreciated the frankness of his Epicurean followers, even if, like Pansa, they were of humble origin.⁵⁶⁵ Conversely, the Epicureans would have marked the similarity to Epicurus' Garden, in which slaves and women were given unprecedented voice, and could even pen invective.⁵⁶⁶

Disdain for *luxuria*

Another point of agreement between Caesar and Epicurus that would have been particularly pertinent in the context of his military retinue was a rejection of the need for luxurious physical surroundings. While Caesar was willing to go into debt for the sake of public magnificence, he did not allot the same resources to his own personal comfort.⁵⁶⁷ He was famed for his ability to endure privation on campaign, matching his men for exertion and exposure to cold, and pushing them in turn to move at an extraordinary pace.⁵⁶⁸ This has been the basis of at least one scholar's

⁵⁶³ Phldm. *Lib. Dic.* col. 18a-b cf. Glad (1996) 34-35.

⁵⁶⁴ *PHerc.* 1082 (One of the six papyri attributed to Philodemus' *On Flattery*) cf. Kemp (2010) 67. *PHerc.* 222 col. 3.3-7 states that the flatterer is motivated by profit rather than friendship: Gargiulo (1981) 103-127. See also Glad (1996) 23.

⁵⁶⁵ See for example Caesar's account of his massacre of the Usipetes and Tencteri during peace negotiations, to the horror of Cato, who suggested that he be handed back to the barbarians as a prisoner: Suet. *Iul.* 24.3; Plut. *Caes.* 22.3; App. *Celt.* 18. Caesar's own account does not flinch away from either the scale of the slaughter or the fact that treating was still underway, but states simply that he thought that he was justified by an attack on his cavalry: *Bell. Gall.* 4.7-15. It is worth noting however, that while the ancients were, for the most part, convinced of Caesar's basic straightforwardness (see Suet. *Iul.* 56.4 for an exception), the issue is more contentious in modern scholarship: Rambaud (1966).

⁵⁶⁶ Leontion's invective against Theophrastus: Cic. *Nat. Deo.* 1.93.

⁵⁶⁷ Plut. *Caes.* 5.14; Cass. Dio 37.8.2. See also Fredricksen (1966) 130.

⁵⁶⁸ Suet. *Iul.* 57.

argument against Caesar's Epicureanism.⁵⁶⁹ Yet though Epicurus saw pleasure as the highest good, and acknowledged that it could be derived from or varied by luxury, he was insistent that the wise man would not be at all perturbed by the absence of expensive food, wine, or furniture.⁵⁷⁰ When Philodemus invited Piso to dine among the Epicureans, he apologized in advance for the absence of imported wine and expensive food, conditions that Piso must have accepted.⁵⁷¹ And when Lucretius gave his account of the good life in Epicurean terms, he described nothing that would not have been freely available in one of Caesar's camps: good friends, good conversations, and access to nature.⁵⁷²

Rejection of Superstition

In Rome, Caesar had a project that many would have balked at the prospect of aiding, but that was rather less unpalatable to Epicureans than the average Roman. This was the manipulation and shaping of the state cult to suit his purposes. From early in his career, Caesar had identified the potential for using religious offices as a path to political power, and in 63 BC he mounted a cynical and vigorous campaign for the position of Pontifex Maximus, borrowing so heavily that he feared he would have to go into exile if he did not prevail.⁵⁷³ He clearly feared no divine retribution, which Canfora attributes to his intellectual sympathies for Epicureanism.⁵⁷⁴ And indeed, if any philosophy could provide justification for disregarding the opinion of the gods, it was Epicureanism. While the matter of whether the philosophy was strictly atheistic was already a source of disagreement in Caesar's time, a fundamental teaching was that the actions of

⁵⁶⁹ Bálazs (1986) 299.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ep. Men.* 130 cf. Woolf (2009).

⁵⁷¹ *Phldm. Ep.* 27.

⁵⁷² *Lucr. DRN.* 2.20-30.

⁵⁷³ *Suet. Iul.* 13.1; *Plut. Caes.* 7.1-4. Pelling (2011) 31 notes that in Plutarch's account, Caesar's occupation of the office is significant for political rather than religious reasons, and that the *Life*, until the Ides, is "resolutely secular."

⁵⁷⁴ Canfora (2007) 23.

mortals could neither please nor displease the gods.⁵⁷⁵ Epicurus did, though, advocate participation in state religion, presumably for social purposes, and his followers made sacrifices, attended festivals, and were initiated into mystery cults.⁵⁷⁶ Following this trend, we find that Piso's son was also a pontifex, and several Roman Epicureans were inducted into the Eleusinian mysteries, motivated by something other than piety.⁵⁷⁷ Their co-adherents were unlikely to have disagreed with Caesar's strategy, and may even have supported it.

One instance of an Epicurean actively condoning Caesar's manipulation of religion is Piso's role in the modification of the *leges Aelia et Fufia* (see above Ch. 1.iv). In his first consulship in 59 BC, Caesar had his efforts to reform agrarian law repeatedly stalled by his colleague Bibulus, who declared a 'sacred period' in order to prevent meetings of the *comitia*, on the grounds of unfavourable omens.⁵⁷⁸ The following year, he had Clodius, as tribune of the plebs, weaken the two laws that had made this possible; the presiding consuls, Piso and Gabinius, did not object.⁵⁷⁹ He and his son-in-law may have agreed that the concept of omens was a silly superstition and an unwarranted source of fear.⁵⁸⁰ Certainly that seems to have been Caesar's opinion. While he most famously ignored the portents of his doom on the Ides of March, that was not the first time he had disregarded an apparent divine warning: the escape of a sacrificial victim was not enough to make him postpone his expedition against Scipio in Africa, and on another occasion he was unperturbed by the discovery that the victim

⁵⁷⁵ Epicurus insisted that the *gods* were real, albeit unconcerned with human affairs: Diog. Laert. 10.123 (*Ep. Men.*); 10.139 (*KD*. 1). Later writers interpreted this as an effectively atheistic stance: Cic. *Nat. Deo*. 1.123; Sext. Emp. *Math*. 9.58; Plut. *Mor*. 1102b, 1112d, 1119d-e, 1123e cf. Obbink (1989) 187 ff.

⁵⁷⁶ Sacrifices: Plut. *Mor*. 1102b (Usener fr. 30); Porph. *Abst*. 1.7-12. Festivals and mysteries: Phldm. *Piet*. p.127.24ff G (PHerc. 1077 xi.25-28).

⁵⁷⁷ Piso Pontifex: *RE*. 99. Atticus and the Eleusinian mysteries: Cic. *Leg*. 2.35.

⁵⁷⁸ Suet. *Iul*. 20.1. On the possibility that Bibulus genuinely believed in the omens: Beard and Crawford (1985) 33.

⁵⁷⁹ Cic. *Red. Sen*. 5; *Pis*. 4.

⁵⁸⁰ Lucr. *DRN*. 1.66.

had no heart.⁵⁸¹ Pansa too seems to have shared this pragmatism, a trait greatly exaggerated in accounts of his death.⁵⁸²

Attitude to Death

Related to Caesar's dismissal of superstition is his pragmatic attitude to death. The most frequently cited evidence for his Epicureanism is the following passage of Sallust, in which the future dictator muses on the fate of the Catilinarian conspirators:

*De poena possum equidem dicere, id quod res habet, in luctu atque miseriis mortem aerumnarum requiem, non cruciatum esse; eam cuncta mortalium mala dissolvere; ultra neque curae neque gaudio locum esse.*⁵⁸³

So far as the penalty is concerned, I can say with truth that amid grief and wretchedness death is a relief from woes, not a punishment; that it puts an end to all mortal ills and leaves no room either for sorrow or for joy.

Bourne and Syme both see here a fundamentally Epicurean pragmatism about death, and an acceptance of the teaching that consciousness is impossible after the dispersal of soul atoms that inevitably occurs.⁵⁸⁴ There are two problems for this interpretation: the fact that Sallust's account of the speech differs from that of Cicero, and seems to owe a debt to Thucydides' Myletian debate, which casts doubt on its accuracy, and secondly that the Epicurean interpretation is too strong a reading.⁵⁸⁵ Caesar here only denies that the dead can suffer, not that they have no sensation at all.⁵⁸⁶ This weaker proposition is one accepted by philosophers from various

⁵⁸¹ Suet. *Iul.* 59, 79. See also Bourne (1997) 422.

⁵⁸² See above ch. 2, also Cass. Dio 46.17, 33; Plut. *Brut.* 39.4.

⁵⁸³ Sall. *B.C.* 51.20 (tr. Rolfe Loeb).

⁵⁸⁴ Bourne (1977) 421; Syme (2002) 243. On the Epicurean view of death: Epic. *Ep. Men.* 124-7; *KD* 19-21; Diog. Laert. 10.22; Lucr. *DRN.* 3.830; Phil. *Mort.* col. 28: 32-36.

⁵⁸⁵ Cicero's account: *Cat.* 4.9-10. On Sallust's imitation of Thucydides: Meister (2016) 144-145.

⁵⁸⁶ Mulgan (1979) 338.

schools, including Stoics and Peripatetics.⁵⁸⁷ Caesar may well have taken such a pragmatic view, but we cannot know for certain.

A more persuasive argument for Caesar's lack of fear of death can be derived from his actions. Even as he carved a path for himself through violence and the severing of alliances, he was determined not to let himself live in fear of the consequences.⁵⁸⁸ Upon his appointment as dictator for life, he dismissed the praetorian cohort that had until then been serving as his bodyguard, and refused to reinstate them, claiming that death was preferable to a life lived in fear.⁵⁸⁹ This is not quite the Epicurean approach; Epicurus claimed that one who had acted in such a way as to potentially incur penalties, would always be perturbed by the possibility, and thus denied *ataraxia*.⁵⁹⁰ Yet it is a hedonic calculus of sorts, a balancing act between physical security and mental distress. Caesar's Epicurean followers would have been sympathetic to his desire not to let the spectre of death loom over him, and he may even have found the teachings of their school on the subject therapeutic.

Affection

While it is worth looking at ideological compatibility between Caesar and the Epicurean politicians, we must not discount a more ineffable phenomenon: that of genuine affection. There is not always a rational basis for positive sentiment, but familiarity and satisfying

⁵⁸⁷ Cicero, in the *Tusculans*, ascribes such views to Dicaearchus the Peripatetic: 10.21; 11.24; Panaetius the Stoic: 32.79, and Aristoxenus: 11.24, cf. Mulgan (1979) 337.

⁵⁸⁸ Bourne (1977) 431.

⁵⁸⁹ App. *Bell. Civ.* 2.109; Vell. Pat. 2.57.1. Interestingly, the latter author claims that Hirtius and Pansa counselled Caesar against this approach, warning him that a position won by arms must be held by arms. I suspect that this is a conflation of the two consuls (Hirtius apparently wrote to Cicero that clemency was his master's downfall: *Att.* 14.22), if not a complete fabrication.

⁵⁹⁰ Porph. *Abst.* 1.7.4. Cicero suggests in *Off.* 3.38 that a complete guarantee of never being found out (e.g. the possession of Plato's ring of Gyges, which confers invisibility) might allow the Epicurean to commit injustice without being perturbed, but notes that the school denies the relevance of this theoretical scenario.

experience can certainly contribute. By the time he had risen to power, Caesar was surrounded by Epicureans. He was married to one, and the tender monument erected to the child Ikadion by his mother Calpurnia Anthis shows that she had passed on her philosophy to the household slaves, who were in turn educating another generation.⁵⁹¹ His extended family through Calpurnia included an Epicurean brother-in-law and father-in-law, neither of whom had ever threatened his ascendancy. Pansa had worked tirelessly for his master's advancement, and as we shall see in Part II, even the professedly apolitical Atticus had contributed to the cause. The cumulative effect of these successful and fruitful relationships may well have been an association in the mind of Caesar between Epicureanism and loyalty, or even affection. Even if he did not agree with the reasoning behind the tenets of the philosophy, the practical outcome of the beliefs of the Epicureans around him was often to his benefit. If he thought them wrong, he likely found them to be usefully, and perhaps endearingly, so.

⁵⁹¹ *CIL*. VI.14211.

5. An Epicurean also-ran? The curious case of C. Memmius

There is one politician of the late Republic whose strategy for scaling the *cursus honorum* bears some of the hallmarks of a career-motivated Epicurean conversion, but which ultimately resulted in failure and ignominy.⁵⁹² Lucretius' addressee Memmius commissioned, or at least supported, the most significant work of Epicurean philosophy in the Latin language, purchased one of the most important relics of Epicurus in the city of Athens, swung abruptly from enmity to loyalty for Caesar, and attempted to drastically modify his political strategy. Yet, unlike Cassius a few years later, he never managed to be taken seriously as either a friend of Caesar or the *Kepos*, despite the presumably large monetary investment he made for this self-presentation and the damage to his career that he risked and ultimately endured. This skepticism extends not only to his contemporaries, but also to modern observers. His case, thanks to his seemingly irrational behaviour serves as a curious footnote to those of his successful peers.

Two incidents in his lifetime have caused generations of scholars to doubt whether Lucretius ever managed to lead him to Epicurean enlightenment, or was ever even trying to: his conviction for *ambitus* in 52 BC and his threat of destroying an Athenian property that had once belonged to Epicurus.⁵⁹³ The latter seems the more serious obstacle to the identification of any association between Memmius and Epicureanism; in a series of letters sent in 51 BC in which he triangulates between Memmius, Atticus and Patro, then Scholarch of the Epicurean school, Cicero attempts to resolve what is clearly a very sensitive issue and the source of great

⁵⁹² Memmius features in Broughton's (1991) 28-29 pamphlet on candidates defeated in consular elections, which provided the inspiration for this section title.

⁵⁹³ Crawley (1963) categorizes the project of promoting Epicureanism as a total failure. Allen and De Lacey (1939) 60 see the poem as a half-hearted overture for patronage. Maslowski (1985) 77, however, argues that the conversion of Memmius is not only a sincere aim, but also the poet's primary one.

enmity.⁵⁹⁴ Memmius is the owner of a plot in the Deme of Melite incorporating an old house of Epicurus. He is keen to build there, much to the displeasure of Patro. Whether he intends to destroy or renovate the existing property is unclear. Cicero pleads with him to put off his plans, not for the sake of Patro, with whom he is clearly at odds, but for Atticus, an influential Roman supporter of the School.⁵⁹⁵

Memmius ultimately gave up whatever plans he had for the site, but there is no indication that he and the *Kepon* were ever subsequently on good terms. While the whole affair is credible evidence for his hostility to Epicureanism at the time, it does not preclude him having ever had an interest. In fact, his ownership of this particular historical site, had he not ever identified with the school, would constitute a rather significant coincidence. It may also have been legally tricky; the school's intention to involve the *areopagus* suggests that Patro felt he had some legal recourse in preserving Epicurus' house.⁵⁹⁶ It is far more likely that Memmius purchased the site in an earlier fit of enthusiasm for the philosophy, perhaps before his exile meant that he had to confront the reality of living there.⁵⁹⁷ This same brief flare of interest would also explain his patronage of Lucretius as he composed *De Rerum Natura*, some time between 58 and

⁵⁹⁴ Cic. *Fam.* 13.1 (SB 63); *Att.* 5.11 (104). The first of these, to Memmius himself, falls into the category labelled by Cicero *litterae accurate scriptae*, or 'carefully written letters': Wilcox (2012) 89n19. It is a masterpiece of persuasion, flattery and social navigation.

⁵⁹⁵ Cicero's emphasis that he does not represent Patro and his denigration of his followers may reflect Memmius' hostility to Epicureanism, but, as Gilbert (2017) 17 notes, could be an attempt to distinguish his own request from that of an impertinent Greek. Memmius was, after all, a Roman senator, even if in exile. See also Guillaumont (2000) 66.

⁵⁹⁶ Epicurus was meticulous in his efforts to ensure the future safety of the school he had founded and its assets, specifying in his will that Athenian proxies preserve its grounds for his mostly *metic* followers: Diog. Laert. 10.16-21 cf. Leiwo and Remes (1999) 163. Hence Patro's invocation of the city authorities: Cic. *Att.* 5.11.6 (SB 104).

⁵⁹⁷ Della Valle (1939) 738 posits a more long-standing association between Memmius and the school, suggesting that he was alongside Cicero when he heard the lectures of Phaedrus as a youth. There seems, however, to be no good reason for Cicero to evade mentioning this in their correspondence. See also Boyancé (1950) 222.

54 BC.⁵⁹⁸ His commitment to the project may have waned somewhat towards the end, but I think it unlikely that the poet could have successfully completed such a large undertaking without any financial aid.⁵⁹⁹

Memmius' foray into electoral corruption presents a more confusing set of questions for his adherence. He began his campaign for consul by teaming up with another candidate and bribing the incumbents with the promise of lucrative proconsular provinces in return for their support. The pair was backed originally by Pompey, but the formation of the triumvirate bought Caesar and his voting bloc of veterans to their cause. Victory seemed assured, but at the last minute, Memmius publically disclosed his crimes, and attempted to prosecute his running mate for *ambitus*. Cicero believed that Pompey was behind the about-turn, but mentions that Memmius was particularly aggrieved by Caesar's condemnations of his actions. Could he have been attempting a swift change of allegiance?⁶⁰⁰ The candidate he tried to make his scapegoat was one of Caesar's most ardent critics.⁶⁰¹ Or perhaps he was trying to turn over a new leaf and live a new, more considered and ethical life, rooted in philosophy. Unfortunately, since Memmius displayed such ineptitude in his manoeuvring, it is impossible to tell exactly what he was trying to achieve.

I believe, though, that Memmius hoped his foray into Epicureanism would achieve for him what it eventually did for Cassius: a complete change of image. He had already a poor reputation, having been the butt of two scathing poems of Catullus, who had accompanied him when he governed Bithynia, and if he was willing to get involved in flagrant bribery

⁵⁹⁸ *DRN* existed in some state of completion in 54, when Cicero mentioned it in a letter to Quintus: *Q. Fr.* 2.9.2 (SB 12). Hutchinson (2001) posits a later date in the 40s, but Memmius' exile and, as Volk (2010) points out, the Civil War, would be an odd context for the poem.

⁵⁹⁹ Even if he was not a particularly enthusiastic student of Epicureanism, Memmius was a patron of the arts. As governor of Bithynia in 57 BC he supported Catullus and Helvetius Cinna, albeit perhaps not to the extent they had hoped for: *Cat. Carm.* 10; 28. He also had a talent for poetry himself: *Cic. Brut.* 70.247; *Ovid. Tr.* 2.433. See Courtney (1993) 233.

⁶⁰⁰ As I argue elsewhere: Valachova (2018) 149.

⁶⁰¹ Second perhaps only to Memmius himself, who, before this campaign was an ardent Pompeian and who had previously accused Caesar of debauched and unmanly behaviour: *Suet. Iul.* 49.2. See also Braund (1996) 50.

to secure the consulship then he must not have had much confidence in his popularity among the voting public.⁶⁰² His family name would not help him achieve his ends: his most famous ancestor was probably a designated Tribune of the Plebs indicted for corruption during the war with Jugurtha.⁶⁰³ So, with the help of Lucretius, whose work he must have commissioned between Piso's consulship and his own campaign, and most likely after his return from Bithynia, he set about cultivating a new self-presentation.⁶⁰⁴ He would become a generous patron of the arts, and in return the poet would recast him as the *clara propago Memmii*, and imbue his lineage with divine descent mirroring that of Caesar.⁶⁰⁵ He would, like Piso, use his Epicureanism to convey an air of cultured philhellenism, perhaps by purchasing and restoring the house in Melite, and, like Pansa he would present himself as a workmanlike public official, with no ambitions to threaten those of the triumvirate.

The scheme to bribe the incumbents was probably his back-up plan, abandoned in haste when he realized that he had been so successful in finding favour with Caesar. The fallout of his revelation was spectacular, and Memmius lost the patronage of both Pompey and Caesar, and then his right to live in Rome. Any reputation he had secured was in tatters, and he had conspicuously failed to live up to the praise and instruction that Lucretius had so publically laid out for him.⁶⁰⁶ Memmius was alone in Athens, in possession of a property that was both unfit for habitation and a constant reminder of his failure. Little wonder he wanted to destroy the house. Had he lived beyond his estimated date of death in 49 BC, he would have been appalled to find that Cassius had successfully used a similar strategy to preserve his life and career, though perhaps he would have

⁶⁰² *Cat. Carm.* 10.28.

⁶⁰³ *Sall. Jug.* 27.2.

⁶⁰⁴ Lucretius refers to events of 58 BC at 3.40: Smith (2001) 36.

⁶⁰⁵ Boyancé (1950) 213-4. The Memmii may have previously claimed descent from Menestheus, a king of Athens, but by the time of Lucretius' writing Trojan lineage was in vogue, thanks to Caesar's funerary laudatio for his aunt in 69 (*Suet. Iul.* 6.1), and Mnestheus fit the bill: *Virg. Aen.* 5.117 cf. Wiseman (1974) 157

⁶⁰⁶ One scholar has even gone so far as to speculate that this was a motivating factor in Lucretius' purported suicide: Brind'Amour (1969) 157.

derived a glimmer of satisfaction when he heard that that scheme too had ultimately ended in a blaze of drama and ignominy.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁷ Cicero refers to Memmius in the past tense in *Brut.* 70.247, composed circa 46 BC.

Part II:

Living Unnoticed?

6. The 'Quietism' of Titus Pomponius Atticus

While much ink has been spilled over the issue of whether the office-holding Roman Epicureans of the late Republic were truly committed to their purported political beliefs, Titus Pomponius Atticus, best known as the lifelong correspondent of Cicero, has escaped such scrutiny. He has been long accepted by scholars as the quintessential Roman Epicurean, and the fact that he opted out of the *cursus honorum* has meant that his brand of the philosophy has long been presumed to be of the orthodox variety, close to that advocated by the founder of the *Kepos* himself.⁶⁰⁸ Atticus, according to that narrative, was a passive figure in the late Republic, an honourable bystander who weathered political conflict by declining to engage, buffered by his philosophically motivated friendships.⁶⁰⁹

There are, however, two major problems for this interpretation. The first of these is that, despite the fact that Atticus was the subject of a huge amount of written testimony from his contemporaries, to a degree unprecedented for one who was neither politician, general, nor king, there exists no explicit identification of him as a fully-fledged Epicurean. More than this, the sources are actively evasive and at times contradictory.⁶¹⁰ Secondly, ground breaking work by Kathryn Welch and Ann Marshall in the 1990s has revealed that Atticus was not quite so politically inactive as he appeared.⁶¹¹ While he might not have pursued the traditional course, he still found ways to influence political figures and events using his friendships, his wealth, and even his literary abilities.

I will argue that these two facts are neither accidental nor unrelated. I suggest that Atticus benefitted from and sometimes actively encouraged

⁶⁰⁸ Cf. Bourne (1977) 418 (who identifies anyone laudatory of Atticus an Epicurean themselves), Balsdon (1979) 51, Fuhrmann (1992) 29, Griffin (1989) 4. Atkins (2000) 504.

⁶⁰⁹ See Lindsay (1998) 326 on Nepos' role in fashioning this narrative.

⁶¹⁰ I argue below, Ch. 6.ii, that this was no accident, but part of a deliberate policy of Atticus.

⁶¹¹ Welch (1996), Marshall (1993);(1999). An earlier proponent of this theory who made somewhat less of an impact is Ziegler (1936).

ambiguity over his commitment to the Epicurean school, and that this afforded him a distraction from and pretext for both his public quietism and his covert political activity. I will show that Atticus exerted a great deal of influence over those writers whom we now take as our primary sources on his character, and thus had more control over his reputation and eventual legacy than has been previously recognised. This allowed him to preserve his cordial relationships with powerful individuals on both sides of political divides, even as he schemed, petitioned, and judiciously applied his wealth to consolidate his own power and security.

Atticus, then, although he took a different path, had more in common than is immediately evident with Piso, Pansa, Cassius, and even Memmius, in that he incorporated his presumed Epicureanism into his political strategy, and used it to enhance his relationships with those in positions of power.

6.i An Epicurean by any other name: Cornelius Nepos on Atticus

Despite his apparent lack of engagement with the great events of his day, and the fact that he never held a political office sufficient to gain senatorial rank, Atticus was the only Roman Epicurean to be the subject of a biography.⁶¹² Cornelius Nepos, who wrote a series on the *Lives of Illustrious Men*, produced his entry on the *Life of Atticus* during his subject's lifetime, and completed it after his death.⁶¹³ While we might expect this to furnish us with a wealth of information about his adherence to the *Kepos* and his integration of its ideals into his life, we are at once confronted by two troublesome roadblocks.⁶¹⁴ First, there is the fact that not once in the *Life* does the word "Epicurean" appear, nor is there any other form of explicit reference to Atticus' philosophy.⁶¹⁵ Second, we must contend with the generally low esteem in which its author has traditionally been held.⁶¹⁶ The latter concern is dual-pronged, if one puts aside the denigrations of Nepos' vocabulary and style that have seen him relegated to the status of a schoolboy author.⁶¹⁷ On one hand, he has a proven record of inaccuracies elsewhere in his extant writings, and on the other, his depiction of Atticus is so favourable, bordering on encomium, that there is

⁶¹² Atticus' only official political roles were symbolic prefectures in the provinces, and Nepos (*Att.* 6.4) insists that he neither fulfilled any practical duties nor accepted financial recompense. See Jones (1999) 91.

⁶¹³ Nepos: *FRH.* 45; Bishop and Drummond (2013) 395-401. The *Life of Atticus* was either published in two "editions," with chapters 19-22 completing the second, posthumous edition (see Gieger (1985) 43n60; Stem (2012) 14) or, as Toher (2002) 139-143 argues, only delivered orally in its first incarnation and fully disseminated after its subject's death. Either way, some form of the *Life* existed for Atticus' perusal during his lifetime.

⁶¹⁴ Hence the wariness exhibited by Tracy (2012) 105.

⁶¹⁵ Griffin (1989) 18.

⁶¹⁶ The nadir of Nepotian reception must surely be Nicholas Horsfall's (1982) 290 remark that "Nepos is an intellectual pygmy whom we find associating uneasily with the literary giants of his generation." A close second is Copley's (1951) 205 dismissal as a "dull and pedantic scholar."

⁶¹⁷ Pryzwansky (2009) surveys the history of this attitude, epitomized by Jenkinson (1967).

no question of whether he was biased towards his subject, only to what degree.⁶¹⁸

Nepos' lack of objectivity, on the other hand, is the consequence of his greatest asset as a biographer: his proximity to his subject. A contemporary of both Cicero and Atticus, he was in contact with each on a personal and professional level, along with other leading literary figures of the day.⁶¹⁹ He was close enough to Atticus to give eyewitness accounts of his dinner parties, the funeral of his mother, and eventually the funeral of Atticus himself.⁶²⁰ Moreover, Atticus was closely involved with Nepos' writing process. He was not only the dedicatee but the commissioning editor of the (sadly no longer extant) extended *Life of Cato*. He supplied the dating evidence and gave critical input to the *Hannibal* and, since the greatest part of his biography was composed during his lifetime (an innovation on the part of Nepos), he would have been privy to its contents and presumably have had some degree of editorial oversight.⁶²¹ Beyond Atticus, Nepos' audience would have comprised his contemporaries and even intimates, thus, his scope for distortion or fabrication was severely narrowed, even after his subject's death.⁶²²

While Atticus' involvement in his biography does not guarantee its absolute accuracy – he never, of course, saw the final version, and he would have had his own agenda – it does mean that we are given some insight into his values and how he sought to represent himself. His

⁶¹⁸ On Nepos' mistakes elsewhere, including misidentifications and dating errors, see Rawson (1985) 49. For the argument that the *Atticus* "far exceeds the tolerable bounds of sycophancy" see Hallett (2002) 350 and a more restrained Stem (2005) 115-6.

⁶¹⁹ Rolfe (1984) vii estimates Nepos' date of birth at 99B.C. and suggests that he was the dedicatee of Catullus' *Carminae*. His interactions with Cicero are encapsulated in *Cic. Att.* 16.5, in which Cicero complains that Nepos always criticizes the very aspects of his works that he likes best.

⁶²⁰ Nepos assures the reader (*Att.* 13.7) that his knowledge comes *propter familiaritatem*, augmenting the authority of his testimony with *arbitramur*, which carries connotations of testifying truthfully in court: *TLL. arbitror*, see also Ulpian *Edict* 13, Roebuck and De Loynes de Fumichon (2004) 18.

⁶²¹ *Nep. Cato* 5: *de eo fecimus rogatu T. Pomponii Attici*. *Nep. Hann.* 13: *Nam Atticus M. Claudio Marcello Q Fabio Labeone consulibus mortuum in Annali suo scriptum reliquit*.

⁶²² Marshall (1999) 57. See also Horsfall (1989) 7-8.

quietistic course through life was not just non-traditional but actively unpalatable to some of his peers, and this account of his actions is in some ways a defence.⁶²³ We know from other sources (discussed below) that he took part in many activities not depicted by Nepos, so those that have made the cut must have been selected for their usefulness in advancing certain themes that allowed the author to approach his subject from an exemplary perspective, and Atticus to maintain a reputation as an honourable albeit unconventional Roman.⁶²⁴

The fact that Nepos never explicitly calls Atticus an Epicurean is perhaps related to this. Apart from his own hostility to philosophy generally, he would have been cognizant of the prejudices of his contemporaries against Epicureanism, especially the hedonic calculus, which was viewed as unacceptably self-interested and pleasure-focused.⁶²⁵ Naturally, Nepos would have wanted to appeal to as broad an audience as possible, and he must have imagined that his readers would be, for the most part at least, Roman. Hence, he is at pains not to diminish Atticus' essentially Roman identity, as we see when he lauds his subject's command of Latin as well as Greek, and praises his refusal to accept Athenian citizenship.⁶²⁶ To portray him as an Epicurean would be to risk making him

⁶²³ Stem (2005) 115-6 writes that the Atticus depicted is "the Atticus whom Nepos wants us to see." I would add that he is also the Atticus *Atticus* would want us to see. See also Lindsay (1998) 327. It is perhaps worth remembering that Nepos himself is also a political quietist: Stem (2012) 61.

⁶²⁴ Nepos' genre was political biography, and while critics disagree as to whether he invented it (see Geiger (1985) cf. Tulpin (2000) esp. 126 and 161), it is agreed that it is basically exemplary: Stem (2012) 66 cf. *Nep. Att.* 19.1. The propagation of a favourable reputation has been a resounding and enduring success. Champlin (1991) 97 writes: "in the **unlikely event** that he had any enemies, their feelings have not survived" (emphasis mine). Thus, we should probably disregard the assertion of Horsfall (1989) 8 that Nepos was essentially too dim to deliberately manipulate Atticus' image: "his graceless language augments our sense of his essential honesty."

⁶²⁵ Nepos' attitude to philosophy: Lindsay (1998) 331, 326; Horsfall (1989) 98. Criticism of Epicurean hedonism: Hanchey (2013) 120-128.

⁶²⁶ *Nep. Att.* 4.1; 3.1. See also Hallett (2002) 348. Ironically, the *cognomen* Atticus poses less of an issue than his command of the Greek language, having more to do with Roman *nobilitas* than Philhellenism (his Athenian friends called him *Titos*: Raubitschek (1949) 98-99). His affectation of this aristocratic mode of address mirrors fellow former-equestrian Cicero's

a *Graeculus*.⁶²⁷ A philosophical outlook is, however, necessary for a positive interpretation of Atticus' apolitical stance, so Nepos is deliberately vague about specific affiliations.

While philosophy is alluded to throughout the *Life*, Nepos' only explicit assertion of it being a motivating factor for Atticus' conduct comes late (chapter 17), and in the relatively trivial context of his harmonious relationship with his sister:⁶²⁸

*Neque id fecit natura solum, quamquam omnes ei paremus, sed etiam doctrina; nam principum philosophorum ita percepta habuit praecepta, ut iis ad vitam agendam, non ad ostentationem uteretur.*⁶²⁹

"Nor did he do this because of nature alone, though we all obey her, but also on account of his learning, for he had so fully perceived the precepts of the leading philosophers that he employed them for conducting his life, not for show."

This reference to 'philosophers' in the plural has been interpreted as an indication of eclecticism, but, if so, it is hardly a strong one.⁶³⁰ The Epicurean *Kepos* had three Scholarchs during Atticus' lifetime, whose teachings would have been apprehended by affiliates along with those of Epicurus, Metrodorus and Hermarchus. Then there were the school's extramural teachers, among them Philodemus in Rome and Siro in Naples. So this statement does not preclude Atticus' adherence to a single school, nor does it particularly support it. As we have seen, the cultivation and maintenance of strong bonds with others was a central component of

insistence on introducing his nickname into his peer interactions: see Adams (1978) 159-60.

⁶²⁷ See above Ch. 1.iii.

⁶²⁸ This is not an entirely uncontroversial subject; Pomponia's deeply unhappy marriage to Quintus Cicero eventually caused a rift between Atticus and his brother-in-law and nephew (See Verboven (1993a) 144), and precipitated a terse exchange between Atticus and Cicero: *Cic. Att.* 1.17 (SB 17). See also Božić (1951) and Harders (2010) 45-46 on the failure of the marriage and Lévy (2012) 59 on the correspondence.

⁶²⁹ *Nep. Att.* 17.3. Translations of Nepos are adapted from Horsfall (1989) unless otherwise stated.

⁶³⁰ Byrne (1920) 35.

Epicurean philosophy in its Roman iteration, and Atticus' close relationship with his sister could easily have been inspired by stories of Epicurus, whose first followers were his siblings and who had an ahead of its time appreciation of the wisdom and company of women.⁶³¹

A more vague allusion to philosophy as a guiding principle comes in the more serious context of Atticus' successful navigation of the turmoil of Caesar and Pompey's civil war:

*Sic vetere institutio vitae effugit nova pericula.*⁶³²

“Thus he escaped new dangers by his old rule of life.”

This *institutio vitae* was Atticus' *quies*, which was apparently so welcome to Caesar that he extended his pardon to encompass the two Quinti Cicerones.⁶³³ It is a stance, of course, completely compatible with Epicurean teachings in both justification and consequence; if anyone could be said to have maintained peace of mind throughout this conflict, it was Atticus, who was invested in the victory of neither party.⁶³⁴ Indeed, the passage in which Nepos explains Atticus' adoption of the policy, while it is not explicitly depicted as a philosophical choice, uses the most Epicurean language of the entire biography:

⁶³¹ Diog. Laert. 10.3: brothers Neocles, Chaerodemus and Aristobulus; 10.5-6: criticism of his admiration for Leontion and Themista.

⁶³² Nep. *Att.* 7.3. This is a particularly important section of the Life. As Stem (2005) 120 points out, "No other series of events in Atticus' life receives this much attention, which is a significant indication that Nepos found this narrative especially important for the presentation of Atticus' character.

⁶³³ Nep. *Att.* 7.3.

⁶³⁴ He was not, however, entirely unperturbed; when Caesar's dictatorship began, Atticus coined the neologism "phalarism," inspired by the notorious tyrant of Acragas, who roasted people alive in an iron bull, to describe the sort of wanton cruelty he hoped the new leader would refrain from: Cic. *Att.* 7.12.2 (SB 135) cf. Gildenhard (2006) 200. That Cicero criticized Epicurus for claiming that the wise man would be happy inside the bull of Phalaris at *Tusc.* 2.17-18 is an interesting coincidence.

*Neque tamen se civilibus fluctibus committeret, quod non magis eos in sua potestate existimabat esse qui se his non dedissent, quam qui maritimis iactarentur.*⁶³⁵

“Yet he did not commit himself to the storms of civil disorder, for he considered that men who entrusted themselves to such waves were no more in control than those who were tossed by the waves of the sea.”

Compare with the proem of Book Two of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, in which the poet expounds on the satisfaction that can be derived from watching the struggles of those who have not achieved Epicurean enlightenment:⁶³⁶

*Suave, mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis
e terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;
non quia vexari quemquamst iucunda voluptas,
sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suavest.*⁶³⁷

"Sweet it is to look down upon the sea's surface swept to turbulence by the wind, and see from land the great exertions of another.
Not that these tribulations are in themselves a sweet pleasure,
but from them it is a joy to discern from which troubles you are free."

Horsfall, as usual unwilling to credit Nepos with any degree of innovation, suggests that he is here parroting sentiment and language he has heard from Atticus.⁶³⁸ We know, however, that Nepos was aware of

⁶³⁵ Nep. *Att.* 6.1. Note that *committo* in Nepos usually has martial connotations.

⁶³⁶ This metaphor is not exclusively Epicurean, but has by the late Republic come to be a commonplace for the philosophy, following an earlier tradition of comparing *ataraxia* with the smooth, undisturbed sea: Clay (1972) 65 cf. Fowler (2007) 31. Cicero's application of the trope to Cato the Elder in *Har. Res.* 1.1 reads as an attempt to reclaim the imagery from the *Kepon*.

⁶³⁷ *Lucretius, DRN.* 2.1. Latin from the Oxford: Bailey (1928).

⁶³⁸ He almost manages to be complimentary, calling this and others of Nepos' recollections of Atticus' opinions "very creditable echoing of Epicurean language."

Lucretius, and wrote that he was as great a poet as Catullus, which strongly implies that he had read the *De Rerum Natura*.⁶³⁹ Either way, he must have been aware of the Epicurean connotations of this imagery, and the ship of state metaphor is not so elegant that it can have been employed for aesthetic purposes only.⁶⁴⁰ While Nepos does not name Atticus as an Epicurean, he does seem here to be encouraging the reading of him as one, and certainly does nothing to discourage such an interpretation. Epicureanism, then, maintains a latent presence throughout the *Life of Atticus*.⁶⁴¹

There is another way in which Nepos seems to imply Atticus' adherence; his depictions of Atticus' lifestyle at times read as attempts to pre-empt and deflect criticisms of Epicureanism.⁶⁴² When he writes of his subject's grand house on the Quirinal in which he attended dinner parties, Nepos qualifies that the building was inherited, and that Atticus had made no alterations beyond the necessary, thus evading potential accusations of *luxuria*.⁶⁴³ Likewise, his household slaves were bred (all of Atticus' staff were born into the household) for business and not pleasure. Nepos tells us that:

*Usus est familia, si utilitate iudicandum est, optima; si forma, vix mediocri.
Namque in ea errant pueri litteratissimi, anagnostae optimi et plurimi librarii,*

⁶³⁹ Nep. Att. 12.4: *idem L. Iulium Calidum, quem post Lucretii Catullique mortem multo elegantissimum poetam nostram tulisse aetatem vere videor posse contendere...*

⁶⁴⁰ The metaphor does have its defenders: Titchener (2003) 91 points out that it acts as an effective framing device for the most dramatic period in Atticus' life. Lindsay (1998) 329, however, claims Nepos is inappropriately "obsessed" with the comparison. Griffin (1986) 76 n. 6 first noted the Epicurean connection.

⁶⁴¹ As Shearin (2012) 32 aptly puts it, Epicureanism seems almost to "haunt" the *text* through "undeniable textual traces."

⁶⁴² Shearin (2012) 37 interprets Nepos' desire to avoid propagating misconceptions of Epicureanism as tacit confirmation of the philosophy's presence.

⁶⁴³ Nep. Att. 13.2.

*ut ne pedisequus quidem quisquam esset qui non utrumque horum pulchre facere posset.*⁶⁴⁴

“His slave household, to judge by its practical qualities, was outstanding; to judge by its beauty, barely adequate. For among it there were highly-educated slaves, excellent readers, and numerous copyists, so there was not even a single footman who could not both read and copy finely.”

Nepos claims that this is both proof against immoderate desires on the part of Atticus as *paterfamilias*, and evidence of his industry.⁶⁴⁵ Educating a slave to literacy required a great dedication of time and effort, and the outcome was a worthy one; private copyists constituted the primary engine of textual dissemination in the late republic, far exceeding the output of any commercial publishing industry.⁶⁴⁶ Thus, Atticus was neither a voluptuary nor a slouch, both characters in the stock invective against Epicureanism.⁶⁴⁷

To fully cement the image of Atticus as a generous but careful spender, Nepos cites a very specific figure of 3,000 sesterces as his average monthly household expenditure. This, he says, is derived *ex ephemeris* – from his subject's account ledger.⁶⁴⁸ While he makes no explicit assertion that he has actually seen the records, it is entirely possible, especially if Atticus granted him access to them.⁶⁴⁹ It is not implausible that the subject

⁶⁴⁴ Nep. *Att.* 13.3. This description of multi-skilled slaves echoes Cicero's assertion in *Pis.* 67 that Piso's aesthetically displeasing slaves pulled double duty in his house, exposing his miserliness (*idem coquus, idem atriensis*). See also Ch. 1.iii.

⁶⁴⁵ Nep. *Att.* 13.4. On the contemporary attitude towards sexual relationships with slaves and freedmen, see Griffin (1985) 24ff.; Lilja (1983) 30ff. cf. Horsfall (1989) 88.

⁶⁴⁶ On the role of Atticus' slaves in the dissemination of literature: Starr (1987) 221; Murphy (1998) 499ff. Specific examples: Cic. *Att.* 16.6 (SB 121) (*de Gloria*); 4.13 (87) (*de Oratore*).

⁶⁴⁷ See Cicero's allegations that Cassius has been "seduced by pleasure": *Fam.* 15.16.3 (SB 215). Mouritsen (2011) 195 points out that Atticus' insistence on *vernae* was at odds with the contemporary elite's obsession with perfection and specialism in their slaves.

⁶⁴⁸ On the keeping of monthly accounts: Cic. *Rosc. Com.* 3-8; *Verr.* 1.60-1. See also de Ste Croix (1956) 42; Watson (1965) 38. Horsfall (1988) 90-91.

⁶⁴⁹ Horsfall (1988) 90-91.

rather than the author was the instigator of this inclusion; in other works, Nepos exhibits no distaste for opulence, and even defends Chabrias from criticisms of extravagance:

*Est enim hoc commune vitium in magnis liberisque civitatibus, ut invidia gloriae comes sit; et libenter de iis detrahant quos eminere videant altius, neque animo aequo pauperes alienam opulentium intueantur fortunam.*⁶⁵⁰

“For it is a common defect in great and free states, that envy is the companion of glory, and people tear down with pleasure those they see to rise higher, and the un-wealthy cannot look upon the riches of the fortunate with equanimity.”

Rather, the inclusion of this figure seems to be an attempt to draw a parallel with Epicurus, who was criticized by hostile parties for the astronomical amount he purportedly spent on his table, while simultaneously lauded by his followers for the simplicity of his lifestyle, while making clear which of those two realities Atticus was closer to.⁶⁵¹ Thus Nepos pre-empts any potential accusations of profligacy, born either from resentment of Atticus' vast wealth or distaste for his chosen philosophy.⁶⁵² It is entirely possible that Atticus was aware of such whisperings in his lifetime, and supplied his biographer with his household documents so that the matter could be put to rest.

⁶⁵⁰ Nep. *Chab.* 3.3. There is an interesting parallel here with Lucr. *DRN.* 3.74-78. Nepos' earlier writings also appear to display a favourable or at least neutral attitude to extravagance. Geiger (1985) 75 says “Pride of place among the surviving fragments seems to belong to examples of luxury and their first importation to Rome,” citing *Exempla* Frgs. 27, 31, 32, 33, 34.

⁶⁵¹ Diog. Laert. 10.7 records without crediting the allegation that he spent a whole *mina* daily on food, but insists at 10.11 that he actually lived incredibly frugally, and purchased the *Kepos* for only eighty *minae*. The Epicurean teaching on luxury seems to have been that it was not necessarily an evil in itself, but to be perturbed by its absence was detrimental to *ataraxia*: *Ep. Men.* 130 cf. Woolf (2009) 160. Philodemus' treatise on Wealth (*CErc.* 2011) is too fragmentary to be of much assistance.

⁶⁵² Lindsay (1998) 330, following Rawson (1985) 227, suggests that Nepos is rather drawing parallels with the impoverished but noble M. Aemilius Scaurus (cf. Cic. *Scau.* 4a), but Epicurus seems, to me, the more obvious comparison.

Another accusation likely levelled at Atticus because of his philosophical allegiance was that his friendships were unacceptably utilitarian.⁶⁵³ It was both obvious and true that his relationship with his uncle Q. Caecilius had earned him the greatest part of his fortune, and that being on good terms with everyone to wield power throughout the crisis of the Republic was an immeasurable boon, and this was not an issue that Nepos could evade. Indeed, he does not even try, instead presenting Atticus' capacity for friendships as his greatest virtue and making it the focal point of the biography.⁶⁵⁴ He is at pains, however, to emphasize that Atticus did not unduly exploit his friendships, even though it was well within his power to do so. Nepos argues that his subject could have taken office merely by virtue of his connections any time he chose, but refused on the grounds that it was dishonourable to take advantage of such a debased state of affairs.⁶⁵⁵

Nepos also highlights the fact that Atticus performed his most lavish and conspicuous acts of generosity when his friends were themselves in need, and not when they could be of use to him.⁶⁵⁶ A prime example of this is his aiding of Brutus after the assassination of Caesar. Atticus refused to become involved with a proposed consortium of financiers that was to fund the liberators in their continued conflict with Caesar's heirs, and such was his influence over that class of men that the

⁶⁵³ Cf. Cic. *Amic.* 8.26, 9.32.

⁶⁵⁴ See Stem (2005) esp. 115-116, who argues that since Atticus' refusal to obtain formal *honores* or *imperium* precluded a celebration of his public life, Nepos lauds instead his private life, and his focus on friendship helps him to develop "an honourable perspective" on his subject's political inaction.

⁶⁵⁵ Nep. *Att.* 6.2-3: *Honores non petiit, cum ei paterent propter vel gratiam vel dignitatem, quod neque peti more maiorum neque capi possent, conservatis legibus, in tam effuse ambitus largitionibus neque geri e re publica sine periculo corruptis civitatis moribus.*

⁶⁵⁶ Horsfall (1989) 75 identifies the "recurrent motif" in Nep. *Att.* 2.2, 4.4, 7.1, 8.6 9.3 and 11.1. See also Verboven (2002) 63, who reads into this the Aristotelian idea (cf. *Nic. Eth.* 8.1.1./1155a8) that friends are essential to the meaningful use of wealth.

entire scheme collapsed.⁶⁵⁷ But when Antony's resurgence forced Brutus and Cassius into exile, Atticus adopted an entirely different stance:

*Atticus, qui pecuniam simul cum ceteris conferre noluerat florenti illi parti, abiecto Bruto Italiaque cedenti sestertium centum milia muneri misit. eidem in Epiro absens trecenta iussit dari, neque eo magis potenti adulatus est Antonio neque desperatos reliquit.*⁶⁵⁸

"Atticus, who had refused to contribute money, along with others, to the cause as it was prospering, sent Brutus as a present 100,000 sesterces when he was in desperate straits and leaving Italy. In his absence, he gave orders for another 300,000 to be given to Brutus in Epirus. Antony he flattered no more in his time of power, no more did he abandon those in despair."

When Antony himself was forced from Rome as an enemy of the people, Atticus performed a similar service for his stranded wife Fulvia, who had become the subject of a great many opportunistic lawsuits. He provided her surety throughout her trials, and even paid off the remainder of a debt she was unable to fulfill on an estate purchased in better times.⁶⁵⁹ Since the ultimate consequence of this kindness was that the resurgent Antony spared Atticus from the proscriptions that claimed so many of his friends and family, it is easy to see how it might have been, and indeed was, viewed as cynically self-interested. Yet Nepos insists that this was far from the case:

⁶⁵⁷ Nep. Att. 8.4: *sic ille consensionis globus huius unius dissensione disiectus est.*

⁶⁵⁸ Nep. Att. 8.6. Stem (2005) 122 points out that not only does this perspective on the matter allow Nepos to defend Atticus from accusations that he hoped to profit from his aiding of, but also brings his actions into line with a consistent policy of political non-involvement, which becomes an even more principled stance when we see him risking a dear friendship (cf. Att. 8.2, 16.1) for its sake. On the conspicuous size of his eventual boon to Brutus: Andraeu (1999) 144.

⁶⁵⁹ Nep. Att. 9.4-5.

*quae cum faciebat, nemo eum temporis causa facere poterat existimare: nemini enim in opinionem veniebat Antonium rerum potiturum.*⁶⁶⁰

"No one could think that he acted thus under force of circumstances, for no one believed that Antony would triumph."

As a policy, Nepos claims, Atticus' prioritization of his friends was just as risky as it was beneficial.⁶⁶¹ After all, what quarrel would Antony have had with him if not for his closeness to Cicero and Brutus? Yet his repeated protestations only serve to highlight the fact that Atticus' friendships were ultimately instrumental. His biggest failure to dispel this criticism is a silence; while he writes in great detail of Atticus' successful efforts to save his old school friend Q. Gellius Canus from Antony's proscriptions, he gives no indication that anything was done in an attempt to preserve Cicero.⁶⁶² While the cause certainly was already lost, it cannot be denied that if Atticus gave up on his lifelong ally in his moment of need, his policy looks to privilege self-preservation over friendship, and fails to live up to Epicurus' own proclamation that the wise man will, if necessary, die for a friend.⁶⁶³

As with the other aspects of Atticus' life that likely attracted criticism (his accumulation of vast wealth, his refusal to engage in the traditional and morally sanctioned political career path), Nepos hints at a philosophical underpinning for his choices, heavily implying Epicureanism without ever naming it. Thus he is able to simultaneously use the school as a scapegoat for Atticus' more 'un-Roman' actions and as a way of imbuing him with a scholarly, intellectual air. Since he wrote with the aim of pleasing Atticus himself, this could well reflect a policy of his subject, to

⁶⁶⁰ Nep. *Att.* 9.6.

⁶⁶¹ Nep. *Att.* 10.2.

⁶⁶² As Marchetti (2009) 97 writes, there is also no suggestion of Atticus mourning Cicero, and he did not pronounce the funeral oration. He does not seem to have held the proscription against Antony; by all accounts the two remained close, even through the crumbling of the triumvirate. Says Farrer (1963) 4: Atticus "proceeded to live at peace and on good terms with one whom history regards as little short of Cicero's murderer."

⁶⁶³ Diog. Laert. 10.119.

deflect condemnations of his lifestyle by treating them as if they were based on misunderstandings of his chosen philosophy rather than valid criticisms, and to engage with them only on the vaguest terms. While the biography of Nepos does not by any means offer a comprehensive view of Atticus' engagement with Epicureanism, it does serve as adequate confirmation of at least some degree of interaction with the school when viewed alongside other suggestions of his adherence, most of which are found in the writings of poor, abandoned Cicero.

6.ii. A Second Self: Cicero and Atticus

If Nepos' greatest strength and weakness as a witness to Atticus' Epicureanism was his proximity to his subject, the same is doubly true of Cicero. He and Atticus were friends from their youth, and as they aged their lives became more and more entwined. Quintus Cicero married Atticus' sister Pomponia, Atticus served as Cicero's *procurator*, and the two advised, consoled and scolded each other through one of the most turbulent periods in Roman history. Cicero, prolific as he was, generated a great deal of written evidence for Atticus' life and character, in both his letters and his philosophical treatises. The correspondence between the two, preserved in sixteen volumes, is intimate and life spanning, and ranges across topics from political strategy to philosophical badinage.⁶⁶⁴ In the philosophical works, meanwhile, Atticus appears as dedicatee, exemplar, interrogator, and sometimes just a friend.⁶⁶⁵ In neither, however, do we find concrete evidence of Atticus' adherence to the Epicurean school, and while it is frequently alluded to, it is also occasionally denied.

The reason for this ambiguity cannot possibly be lack of knowledge on Cicero's part. While Atticus' side of their correspondence is almost entirely lost to us, the tone in Cicero's letters is one of the greatest intimacy, and the preserved fragments of the replies give us no reason to doubt that Atticus exhibited a similar level of candour.⁶⁶⁶ And even had Atticus been evasive about his philosophical leanings, Cicero had personally witnessed his first exposure to the *Kepos*, and listened to the lectures of Phaedrus alongside him on a youthful trip to Athens.⁶⁶⁷ So his

⁶⁶⁴ The correspondence does, however, seem to have halted some months before Cicero's death. Whether because of a falling-out or simply physical proximity, we cannot know: Marchetti (2009) 96. Hariman (1989) 148 identifies four main themes in the corpus: "banter, business, politics and personal burdens."

⁶⁶⁵ Dedicatee: Exemplar: *De Senectute*, see Baraz (2012) 178-8; Interrogator: *De Legibus*, see Atkins (2013) 23; Friend: *De Finibus* (a sort of "cameo role").

⁶⁶⁶ On the transparency and intimacy of Cicero's letters: Tracy (2012) 90.

⁶⁶⁷ Cic. *Att.* 13.39.3 (SB 342), 16.7.4 (415); *Fam.* 13.1.2 (SB 63); *Fin.* 1.34-36. See also Schneider (2004) 48.

unwillingness to explicitly state whether or not Atticus was a true Epicurean must stem from some other concern, either his own or that of his friend.

The influence of Atticus over all of Cicero's portrayals of him cannot be underestimated. In the case of the philosophical treatises, his input is obvious, revealed through the correspondence. We see Atticus working closely with Cicero from the earliest conception of these works, suggesting subjects and dedicatees, making editorial revisions, lending the use of his slaves for the production of copies, and finally facilitating their dissemination through reading and transfer of manuscripts.⁶⁶⁸ He would have had ample opportunity to approach Cicero about any part of his portrayal that he did not appreciate, and the power to withdraw his services if the author did not acquiesce, so it is certain even more so than in the case of Nepos that Cicero's fictionalised Atticus is an authorised version.

The matter of the letters is more complex. While it is true that Atticus was his closest confidant, and that he could speak more freely with him than with anyone else, that does not mean that Cicero was always entirely honest.⁶⁶⁹ While he often teases and sometimes rebukes Atticus, Cicero would always have been aware that the ultimate purpose of his correspondence was to maintain a relationship that he valued and relied on.⁶⁷⁰ He would not, therefore, have been keen to genuinely offend his friend.⁶⁷¹ It would have been easy for him to do so, were he to delve too deeply into the subject of Atticus' Epicureanism, for Cicero struggled

⁶⁶⁸ See Gurd (2007) esp. 53 on Cicero and Atticus' "shared ownership" of the texts cf. *Att.* 1.13.5 (SB 13). Editorial revisions: *Att.* 16.11 (SB 420); 15.14 (402) cf. Starr (1987) 213. Atticus assists with research: *Att.* 13.23.3 (331), 12.22.2 (261). Dissemination: *Att.* 2.1 (SB 21), 16.2 (412), 16.3 (413), see also Kenney (1982) 20, Murphy (1998) 496-9.

⁶⁶⁹ We should be wary, however, of projecting the modern conception of a "best friend" onto the relationship between Cicero and Atticus: Williams (2012) 231. We should also remember that Cicero's blood loyalty with his brother often outstripped his sense of obligation to Atticus, and that he expected (wrongly, as it turned out) more in return from Quintus: Steel (2005) 89. The marriage between Cicero's and Atticus' siblings was so unsuccessful as to pose a threat to their own relationship at times: *Att.* 1.17 (SB 17). See also Konstan (1997) 124, Lévy (2012) 59.

⁶⁷⁰ White (2010) 28 on the aims of correspondence generally.

⁶⁷¹ Tracy (2012) 90.

greatly with the philosophy's pragmatism and with the idea of a retreat from politics, so alien were these from his own philosophical views and his own lifestyle, driven primary by his political ambitions as a *novus homo*.⁶⁷² This was clearly a source of contention for the two men, and we shall see that many of the allusions to Atticus' Epicureanism suggest the making of *apologiae* on his part.⁶⁷³

Likewise, Cicero's own hostility to Epicureanism might account for his unwillingness to explicitly link Atticus to the philosophy in the dialogues. For his use of his friend in these works surpassed the roles he offered to his other contemporaries, chosen as a gesture of flattery, or posthumously as a tribute. Atticus was included not simply to make him look good, but also so that his erudition and intellect might reflect on the author. Cicero presented Atticus as a second self, and sought to portray their friendship as not just close, but morally laudable by the standards of the Academy. This demanded, as he writes in *Laelius de Amicitia*, not just compatible philosophical outlooks but shared virtues, "complete agreement on all matters human and divine."⁶⁷⁴ The irony of making Atticus simultaneously the dedicatee and exemplar of the text while overtly labelling him an Epicurean would not have been lost on any reader, so it is no surprise that Cicero is evasive about his allegiance here.⁶⁷⁵ And since Cicero is so concerned generally with *constantia*, it follows that he should do likewise with the other texts in that genre.

Yet, for all the very good reasons that Cicero has for avoiding discussion of Atticus' affiliation with the Epicurean school, he sometimes does so anyway. And when he does, his writings are revelatory of both

⁶⁷² See Nicgorski (2002); Hanchey (2013) 120; Maslowski (1985) 55-6. Despite his unwillingness to freely discuss Epicureanism with Atticus, he was not so restrained with his other correspondents, and Epicurus is the philosopher mentioned most frequently in the corpus: Guillaumont (2000) 66.

⁶⁷³ E.g. *Att.* 1.17.5 (SB 17) cf. Hill (1952) 48, Shackleton Bailey (1965) 1.5.

⁶⁷⁴ *Cic. Amic.* 20 cf. Glucker (1988) 69.

⁶⁷⁵ The matter of allegiance is more blurred throughout *De Amicitia* than Cicero's other philosophical works: There are no dedicated representatives of the schools, and the sources are mixed, albeit with Epicureanism well represented.

Atticus' relationship with the *Kepon*, its Scholarchs and its adherents, and his attitude to the philosophy.

6.iii Atticus' Epicureanism in Letters

Atticus was not the only individual with whom Cicero sought to build or augment a relationship through epistolary communication. One of the many others, we have already seen, was Memmius, and in his case the task was made all the more complicated by the fact that Cicero also intended to extract from him a favour: the relinquishing of the house of Epicurus in Melite. And, adding yet another layer of complexity, he was doing so at the behest of Atticus. It would be to his benefit, then, to delineate the relevant allegiances, in order to demonstrate to Memmius that he was on his side.

*Pomponium Atticum sic amo ut alterum fratrem. nihil est illo mihi nec carius nec iucundius. is (non quo sit ex istis; est enim omni liberali doctrina politissimus, sed valde diligit Patronem, valde Phaedrum amavit) sic a me hoc contendit, homo minime ambitiosus, minime in rogandi molestus, ut nihil umquam magis...*⁶⁷⁶

"I love Pomponius Atticus like a second brother. Nothing is more precious or delightful to me than to have him as a friend. Nobody is less of a busybody, less inclined to importune, but I have never known him request anything of me more pressingly than this – not that he is one of that sect, for he is a person of the most comprehensive and refined culture, but he has great regard for Patro, and had a deep affection for Phaedrus."

Cicero sorts the involved parties into three groups: In one, Patro the Scholarch and his followers (*istis*); in the next, Atticus, a friend but not a follower; and finally, beyond that, Memmius and himself, right-thinking Romans who reject both the philosophy and its adherents, but who maintain affection for Atticus. He is very careful to qualify, however, that Atticus' love for the Epicureans is not totally divorced from appreciation of their philosophy; he is learned in all that sort of thing. Cicero made a copy of this letter for Atticus, and Atticus kept it, along with the rest of their

⁶⁷⁶ Cic. *Fam.* 13.1.5 (SB 63).

correspondence, safe until its eventual publication.⁶⁷⁷ He must not, then, have minded very much being classified as something less than a fully-fledged Epicurean, a man educated in the philosophy of the *Kepos* but not belonging to it. Perhaps this was the truth of it. Yet in their private letters Cicero is apt to draw the boundaries between Epicurean and non-Epicurean elsewhere. In a missive on the death of their mutual friend L. Lentulus Niger, he writes:

*virum bonum et magnum hominem et in summa magnitudine animi multa humanitate temperatum perdidimus, nosque malo solacio sed non nullo tamen consolamur quod ipsius vicem minime dolemus, non ut Saufeius et vestri, sed mehercule quia sic amabat patriam ut mihi aliquo deorum beneficio videatur ex eius incendio ereptus.*⁶⁷⁸

"We have lost a good and great man, who combined a really lofty spirit with much grace and kindness of manner. My consolation, poor enough but still a consolation, is that I feel no sorrow at all on his account – I don't say so after the manner of Saufeius and your co-sectaries, but because upon my soul it seems to me a gift of providence that a man who loved his country as he did should be snatched away from its conflagration."

Cicero is generally in agreement with the Epicurean idea that death is no evil, and even spares one the pain of life, but he is loathe to admit any sympathy for the reasoning behind it.⁶⁷⁹ He is, then, keen to distance himself from the true believers of the *Kepos*; he is not, he specifies, thinking along the same lines as Lucius Saufeius, a Roman *eques* who has dedicated himself entirely to the school.⁶⁸⁰ But where does Atticus stand?

⁶⁷⁷ Cic. *Att.* 5.11.6 (SB 104) *cuius epitulae misi ad te exemplum*. On Atticus' preservation of the correspondence: Shackleton Bailey (1999) 2. There is some debate over when exactly the letters were published, and in exactly what form, see: Sommer (1926) 389-422, Carcopino (1947) 305-363, Taylor (1964) 678-681, Setaioli (1976) 105-120, Philipps (1985) 227-237.

⁶⁷⁸ Cic. *Att.* 4.6.1 (SB 83)

⁶⁷⁹ Cf. Ep. *Men.* 124-7. Lucr. *DRN.* 3.830-911. Cic. *Tusc.* 1.

⁶⁸⁰ Nep. *Att.* 12.3. There is also inscriptional evidence for Saufeius' commitment to the school; he and his brother commissioned a herm of the

Socially, at least, with Saufeius: he and the Epicureans are *vestri*, and while "co-sectaries" might constitute a slight over-reading on the part of Shackleton Bailey, Cicero certainly intended to convey some kind of allegiance. But does he mean to imply sincere belief on his correspondent's part? That is less clear, for he avoids the second person singular, and the choice of the possessive serves to distance Atticus slightly from his purported philosophical allies. Whether this reflects Atticus' attitude or Cicero's prejudice is not possible to discern, but the latter is certainly a possibility. In another letter, Cicero's glee in identifying what he believes to be a disagreement between Saufeius and Atticus is transparent:

filiola tua te delectari laetor et probari tibi φυσικὴν esse τὴν <στοργὴν τὴν> πρὸς τὰ τέκνα. etenim si hoc non est, nulla potest homini esse ad hominem naturae adiunctio; qua sublata vitae societas tollitur. bene eveniat! inquit Carneades, spurce, 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 esse oportere 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.⁶⁸¹

"I am glad that your little daughter gives you pleasure and that you agree that affection for one's children is part of nature. Indeed if that is not the case there can be no natural tie between one human being and another, and once you abolish that, you abolish all society. 'And good luck!' says Carneades – an abominable thing to say, but not so naïve as the position of our friend Lucius and Patro; when they make self-interest their only yardstick while refusing to believe in any altruistic act and maintain that we should be good only to avoid getting into trouble and not because goodness is naturally right, they fail to see that they are talking about an artful dodger, not a good man. But I think all this is in the volumes which you have encouraged me by praising."⁶⁸²

Scholarch Phaedrus: Raubitschek (1949) 101-2. See also Castner (1989) 64-67, Münzer Pauly *RE*. IIa 256-357, and Hallett (2002) 347n3.

⁶⁸¹ Cic. *Att.* 7.2.4 (SB 125)

⁶⁸² The *Tusculans*.

Here Cicero appears delighted to have identified what he believes to be a divergence on the part of Atticus from Epicurean orthodoxy. While part of his joy stems from the fact that he and his friend now have in common powerful love for their daughters (Tullia was one of the few enduring passions of Cicero's life, and her death was psychologically devastating to him), the rest is no doubt derived from the fact that here he can put up a divide between believer and non-believer, and Atticus will be on his side of the fence.⁶⁸³ While Cicero was not quite right about the Epicurean attitude to paternal affection, he does seem to have found a choice on the part of Atticus that brings him closer to emulation of himself rather than an Epicurean sage.⁶⁸⁴ His gladness suggests that this was not something he felt he could take for granted, and that Atticus' affection for little Attica was a revelation to him. Cicero, it seems, did not himself know the true extent and sincerity of Atticus' commitment to Epicurean philosophy, and since this could have been easily remedied with just a few words, we must be open to the possibility that this was a deliberate choice on the part of Atticus.⁶⁸⁵

Cicero has been confident all along, however, that Atticus is something less of an Epicurean than Saufeius. Not long before the letter about little Attica, when obliged by propriety to see a visiting Saufeius off with a message for Atticus, Cicero wrote:

⁶⁸³ Cic. *Att.* 12.14.3 (SB 251) on Cicero's near inconsolable grief for Tullia. See also Treggiari (2007) 136-138.

⁶⁸⁴ The main source for Epicurus' advice on marriage and child rearing is Diog. Laert. *Lives* 10.116, which has unfortunately been subject to considerable textual corruption: Chilton (1960) 71-74. If read in the same sense as the other preserved maxims, however, it seems that he stated that the wise man would not usually marry or start a family, although exceptions could be made: Brennan (1996) 348 ff. On the other hand, Epicurus took pains to mandate in his will care and provision for the children of his disciple Metrodorus: Diog. Laert. 10.22. Lucretius acknowledged the power of paternal love when he credited affection for children with being the primary factor in softening the human race enough to form societal bonds: *DRN.* 5.1011-21.

⁶⁸⁵ Gilbert (2017) 10 suggests that Cicero merely sees here an opportunity for a joke about Atticus' Epicureanism, yet it is, at its heart, a joke about his *non-Epicureanism*: an important distinction, I feel.

*Dederam equidem L. Saufeio litteras et dederam ad te unum, quod, cum non esset temporis mihi ad scribendum satis, tamen hominem tibi tam familiarem sine meis litteris ad te venire nolebam; sed ut philosophi ambulant, has tibi redditum iri putabam prius.*⁶⁸⁶

"I gave L. Saufeius a letter for you, and nobody else, because even though I did not have time enough for writing I was unwilling that so close a friend of yours should join you without a letter from me. But at the rate philosophers move I imagine this will reach you first."

From the gently derisory tone with which Cicero mentions philosophers, and his use of the third person plural, it is obvious that this is a category that includes neither himself nor Atticus. Saufeius had a similar lifestyle to Cicero's correspondent, in that his vast wealth afforded him the ability both to evade political responsibility and spend considerable time in Greece.⁶⁸⁷ Yet somehow Saufeius has gone further in his commitment to the school; he is not just philosophical, but a *philosopher*. Cicero either knows or suspects (and probably hopes) that Atticus cannot claim the same level of devotion.

There is a gap of twelve years before Saufeius is mentioned again, and in time both Saufeius' Epicureanism and Atticus' praise of the *Tusculan Disputations* have grown in significance for Cicero, who still seems to be struggling with uncertainty over the depth of his friend's adherence. The name Saufeius has become a byword for the *Kepos*, and for Atticus' association with it, while the treatise so praised by Atticus has become symbolic of the pair's shared domain of virtues, from which the Epicureans are excluded:

animis enim usi sumus virilibus, consiliis, mihi crede, puerilibus. excisa enim est arbor, non evulsa; itaque quam fruticetur vides. redeamus igitur, quod

⁶⁸⁶ Cic. *Att.* 7.1.1 (SB 124).

⁶⁸⁷ Saufeius' assets were so great that they attracted the rapacious attentions of the triumvirate, who must have concocted some pretext for his proscription, since he was certainly a quietist: *Nep. Att.* 12.3.

*saepe usurpas, ad Tusculanas disputationes. Saufeium de te celemus; ego numquam indicabo.*⁶⁸⁸

"We have shown the courage of men and the policy, believe me, of children. The tree has been felled but not uprooted, and you see how it is sprouting. Let us then go back, as you often say, to the 'Tusculan Disputations.' Let us not tell Saufeius of your backsliding – *I shall say nothing.*"

The context for this is Antony's ascendancy in the wake of Caesar's assassination, and Cicero is engaging in one of his customary vacillations in response to a shift in power.⁶⁸⁹ He knows not whether to continue to tolerate Antony, which he sees as putting him in the same camp as Saufeius and the other Epicureans, or whether to resist as a Stoic, placing himself metaphorically back in his Tusculans. The reason for invoking such an ancient mapping of allegiances seems to be that Cicero has finally seen Atticus' mask of quietism slip, when he uncharacteristically gave voice to the sentiment that the actions of the liberators did not go far enough, and that Caesar's legacy as well as his life needed to be destroyed.⁶⁹⁰ This incident was so noteworthy, perhaps because it was out of character, that Cicero refers to it explicitly, and verbatim, twice in separate letters.

*meministine te clamare causam perisse si funere elatus esset? at ille etiam in foro combustus laudatusque miserabiliter servique et egentes in tecta nostra cum facibus immissi.*⁶⁹¹

⁶⁸⁸ Cic. *Att.* 15.4.2 (SB 381).

⁶⁸⁹ Atticus' pragmatic advice, stemming from his own values, but nevertheless valued by Cicero, was often the cause of his friend's apparent wavering over decisions. See, for example, their extended discussion over when and whether Cicero should travel to meet Pompey at the outset of hostilities with Caesar: Cic. *Att.* 7.17.4 (SB 141); 8.11 (161); 8.2.3 (152); 8.15.1 (165); 9.19.2 (189); 10.10.5 (201); 10.6.1 (197) cf. Gewecke (1937).

⁶⁹⁰ This is in stark contrast to the actions of Piso, whose deeds in the aftermath of the assassination were vital to the preservation of Caesar's legacy: above Ch. 1.iv.

⁶⁹¹ Cic. *Att.* 14.10.1 (SB 364).

“Do you remember how you cried out that the cause was lost if he had a public funeral? Well, he was actually cremated in the Forum with a pathetic eulogy, and slaves and beggars were sent to attack our homes with firebrands.”

And a month later,

*recordare tua. nonne meministi clamare te omnia perisse si ille funere elatus esset? sapienter id quidem. itaque ex eo quae manarint vides.*⁶⁹²

“Recall your own words. Don't you remember crying out that all was lost if Caesar received public burial? And very wise you were. Well, you see the consequences.”

While Atticus has not quite evinced Cicero's more drastic view that the fall of Caesar should be cemented with the subsequent killing of Antony, if he really did call aloud for the suppression of the funeral, then he has far exceeded the bounds of neutrality.⁶⁹³ In urging action to support Brutus' scheme, he has demonstrated his support for it, continuing a long tradition of prioritising his loyalty for his young friend over his purported philosophical principles.⁶⁹⁴ Cicero is quick to note the contradiction, and when Atticus attempts to invoke Epicurus in a letter urging him to stand back from the political fray, he responds with the taunt: *non te Bruti nostri vulticulus ab ista oratione deterret?* – doesn't the frown of our Brutus put you off such talk?⁶⁹⁵ It seems that after years of honouring the tacit agreement that he will acknowledge Atticus' self-professed Epicureanism while putting aside his contradictory actions, Cicero has reached the point where he can no longer suppress his doubts about the sincerity of his friend's adherence.⁶⁹⁶ That it took twelve years to reach this state is

⁶⁹² Cic. *Att.* 14.14.3 (SB 368).

⁶⁹³ Cic. *Att.* 14.22.2 (SB 376): The Ides of March *magnum... mendum continent.*

⁶⁹⁴ And above his loyalty to his fellow Epicureans: it was Piso who ensured that Caesar was given a public funeral: App. *Bell. Civ.* 136.

⁶⁹⁵ Cic. *Att.* 14.20.5 (SB 374).

⁶⁹⁶ The strain put on their relationship by what Cicero sees as Atticus' hypocrisy has also allowed him to put aside the *verecundia* (social worry or

testament to Atticus' commitment to preserving ambiguity over his philosophical beliefs. Cicero's promise not to tell Saufeius implies that Atticus has, all this time, been keeping up appearances among the faithful of the *Kepos*.

shame) that usually inhibits his criticism of Atticus' philosophy and lifestyle: Kaster (2005) 27. A similar increase in frankness in response to a disagreement is seen in *Att.* 1.17.6-7 (SB 17). See also Konstan (1997) 124.

6.iv Atticus and the Dialogues

While fear of causing a rift in their relationship would have made Cicero wary of writing anything that might displease Atticus in their private correspondence, it could not entirely prevent him from (intentionally or unintentionally) contradicting Atticus' intended self-representation. The same is not true of the philosophical dialogues.⁶⁹⁷

While it might be anachronistic to call Atticus Cicero's publisher, the reality is that he played a crucial role in the editing and dissemination of his friend's works, and because of this exerted more control over his portrayal therein than any other character in the dialogues.⁶⁹⁸ Cicero relied on Atticus to note any potentially embarrassing errors, and claimed jokingly to live in fear of the red wax wafers that bore his corrections.⁶⁹⁹ Atticus' team of highly skilled copyists produced the physical manuscripts, and on occasion was responsible for cutting and pasting several drafts together to produce a finished item.⁷⁰⁰ Dinner parties in Atticus' Quirinal mansion served as book launches, with readings from Cicero's latest offerings as after-dinner entertainment.⁷⁰¹ Most importantly perhaps, Atticus used his vast network of friends and business contacts to ensure the movement of Cicero's works throughout civilised society.⁷⁰² Thus, when

⁶⁹⁷ Twelve of Cicero's philosophical works from the years 46-44 BC survive (not including the dubious *De Optimo Genere Oratorum*). For a full chronology see Powell (1995) xiii-xvii. As noted above, Intro. v, I refer to these collectively as "the dialogues," even though *De Officiis* does not take that form.

⁶⁹⁸ On the lack of standardised procedures in in Republican "publishing": Philipps (1986) 228. See also Kenney (1982) 4.

⁶⁹⁹ Cic. *Att.* 16.11 (SB 420); 15.14 (SB 402). See also Starr (1987) 213.

⁷⁰⁰ On the quality of his literary staff: Nep. *Att.* 13.3. Cic. *Att.* 16.6.4 (SB 414): Cicero, having noticed that he has used the same preface for *De Gloria* and Book Three of the *Academica*, asks Atticus (or, more likely, one of his slaves) to cut out the offending portion of the former, and affix some newly composed lines: *tu illud desecabis, hoc adglutinabis*.

⁷⁰¹ *Att.* 16.2 (SB 412); 16.3 (413). On the use of *lectores* (trained slaves for reading at dinner parties) see *Cat.* 44.8-15, Horsfall (1995).

⁷⁰² Cic. *Att.* 2.1: Cicero asks Atticus to use his contacts to circulate *On His Consulship* in Greece: *si tibi placuerit liber, curabis ut et Athenis sit et in ceteris oppidis Graeciae*. Possibly he intended for Atticus to place copies in public libraries: Murphy (1998) 496. Atticus also publicized the written version of *Pro Ligario*: Cic. *Att.* 13.19.2 (SB 326). See Stroup (2010) 111.

Atticus made a request regarding the contents of a tract, he was obliged to, at the very least, give it his full consideration.

One of the most important literary matters on which Cicero sought the advice of Atticus was his choice of dedicatees and interlocutors. Unsurprisingly, his friend encouraged him to glorify Brutus by dedicating several works to him, and we also see, across several letters, a successful campaign for Cicero to make Varro a dedicatee.⁷⁰³ Atticus never, on the other hand, appealed for the opportunity to represent the school to which he was supposedly committed, and may even have asked not to. After all, he would have been a natural choice. Not only was he such a loyal friend as to merit such an honour, his fictionalised representation would need no alterations in order to seem an aptly cultured and intelligent mouthpiece for the complex philosophy.⁷⁰⁴ So Cicero, for one reason or another, must have made an active choice not to use him in this way.

Unfortunately, while we have good evidence that Atticus made at least one direct request regarding Cicero's portrayal of the proponents of Epicureanism, for *De Finibus*, and that it was granted, what exactly he wished remains elusive. Cicero wrote to him:

⁷⁰³ As well as *Brutus: De Oratore*, the dedicatee of the *Tusculan Disputations*, *The Stoic Paradoxes*, *De Natura Deorum* and *De Finibus*; see Stroup (2010) 26 n51. When Atticus leaked an early version of the manuscript to Balbus, Cicero was incensed that he had let it be seen by someone other than the dedicatee he himself had chosen: *Bruto, cui te auctore προσφρωνῶ*: Cic. *Att.* 327.1. (Cicero did not find Brutus nearly so charming as Atticus did: Cic. *Att.* 6.1.7 (SB 115): *sed totum hoc Bruto dedi; qui de me ad te humanissimas litteras scripsit, ad me autem, etiam cum rogat aliquid, contumaciter, adroganter, ἀκοινονοήτως solet scribere*.) Atticus pestered Cicero to make Varro an interlocutor in the *Academica* (Cic. *Att.* 89.2), and had his wish granted in a second edition, see Griffin (1997) 16. Cicero further pleased Atticus by making Varro representative for the Academics in *De Re Publica*: Cic. *Att.* 323.1-2, 326.5, 327.1.

⁷⁰⁴ Cicero's audience would have appreciated that the *mos dialogorum* allowed an author considerable leeway in his portrayals of his characters' intellects, geographical location, and even when they lived (Cic. *Fam.* 9.8.1 (SB 254); *De Or.* 1.97, 11.13, 11.22; *Rep.* 1.15 cf. Griffin (1994) 724). He tried, however, to aim for realism where he could, and to choose believable speakers. Cic. *Att.* 3.1-2 (SB 46): Cicero rejects Catulus, Lucullus and Hortensius as insufficiently "experienced" to act as mouthpieces for the *Academica*. See also Lintott (2008) 327.

*de Epicuro, ut voles; etsi μεθαρμοσόμαι in posterum genus hoc personarum. incredibile est quam ea quidam requirant. ad antiquos igitur; ἀνεμέσητον γάρ.*⁷⁰⁵

“As to Epicurus, it shall be as you wish; but in future I intend to change my system with regard to this category of characters. It is incredible how anxious some people are to get in. Back to the ancients therefore; that will be *sans resentment*.”

Cicero is certainly talking about interlocutors, and it seems that his ire has been raised by impudent requests from those who wish to become one. Perhaps Atticus has made a request on behalf of one of his friends to serve as the spokesman of the *Kepon*.⁷⁰⁶ It is not entirely impossible, however, that Atticus has merely declined to be featured in such a way himself, and that Cicero resents the vacuum he has created since it means that he must once again consider all the hopefuls vying for a place in his dialogues.⁷⁰⁷ Indeed, the eventual interlocutor of the final version is the deceased L. Manlius Torquatus, who could not possibly have been clamouring for inclusion, and there is no indication that Cicero has gone back on his word in making that choice.⁷⁰⁸

So why would Atticus not want to represent the Epicurean School in Cicero's works? There are several possibilities. One is that he may not have relished the prospect of having his character exposit a great chunk of philosophy, only to see it summarily demolished by a rival interlocutor, or

⁷⁰⁵ Cicero *Att.* 12.12.2 (SB 259).

⁷⁰⁶ Perhaps someone who was genuinely an Epicurean: Shackleton Bailey (1966) 316.

⁷⁰⁷ It is also possible that Atticus was not alone in wishing not to be "outed" as an Epicurean, or unwilling to be represented (or misrepresented) by Cicero as the mouthpiece of his least favourite school.

⁷⁰⁸ Just three months later, Cicero sends Atticus a revised version of the Epicurean section of *De Finibus*, now entitled *Torquatus* to reflect its speaker: *Cic. Att.* 13.5.1 (SB 312). There is no sense of an apology in this letter.

Cicero himself.⁷⁰⁹ Or perhaps he did not want to be associated with Cicero's skewed portrayal of the doctrine of Epicurus.⁷¹⁰ Another possibility is that he simply had not the personality to style himself a representative of anything.⁷¹¹ I would like to suggest that Atticus was simply not too keen to be associated intimately with the aspects of the philosophy that his Roman contemporaries would find unpalatable, thus diminishing his reputation. These, of course, would be exactly the doctrinal points that Cicero would be most keen to seize upon in service of his own agenda.

A fictionalized Atticus does, however, make an "Epicurean" appearance in Book Five of *De Finibus*, and while he does not defend or even mention the doctrine of the school, he certainly demonstrates that does not scorn the *Kepos* or its founder.

*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 praeteribamus, 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.*⁷¹²

"For my part," said Pomponius, "you are fond of attacking me as a devotee of Epicurus, and I do spend much of my time with Phaedrus, who as you know is my dearest friend, in Epicurus's Gardens which we passed just now; but I obey the old saw: I 'think of those that are alive.' Still I could not forget Epicurus, even if I wanted; the members of our body not only have pictures of him, but even have his likeness on their drinking-cups and rings."

⁷⁰⁹ The Epicurean spokesman is often little more than a straw dummy against which Cicero can showcase his philosophical prowess: Farringdon (1939) 192.

⁷¹⁰ Cicero's misrepresentations of Epicurus are intentional, designed to provide a contrast with the "correct" point of view: Maso (2015) 14. He is not alone in this; Plutarch and other hostile sources often quote a μέν clause without the following δέ: Fowler (2007) 404-5.

⁷¹¹ A theory advanced by both Griffin (1994) 727 and Welch (1996) 450.

⁷¹² Cic. *Fin.* 5.3.

As the characters of the dialogue engage in a light discussion of the landscape of Athens and its capacity for bringing forth the memories of the founders of the great philosophical schools, a youthful Atticus makes this curiously vague interjection.⁷¹³ He invokes, but does not confirm, Cicero's jibes about his adherence, offering instead a series of suggestive but inconclusive statements: He spends much time in the Garden itself, he keeps company with the Scholarch, and considers him his dearest friend. Then he gives the strongest hint of his commitment: calling his contemporary Epicureans *nostri familiares*, implying that he has as much a claim on them as their leader, Phaedrus. The effect is diminished, however, by the preceding *nec tamen Epicuri licet oblivisci, si cupiam*: He is not actively trying to remember Epicurus, like those who commission the cups and rings bearing his image, but is passively coerced into remembrance by seeing those items among his friends.⁷¹⁴ Still, that he is regularly in close enough proximity to examine the tableware of the Epicureans suggests that he is an attendee of the monthly dinners of the Twentieth, a central part of Epicurean communal activity.⁷¹⁵

Cicero's response muddies the waters yet further:

*Hic ego: Pomponius quidem, inquam, noster iocari videtur, et fortasse suo iure. ita enim se Athenis collocavit, ut sit paene unus ex Atticis, ut id etiam cognomen videatur habiturus.*⁷¹⁶

⁷¹³ Cicero uses this dialogue to evoke an aptly philosophical setting for his coming argument, a *locus amoenus*. See Worman (2015) 294. The dramatic date of *De Finibus* is 79BC, the year in which Cicero withdrew from politics aged 27 in order to study philosophy and rhetoric in Athens: Rackham (1967) ix.

⁷¹⁴ Six "Epicurus" rings are catalogued: Nos. 438-441 in Richter (1971); 1638 in Marshall (1907); 361 in Brandt (1968). No *pocula* bearing the image of Epicurus have yet been discovered, but a cup found at Boscoreale featuring Zeno mocking Epicurus could be a parody: Frischer (1982) 88. Pliny *NH*. 3.2.5 mentions portraits in bedrooms.

⁷¹⁵ As Piso was invited to in Phil. *Ep.* 27. See also De Witt (1954) 51-52.

⁷¹⁶ Cic. *Fin.* 5.4.

"As for our friend Pomponius," I interposed, "I believe he is joking; and no doubt he is a licensed wit, for he has so taken root in Athens that he is almost an Athenian; in fact I expect he will get the surname of Atticus!"

While his words here serve primarily as a set up for a joke about Atticus' adoption of his *cognomen*, and allows the character of Cicero to demonstrate impressive foresight (this fictionalised discussion predates his use of this name), another point is being quietly made.⁷¹⁷ When Cicero teases Atticus about how attached to Greece he is, and how Athenian he will become, this serves to highlight that what he *is*, and what he was born, is Roman.⁷¹⁸ By linking Atticus' engagement with the *Kepos* with his eventual nickname, Cicero portrays it as more of a cultural affectation than a sincere and life-guiding adherence.

If Atticus had enough authority over Cicero's text to influence something as fundamental as the identity of an interlocutor, it certainly would have been within his power to amend or even to veto this trivial appearance of his, especially as the manuscript would have passed through his hands before those of anyone else.⁷¹⁹ He must not, then, have minded very much being painted as a dilettante, and may even have encouraged it. After all, such a portrayal would allow him to appeal to Epicurean and anti-Epicurean alike.⁷²⁰ If pressed by one of the *Kepos*' faithful on why he seems here to trivialise his commitment to the school, he could lay the blame squarely at the feet of Cicero, and point out that it is the author's character that suggests that his adherence is a joke.⁷²¹ At the same time, he

⁷¹⁷ Cicero begins to use Atticus for his friend after 50BC (*Att.* 6.1.20; SB 115): Adams (1978) 159.

⁷¹⁸ Atticus' embrace of his reputation for Graecophilia is enabled by his security in his descent from an ancient and honourable Roman lineage (cf. *Nep. Att.* 1.1): Swain (2002) 148.

⁷¹⁹ This was a privilege that Atticus took for granted, as we can see from Cicero's attempts to mollify him after his discovery that Pompey had been the first to receive a copy of *De Provinciis Consularibus*: *Cic. Att.* 4.5.1 (SB 80).

⁷²⁰ Cf. *Tac. Agric.* 4, in which he writes that Agricola curbed his philosophical learning and enthusiasm to the level acceptable for a Roman Senator.

⁷²¹ Cicero's contemporaries would have been just as aware as modern readers of his prejudice against Epicureanism. Indeed, *De Finibus*'

could explain his association with Epicureanism to hostile Romans as merely a cultural jest between himself and a close friend, rooted in their youthful sojourn in Athens.

Cicero has mentioned this period earlier in *De Finibus*, when he boasted of his own knowledge of Epicurean doctrine:

*Nisi mihi Phaedrum, inquam, tu mentitum aut Zenonem putas, quorum utrumque audivi, cum mihi nihil sane praeter sedulitatem probarent, omnes mihi Epicuri sententiae satis notae sunt. atque eos, quos nominavi, cum Attico nostro frequenter audivi, cum miraretur ille quidem utrumque, Phaedrum autem etiam amaret, cotidieque inter nos ea, quae audiebamus, conferebamus, neque erat umquam controversia, quid ego intellegerem, sed quid probarem.*⁷²²

“Unless you believe that Phaedrus and Zeno spoke falsely to me,” I said. “For I have heard them both speak, and, although I approved of nothing except their earnestness, the whole of Epicurus’ sayings is well known by me. I frequently listened to those aforementioned with our friend Atticus, who admired them both, and indeed loved Phaedrus. Every day we used to confer among ourselves on the subject of what we had heard, and there was never any controversy over what I could understand, only what I could believe.”

Here Cicero once again limits Atticus' ties with the *Kepos* to the realm of the social. While both of them have heard the whole of the philosophy of Epicurus expounded in terminology within their grasp, there is no explicit indication that Atticus accepted it (although that is certainly implied). Cicero's character is clear that he has rejected it wholesale, but all he says of Atticus is that he admired his teachers and loved Phaedrus.⁷²³ In this way, he can include his friend in this culturally edifying experience

audience would have presumably recently read Book One, in which the philosophy and its proponent receive a comprehensive drubbing, summarised in *Fin.* 2.1-2.

⁷²² Cic. *Fin.* 1.16.

⁷²³ Cicero, too, was fond of Phaedrus, who may have been his first philosophical teacher. Yet he was not as loyal as Atticus, and criticised the Scholarch (through Cotta as interlocutor) for what he saw as hypocritical sensitivity to frank speech in *Nat. Deo.* 1.93. See Maso (2015) 42.

without laying him open to charges of unacceptable hedonism.⁷²⁴ Atticus certainly saw this portion of the text; it is the *Torquatus* that Cicero wrote of sending in Cic. *Att.* 13.5.1 (SB 312), so again he must have approved the inclusion of this anecdote.

That Atticus tolerated or even welcomed ambiguity over his Epicureanism also accounts for the range of views attributed to him, more or less overtly, in other dialogues. While he cannot be identified with certainty as the "A" of the *Tusculan Disputations*, that reading is encouraged by Cicero's choice of "M" for the other interlocutor.⁷²⁵ The sentiments of "A," which help to advance a mostly Stoic viewpoint, may represent a sort of wish fulfilment for Cicero, an imagined conversation in which his closest friend is, for once, in total agreement with him.⁷²⁶ This would explain why he subsequently uses that title as a shibboleth for what he perceives to be Atticus' divergence from Epicureanism in response to the mishandling of the assassination of Caesar by the 'liberators.'⁷²⁷ Yet the fact that the character is not explicitly named affords Atticus an easy deniability; if he wishes to explain away his apparent heterodoxy to an Epicurean friend, he can simply say that he is not "A." At the same time, all he has to do to encourage the opposite conclusion is to state his approval of the tract.

There is no doubt over the identity of Atticus as the dedicatee and idealised friend of *Laelius De Amicitia*, written a year later, but in light of the general confusion he has already helped to generate over the sincerity

⁷²⁴ Cicero imagines such criticisms being levelled at Torquatus at *Fin.* 2.74.

⁷²⁵ King (1950) 10-11 argues that Atticus' advanced age of sixty-five precludes him from this identification, and suggests instead an anonymous *Adolescens* or *Auditor*.

⁷²⁶ The *Tusculans* are of an intensely personal nature, especially those passages pertaining to grief, which represent Cicero's efforts to come to terms with the death of Tullia. See Erskine (2003) 6-10. "A" advances, among others, the following thoroughly un-Epicurean viewpoints: That death is an evil: *Tusc.* 1.9; That philosophy is of no practical use: 2.12; That the wise man is vulnerable to distress: 3.7; That the wise man cannot be free from mental disorder: 4.8; That one can live an evil life without being wretched: 5.12. While he is disabused of these notions in the course of the dialogue, it is with Cicero rather than Epicurus that he is eventually brought to agreement.

⁷²⁷ Cic. *Att.* 15.4.2 (SB 381).

of Atticus' Epicurean beliefs, Cicero's definition of friendship looks like sheer wishful thinking.⁷²⁸

*Est enim amicitia nihil aliud nisi omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum cum benevolentia et caritate consensio; qua quidem haud scio an excepta sapientia nihil melius homini sit a dis immortalibus datum.*⁷²⁹

"For friendship is nothing else than an accord in all things, human and divine, conjoined with mutual goodwill and affection, and I am inclined to think that, with the exception of wisdom, no better thing has been given to man by the immortal gods."

While their mutual *benevolentia et caritas* cannot be denied, none of Cicero and Atticus' contemporaries would regard the pair, one a self-made consular and fierce critic of Epicureanism, the other a political quietist and friend of the *Kepos*, and presume between them total agreement on all matters.⁷³⁰ They would see only Cicero's desire for this to be so, and Atticus would remain free to present himself in whatever way was most expedient to any given relationship.

⁷²⁸ Atticus is explicitly named at Cic. *Amic.* 2.

⁷²⁹ Cic. *Amic.* 20. (tr. Müller.)

⁷³⁰ The assertion is so removed from reality as to be perturbing: Gucker (1988) 69.

7. The Political Animal

*nam tu quidem, etsi es natura πολιτικός...*⁷³¹

"For you yourself, though by nature a political animal..."

Atticus' projection of an ambiguous relationship with Epicureanism served as simultaneously a distraction from and justification of his nonparticipation in traditional Roman politics. Conversely, and with even greater success, it concealed his non-traditional interventions into the political arena. Atticus' efforts to see himself portrayed as fundamentally a philosophical individual have resulted in a remarkably favourable legacy, and modern scholars still take for granted that his survival strategy for the turmoil of the late Republic was founded on a basically moral stance.⁷³² Another effect of this is that the scope for debate over Atticus' political involvement has been limited to whether his Epicureanism motivated his quietism or vice versa, and less attention has been given to the question of how withdrawn from political life he really was, and whether there might be some other motivation for his strategy. As a result, exploration of one of Atticus' defining characteristics and potential motivations has long been neglected: his wealth.

⁷³¹ Cic. *Att.* 4.6.1 (SB 83). By using the Greek, Cicero evokes Aristotle's comment in *Pol.* 1235a.1 that man is a πολιτικὸν ζῷον.

⁷³² Harper Lee strengthened yet further the association of the name Atticus with moral integrity when she named the principled lawyer of her *To Kill a Mockingbird* after Pomponius Atticus. Atticus was the 360th most popular name for American boys born in 2016: US census data.

7.i. The Problem of Atticus' Fortune

Money itself was no evil in the late Republic, and was often a tool for political advancement, especially for those seeking upward mobility between the orders.⁷³³ Yet the active acquisition of money was perceived as somewhat undignified for the ruling class, and businessmen were accepted to be inferior to the aristocracy.⁷³⁴ Atticus was born into a wealth unprecedented for a member of the equestrian order; his father, whom Nepos tells us was wealthy for his time, left him an inheritance of two million sesterces, which would have made him one of the eighty richest Romans at a time when Rome was experiencing huge growth in personal wealth.⁷³⁵ Along with its obvious benefits, this wealth would have brought with it unwelcome side effects. Firstly it would have marked Atticus as a man with assets, and therefore power, above his equestrian station.⁷³⁶ Secondly, it would have made him an obvious target for the proscriptions of the Sullan regime.⁷³⁷

This, however, constituted the less problematic portion of Atticus' fortune. It was a second inheritance of ten million *HS*, from his maternal uncle Q. Caecilius, which truly propelled Atticus into the realm of the super wealthy. This money, acquired in 58 BC, was tainted, not just by its association with the non-senatorial class, but because of its provenance. Caecilius was a notorious usurer or *faenerator*, who extracted exorbitant

⁷³³ Verboven (2007) 863 identifies a "strong plutocratic bias" in Republican society, and points out that the major signifiers of status (property, education, and offices) could be bought or acquired through bribery. See also Potter (2011) 64-69 on the role of wealth in the accumulation and consolidation of power.

⁷³⁴ See Cic. *Verr.* 2.22.122; Livy 21.63.4 cf. Hill (1952) 48.

⁷³⁵ Nep. *Att.* 1.1. Kay (2014) 293.

⁷³⁶ The equestrians and the senators were not quite two distinct classes; the latter were technically drawn from the former, and all belonged to the class of those wealthy enough to run for office. In practice, however, the magistracies of the late Republic were essentially hereditary, and the families benefiting from this became a mostly closed elite group. Thus, Cicero could talk about being a *novus homo*. See Brunt (1967) 1095-6; Nicolet (1974) 253; Millar (1988) 46; Veyne (1990) 161-2n1.

⁷³⁷ Plut. *Sull.* 31.5; App. *Bell. Civ.* 96. See also Jaczynowska (1962) 487; Santangelo (2007) 81.

amounts of interest even from members of his own family.⁷³⁸ If this distasteful profession was enough to sully his reputation, his unpleasant demeanour only served to diminish it further.⁷³⁹ According to Nepos, Atticus was one of the few individuals who could stomach his company:

*Habebat avunculum Q. Caecilium, equitem Romanum, familiarem L. Luculli, divitem, difficillima natura: cuius sic asperitatem veritus est, ut, quem nemo ferre posset, huius sine offensione ad summam senectutem retinuerit benivolentiam. quo facto tulit pietatis fructum.*⁷⁴⁰

"He had an uncle, Quintus Caecilius, a Roman knight and a friend of Lucius Lucullus, a rich man and of a very difficult character: Atticus so respected his acerbity that he gave no offence and retained his goodwill – no one else could stand him – down to his old age and thereby reaped the fruits of his devotion."

Further tarnishing this inheritance is the fact that it was deeply unpopular and perhaps even illegitimate. Caecilius had benefited greatly from the patronage of the Lucullus mentioned by Nepos, and had assured him that he would inherit, but instead left everything to Atticus in his will, sealing the transaction with a posthumous adoption.⁷⁴¹ When this became public knowledge, an angry mob assaulted his funeral procession and dragged the corpse through the street with a rope around its neck.⁷⁴² Throughout his life, Atticus' wealth must have brought down on him great dangers. The target it put on his back must have provided much of the

⁷³⁸ Cic. *Att.* 1.12.1 (SB 12) puts his interest rate for family at twelve percent.

⁷³⁹ Public opinion of *faeneratores* was incredibly low. The lemmas '*fenus*' and '*fenerator*' in *TLL* 6: 1912-1926, cols. 475, 484-485 yield, among others, the abstract nouns *avaritia*, *crudelitas*, and *impudentia*. See Bürge (1980) 118-119 cf. Verboven (2002) 172 and n.304. Q. Caecilius is one of only four individuals whom we know to have been explicitly identified as *faeneratores*: Verboven (2008) 212.

⁷⁴⁰ Nep. *Att.* 5.1.

⁷⁴¹ Hopkins (1983) 241. Adoption was an accepted method of affirming succession and transmission of assets: Corbier (1991) 63. Marshall (1999) 61 theorizes that Caecilius had served as an equestrian "front" for Lucullus, the consul of 74 BC and hero of the Mithradatic wars, performing on his behalf financial transactions beneath the dignity of a Senator.

⁷⁴² Val. Max. 7.8.5; Cic. *Att.* 3.20.1 (SB 65). See also Champlin (1991) 98.

motivation for his flight from Rome in 86 BC, and his later enmity with the friends of Lucullus would have confirmed to him that it was wise to maintain a residence and bolt-hole outside of Rome. To admit this, however, would have been to appear shamefully self-interested, and even cowardly. To evade being perceived in such a way, Atticus employed a range of strategies.

In order to distance himself from his humble origins, Atticus, like Cicero, affected an aristocratic *cognomen*. Unlike the infantilising inherited "chickpea" of his friend, Atticus' nickname was overtly flattering, suggesting erudition and a taste for the exotic, and serving to emphasize the cultural aspect of his sojourn in Athens.⁷⁴³ That it is used in the greetings of his correspondence with Cicero suggests that it was his preferred form of address, but Cicero's avoidance of employing it elsewhere for more than fifteen years after first using it in 50 BC indicates that he was for a long time uncomfortable with it.⁷⁴⁴ Atticus, then, must have been the driving force behind its usage.⁷⁴⁵ Due to his efforts in establishing this form of address, Atticus was later able to shrug off the adoptive name he acquired along with the fortune of Q. Caecilius; Cicero used it only once, and it is only found elsewhere in Varro's *De Re Rustica* as a point of pedantry; Nepos never mentions it.⁷⁴⁶ Mirroring Atticus' adoption of his uncle's name and then promotion of his *cognomen* as an alternative is the fact that he named his daughter Caecilia Attica, then

⁷⁴³ Shackleton Bailey (1995) 26.

⁷⁴⁴ Cicero calls Atticus by his *cognomen* for the first time in 50 BC: *Att.* 6.1.20 (SB 115). In correspondence with his own family, however, he continues to use 'Pomponius,' suggesting that this was how he thought of him: *Q. Frat.* 1.3.8 (SB 3); 1.4.2 (4); 2.3.7 (7); 2.5.3 (9); 2.10.2 (14); 2.11.2 (15), *Fam.* 14.5.2 (SB 119); 14.10 (168); 14.14.2 (145); 14.19 (160). See Adams (1978) 159-60.

⁷⁴⁵ It was not his Greek friends, who called him by a Hellenized version of his *praenomen*: *Titos*. Cicero mimics this in some of their more philosophical exchanges: *Att.* 2.9.4 (SB 29); 2.12.4 (30). See Powell (1984) 239.

⁷⁴⁶ *Varr. Rus.* 2.2.2: *Atticus, qui tunc Titus Pomponius, nunc Quintus Caecilius cognomine eodem.* *Cic. Att.* 3.20 (SB 65). Also Shackleton Bailey (1965) 156, 158, 207. This was a very successful strategy that has influenced even modern scholars. Among the secondary texts I consulted for this chapter I found Atticus listed in the indices under his official adopted name only once, in Verboven (2002).

encouraged his friends to call her by only the latter part. Cicero refers to her in their correspondence initially as 'Caecilia,' then 'Atticula,' and thereafter exclusively 'Attica'.⁷⁴⁷

Also unmentioned by Nepos is the role of money in Atticus' relocation to Athens.⁷⁴⁸ He attributes this decision instead to two rather more principled concerns, each compatible with the teachings of Epicurus: the desire for physical and mental security, and the prioritization of friendships over personal gain.⁷⁴⁹ At the heart of both of these was the ascendancy of Sulla. Atticus' safety, Nepos claims, was threatened by his somewhat tenuous familial connection to Publius Sulpicius, a partisan of Cinna over Sulla and an early victim in their struggle (Atticus' cousin was married to his brother) which may, he implies, have brought down upon him the retribution of the opposing faction.⁷⁵⁰ At the same time, according to Nepos, Atticus' humanity and decency would not allow him to harm Sulla, and such was his capacity for neutrality that he was able to behave decently towards him, despite his purported fear. Atticus hosted Sulla in Athens, and impressed him with his erudition and culture, as well as his steadfast refusal to take sides:

Quibus rebus factum est ut Sulla nusquam eum ab se dimitteret cuperetque secum deducere. Qui cum persuadere temptaret, 'Noli, oro te', inquit Pomponius 'adversum eos me velle ducere, cum quibus ne contra te arma

⁷⁴⁷ Caecilia: *Att.* 6.2 (SB 116); 6.4 (118). Atticula: 6.5 (119). cf. Shackleton Bailey (1995) 24.

⁷⁴⁸ Nepos also neglects to mention the potential role of the financial crisis of the 80s BC, caused by a combination of the social war and the debasement of Eastern currency by the conflict with Mithridates. Cicero mentions difficulty in reclaiming debts at the time: *Leg. Man.* 7.19. See Marshall (1999) 58. Perlwitz (1992) goes further, arguing that Nepos is cynically deploying Atticus' supposed intellectual interests as a smokescreen for his financial motivations. Hallett (2002) 347n3 notes that this is portrayed as a pragmatic rather than philosophical decision; see for contrast Saufeius in *Att.* 12.3.

⁷⁴⁹ The term *ataraxia* is never used, however, maintaining ambiguity over Atticus' exact affiliation: Bailey (1951) 164; Lindsay (1998) 329.

⁷⁵⁰ *Nep. Att.* 2.1.

*ferrem, Italiam reliqui.' At Sulla adulescentis officio collaudato omnia munera ei, quae Athenis acceperat, proficiscens iussit deferri.*⁷⁵¹

"So, because of these, it happened that Sulla at no point let him go and wanted to take him back with him to Italy. When Sulla tried to convince him, 'No, please, I beg you,' said Atticus, 'I left Italy to avoid bearing arms against you in the company of those men against whom you would lead me.'" Sulla commended the young man's sense of duty, and ordered all the presents which he had received at Athens to be passed on to him at his departure."

Thus, in Nepos' version, Atticus managed to decline the request of one of the most powerful and vengeful individuals of his day without offending him and even managed to convince him that his neutrality was based in a desire not to harm him.⁷⁵² This seems like a masterstroke of diplomacy, and a cunning evasion of danger, but in truth Atticus was probably never under threat from Sulla; his decision to move to Athens just after the dictator pardoned it for allying with Mithridates and for resisting his brutal invasion cannot have been entirely coincidental.⁷⁵³ To base himself in a city so entirely dependent on the goodwill of Sulla seems like an expression of faith in him, and an indication that Atticus saw the benefits of the location as outweighing any threat.⁷⁵⁴ In all likelihood, his knowledge that Athens had already suffered the worst of the fallout from the Mithridatic War and was therefore due an upward swing in fortunes, knowledge that probably came from Sulla himself, was the driving force for his relocation.

For in reality, Atticus used his time in the East and his absence from Roman politics not just to preserve his wealth, but also to actively augment it. He was a shrewd investor, who never made a purchase without calculating how long it would take to sufficiently increase in value as to allow him to recoup its cost, and he had recognized the bottom of the

⁷⁵¹ Nep. *Att.* 4.2.

⁷⁵² See Stem (2005) 118.

⁷⁵³ Sulla's clemency towards the defeated Athens was unexpected in light of the fury with which he besieged it: Habicht (1997) 311. See also Santangelo (2007) 44.

⁷⁵⁴ Habicht (1997) 328.

Eastern property market.⁷⁵⁵ He bought up vast swathes of land surrounding his main estate in Buthrotum, a lucrative investment that perhaps benefited from a military supply contact.⁷⁵⁶ He farmed sheep here with great success, and entwined his finances with those of both locals and Roman administrators to the extent that he was able to summon cash at a moment's notice anywhere from Athens to Epirus.⁷⁵⁷ This was not the sort of wealth accumulation that could happen by accident, and it would have escaped no one's notice that it was facilitated by Atticus' decision to absent himself from Rome and from the duties of a senatorial career.⁷⁵⁸

⁷⁵⁵ Cic. *Att.* 9.9.4 (SB 176). See Hollander (2007) 77.

⁷⁵⁶ Horsfall (1989b) 61-62, Hernandez (2017) 211. Buthrotum, mythically founded by the Trojans Helenus and Andromache (Virg. *Aen.* 3.295), is modern Butrint in Albania. Cicero mentions other purchases in Corcyra and Sybota (*Att.* 5.9.1, SB 102), and Charonia and Thesprotia (*Att.* 6.3.2, SB 117).

⁷⁵⁷ Perhaps, however, without the level of involvement implied by his appearance as the interlocutor for ovine husbandry in Varr. *Rust.* 2.2.1. Nep. *Att.* 8.6 on his ability to liquidize foreign assets.

⁷⁵⁸ Such provincial purchases may have been prohibited for senators: Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.56 cf. Marshall (1999) 60. See also Prag (2016) 19.

7.ii. The Uses of Wealth

Fortunately for Atticus, the very wealth whose acquisition may have attracted the ire of his contemporaries was a valuable tool for their mollification and cultivation as allies. He was far less likely to incur criticism for his accumulation of capital if he could be seen to be using it to the benefit of others, and that was exactly what he did. Atticus made interest free loans to both cities and individuals, earning himself the gratitude of the people of Athens and numerous men who would eventually rise to power.⁷⁵⁹ When those he considered to be his friends found themselves in particularly dire straits, he went even further, bestowing large amounts as gifts.⁷⁶⁰ He scrupulously (or perhaps cynically) came to the aid of those in need on both sides of conflicts, as when in 43 BC he simultaneously bestowed 300,000 sesterces on a fleeing Brutus and came to the aid of Antony's wife Fulvia, who, due to her husband's precarious status, had fallen prey to opportunistic creditors and was thus unable to complete payment on an estate purchased in better times.⁷⁶¹ He was also careful not to appear too intent on recouping his losses, and as a consequence never took part in a trial relating to his property or that of anyone else.⁷⁶²

At the same time, the cushion of Atticus' wealth allowed him to offer to his contemporaries a range of more discreet financial services that were not directly profitable to him, but were nevertheless of great value to their recipients.⁷⁶³ While modern sources often refer to Atticus as a banker, there is no evidence that he ever accepted unsealed deposits in the manner

⁷⁵⁹ *Nep. Att.* 2.4 on the loan to Athens (*neque usuram umquam ab iis acceperit*). The gratitude of the Athenians: Raubitschek (1949) 102 cf. the statue dedications *IG. II (2) 3513* 1-7. Perlwitz (1992) 42 argues, contrary to Nepos, that Atticus charged a small amount of interest.

⁷⁶⁰ *Cic. Att.* 2.2 (SB 22), 4.4 (76), 4.8 (79) on monetary gifts to Marius, Cicero and Brutus, respectively

⁷⁶¹ *Nep. Att.* 4.8; 9.2-7.

⁷⁶² *Nep. Att.* 6.3. This choice bears a resemblance to the policy of avoidance of forensic oratory practiced by Cassius and Piso, and Pansa in his early career.

⁷⁶³ Jones (2006) 254-5.

of an *argentarius*.⁷⁶⁴ Rather, Atticus' main business was *procuratio*, the administration of the financial affairs of others, particularly when they were absent from Rome for one reason or another. It was not only the absence of a fee that made this activity more honourable than other financial services; due to the Roman system of provincial governorships and military services for members of the senatorial class, *procuratio* was essential to the smooth running of the state in their absence.⁷⁶⁵

Atticus' clients included many of his equestrian peers, as well as the senators A. Manlius Torquatus, M. Porcius Cato, Q. Hortensius Hortalus and both Quintus and Marcus Cicero.⁷⁶⁶ It is for Atticus' interventions into the financial affairs of the latter, of course, for which the most abundant evidence is available. We see him take a particularly active role on six occasions, which, with one exception, represent the lowest points of Cicero's career. The earliest of these corresponds with his exile; amid his bewailing of his misfortune, Cicero thanks Atticus in vague terms for dealing with his accounts, and gives permission for him to put into effect several proposed actions, none of which he sees as necessary to recount, which suggests that he allowed his *procurator* a great deal of autonomy at this time.⁷⁶⁷

During his governorship of Cilicia, however, we see Cicero giving much more explicit instructions for the balancing of his accounts and the payment of debts from his estate, especially a particularly anxiety-inducing amount outstanding to Caesar.⁷⁶⁸ Cicero's variation between vague and explicit instructions for Atticus continues throughout his loss of fortune in the Civil War, his period awaiting pardon in its aftermath, his inability to

⁷⁶⁴ In other words, he never invested the money of his clients for his own profit: Wiedemann (2003) 14. Andreau (1999) 17-18 first defined the distinction between deposit bankers and elite financiers such as Atticus.

⁷⁶⁵ Andreau (1999) 19.

⁷⁶⁶ *Nep. Att.* 15.2-3 cf. Rauh (1986) 7.

⁷⁶⁷ *Cic. Att.* 3.8.4 (SB 53). A *procurator* would not be concerned with small-scale expenses such as a household budget, but could effect large purchases and the payments thereof, solicit and pay off loans, and buy and sell debt claims: Andreau (1999) 18.

⁷⁶⁸ *Cic. Att.* 5.1 (SB 94); 5.4.3 (97); 5.5.2 (98); 5.6.2 (99); 5.8.2 (101); 5.9.2 (102); 5.10.2 (103) cf. Rauh (1986) 10.

function after the death of Tullia, and the turmoil after the Ides.⁷⁶⁹ At both of these extremes, however, his requests would have obliged Atticus to exert a great deal of time and energy on his behalf, and perhaps even to risk some of his own capital.⁷⁷⁰

The benefit for Atticus was twofold. For one, his dedication to facilitating the financial wellbeing of others earned him the presumption that all of his dealings were at least in part altruistically motivated. Secondly, his *procuratio* fostered dependence on him by his patrons and burdened them with an obligation to him. The combined effect of these was that he could lobby discreetly for his own financial interests while maintaining his pretence of detachment from politics. Through Cicero, for example, he recommended his own agents to provincial governments, campaigned against a proposed debt reform that threatened to diminish his profits, opposed legislation that would curtail the publican activities of the equestrian class, and petitioned a series of provincial governors to aid him in the collection of a debt from the city of Sicyon, and no doubt he used others in a similar fashion.⁷⁷¹ The last of these particularly belies his purported political inactivity, and illustrates that the accumulation and protection of a fortune cannot be accomplished without interactions with the apparatus of power.

Atticus displayed particular intransigence in his repeated efforts to extract what was owed to him by Sicyon, writing repeatedly to Cicero and pressuring him to exert influence on his behalf on first the Senate and then

⁷⁶⁹ 48 BC (financial crisis): Cic. *Att.* 11.1 (SB 211); 13.1 (296). 48-47 BC (in Brundisium) 12.5a (SB 307); 45 BC (death of Tullia) *Att.* 12.22.3 (SB 261); 12.23.3 (262); 12.27.3 (266); 12.28.1 (267); 44 BC: *Att.* 15.20.4 (SB 397); 15.26.4 (404); 16.15.5-6 (426). cf. Rauh (1986) 10-11.

⁷⁷⁰ Because of his independent wealth, however, Atticus would have been less vulnerable than other procurators. Trust and loyalty, therefore, were paramount to his relationships with his financial clients: Verboven (2002) 245.

⁷⁷¹ Cic *Fam.* 13.18 (SB 284): Cicero writes to Sulpicius Rufus, governor of Achaëa, to recommend Atticus' Epirote estate. Cicero recommends Atticus' *procuratores* and *negotia* to Minucius Thermus: *Att.* 5.20.10 (SB 110); 13.2 (297) cf. Verboven (2002) 250. Atticus' campaign against debt reform during Cicero's consuship: Welch (1996) 462-3. Atticus opposes a measure of M. Bibulus against the publicans of Cilicia: Cic. *Att.* 6.1.5 (SB 115) cf. Hill (1952) 76. Sicyon: Verboven (1993b).

two consecutive governors of Macedonia.⁷⁷² When it became apparent that the city had not the capital to honour the debt, Atticus extracted what was owed to him in the form of works of art, mostly paintings.⁷⁷³ The sheer length of his pursuit of this particular money belies any claim he might have made to an untroubled mind thanks to his absence from politics, and the callous rapacity he displayed is in no way fitting with the Epicurean conceptions of neighbourliness and justice.⁷⁷⁴ Yet this behaviour pales into insignificance in comparison to the requests he made of Cicero as his friend governed Cilicia.

Cicero, upon taking up his post, was outraged by the actions of a praefectus of his predecessor Appius, one Scaptius. This man had flouted the *lex Gabinia* that prohibited profiteering in the provinces and made loans at 48% interest, wildly beyond the limit of 12%.⁷⁷⁵ His collection methods were barbaric, and had culminated in the death by starvation of five members of the Council of Salamis whom he had besieged in their chamber.⁷⁷⁶ Atticus, (who, it must be remembered, had control of Cicero's assets in Rome) instead of supporting his friend's desire to prosecute this villain, urged him to reappoint Scaptius, and even suggested that he furnish him with a small cavalry to aid his collections: *non amplius... quinquaginta*.⁷⁷⁷ This was a particularly egregious moral compromise to ask of Cicero, who prided himself on his *constantia* and who found it abhorrent to commit the very crimes for which he had so aggressively prosecuted Verres.⁷⁷⁸ His horror at the notion is palpable:

⁷⁷² Cic. *Att.* 1.13.1 (SB 13); 1.19.9 (19); 1.20.4 (20); 2.1.10 (21); 2.13.2 (33); 2.21.6 (41). Governors: G. Antonius Hybrida and G. Octavius.

⁷⁷³ Andreau (1999) 143.

⁷⁷⁴ In the Epicurean conception, the whole world was one society (Diog. Oin. 25.2.3-11), so Atticus would have been obliged to treat the provincials with the same compassion and justice he did his own countrymen, or suffer from the knowledge of his own wrongdoing: Porph. *Abst.* 1.10.2; Ep. *KD.* 33-35.

⁷⁷⁵ Cic. *Att.* 5.21.10 (SB 114).

⁷⁷⁶ Cic. *Att.* 6.1.6 (SB 115).

⁷⁷⁷ Not more than fifty. Cicero is directly quoting Atticus (*inquis*): *Att.* 6.2.8 (SB 116).

⁷⁷⁸ Tracy (2012) 104-5.

*id me igitur tu, cuius mehercule os mihi ante oculos solet versari cum de aliquo officio ac laude cogito, tu me, inquam, rogas praefectus ut Scaptius sit?*⁷⁷⁹

Well then, are *you*, whose face I do assure you is in my mind's eye whenever I contemplate any right and creditable act, are *you* asking me to make Scaptius a prefect?

Atticus further imposed on Cicero by keeping his motivations opaque. It did eventually emerge, however, that the creditor on whose behalf Scaptius was working was M. Junius Brutus, whom Atticus had always been so keen to cultivate.⁷⁸⁰ He had even gone so far as to suggest to Cicero that the incurrence of Brutus' goodwill was a more worthwhile aim than any other he could pursue as governor of Cilicia.⁷⁸¹ Whether it was simply his desire to consolidate this political alliance that spurred Atticus, or whether he himself had a covert financial stake, we cannot know, but either way his actions were abhorrent to both contemporary Roman morality and the teachings of Epicurus.

Since Atticus overtly flouted the expectations placed on a Roman of his elevated station, he may have relied on public perception of himself as an Epicurean to distract from his less than honourable activities. Because the sage of the *Kepos* would not commit any injustice, either openly or secretly, for fear that its eventual discovery and the anxiety thereof might detract from his *ataraxia*, he might have hoped that his assumed adherence would lead bystanders not to look too carefully into his dealings, and to presume that when he seemed not to be taking an active role in any matter,

⁷⁷⁹ Cic. *Att.* 6.2.8 (SB 116)

⁷⁸⁰ Cic. *Att.* 6.1.6 (SB 115). Although he hid the nature of his involvement, Brutus had been participating all along in foisting Scaptius upon Cicero. While Cicero professes to think that Atticus was unaware of the identity of the creditor (*quod nec mihi unquam Brutus dixerat nec tibi*), this seems unlikely.

⁷⁸¹ *Att.* 6.1.7 (SB 115): *plane te intellegere volui mihi non excidissee illud quod tu ad me quibusdam litteris scripsisses, si nihil aliud de hac provincia nisi illius benevolentiam deportassem, mihi id satis esse.*

he was truly taking no role at all.⁷⁸² His few open political interventions, all on behalf of Cicero, conversely, would be seen as deviations from his norm and evidence of his sincere commitment to his deepest friendship.⁷⁸³

These overt political acts took the form of exerting his influence on the equestrian class in order to advance a goal of Cicero, who seems to have had great faith in Atticus' ability to accomplish this.⁷⁸⁴ In 65 BC Cicero appealed to his friend to return to Rome from Athens in order to assist with the canvassing for his consular campaign, and we can assume from Nepos' assertion that Atticus always attended the elections of his friends that he obliged.⁷⁸⁵ This was no small request; long journeys were always perilous, so Cicero was unlikely to have made it had he not needed the support of wealthy non-Senators.⁷⁸⁶ Atticus' huge fortune and vast number of business connections made him a vital link in the network that bound the *equites*, which, along with his amenable disposition, helped him to tip the balance in Cicero's favour.

Atticus' influence over the equestrian class brought about the most overt political action of his entire life. In 63 BC he allowed Cicero as consul to designate him the captain of a company of *equites* charged with guarding the road from the Forum to the Capitol, as turmoil seethed around the discovery of the machinations of Catiline.⁷⁸⁷ This extraordinary event is mentioned only once by Cicero, and never by Nepos:

*nunc vero, cum equitatus ille quem ego in clivo Capitolino te signifero ac principe collocaram senatum desuerit*⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸² Ep. *KD*. 33-35.

⁷⁸³ See Veyne (1990) 229.

⁷⁸⁴ Nicolet (1966) 709 calls him "princeps et signifier de l'ordre équestre."

⁷⁸⁵ Cic. *Att.* 1.4.1 (SB 9) cf. Rauh (1986) 11. Also Nep. *Att.* 4.3.

⁷⁸⁶ Because of the alliance made by two of the other consular candidates for 63 BC, it would be harder than usual for Cicero to acquire the required majority of ninety-seven *centuriae* from the voting of the higher *census classis*. Thus, he was especially reliant on the support of the lower social orders: *Comment. Pet.* 29 cf. Feig Vishnia (2012) 114. See also Taylor (1949) 37-38.

⁷⁸⁷ Bailey (1951) 164. See also Ziegler (1936) 12.

⁷⁸⁸ Cic. *Att.* 2.1.7 (SB 21). See Shackleton Bailey (1999) 132n7 for a note on the positioning of the group.

"The Senate has been deserted by the Knights, whom I once stationed on Capitol Rise with you as their leader and standard-bearer."

The occupation was a demonstration of solidarity with the Senate, but the equestrians were not just for show; some of their number drew their swords and drove off the retinue of Caesar, praetor elect at the time, who opposed Cicero's harsh measures against the conspirators.⁷⁸⁹ History, at least in the short term, did not look kindly on those who supported Cicero; he soon found himself exiled for executing citizens without trial, and this is perhaps why Nepos does not recount the event in his *Atticus*.⁷⁹⁰

To take such dramatic action, and to exert himself so forcefully in the name of the cause of dealing harshly with political enemies, could certainly not be justified in Epicurean terms. In fact, the punishment meted out was condemned strongly by the most prominent Epicurean at that time: Piso, who, as consul, declined to intervene to save Cicero from exile in 58.⁷⁹¹ Atticus himself may have been horrified by the violence, and if he did not condone the attack on Caesar it would have been a clear illustration of his unsuitability for the role of leading armed men. This single foray into Cicero's dangerous world of politics, in which his friend sometimes felt compelled to wear a breastplate to the forum, may well have been enough to solidify Atticus' commitment to avoiding the public sphere. Although he continued to lobby quietly in his own interest, and the members of his social class continued to be influenced by his decisions, we never again hear of him making such an overt political stand.⁷⁹²

⁷⁸⁹ Suet. *Iul.* 14; Sall. *Cat.* 49.

⁷⁹⁰ Welch (1996) 452n64 suggests that Atticus might have deliberately suppressed the incident in his biography. If he did not respond well to Cicero's mention here, that might account for why it is not brought up again in their correspondence.

⁷⁹¹ Cic. *Pis.* 14.

⁷⁹² Cicero wears a breastplate: Plut. *Cic.* 14.7-8. The *equites* followed Atticus' decision not to fund the 'liberators' after the death of Caesar, and the whole scheme collapsed: Nep. *Att.* 8.3-4; Cic. *Att.* 15.3.2. See also: Hill (1952) 196; Lindsay (1998) 329.

7.iii. Atticus' Province

If Atticus wielded a considerable degree of power in Rome, he had even more influence and autonomy in Epirus, where he had bought up so much land that Cicero jokingly – or perhaps not so jokingly – called it his province.⁷⁹³ This estate was likely Atticus' most valuable asset, one he had been gradually augmenting since its acquisition as early as 69 BC.⁷⁹⁴ This was an unusual investment for a Roman *eques*, especially as it was mirrored by his lack of interest in acquiring Italian land.⁷⁹⁵ Here he was free to conduct economic activity on a grand scale, farming sheep and possibly offering financial services similar to those he practiced in Rome and Athens.⁷⁹⁶ He probably recommended his own network of *publicani* and *procuratores* to incoming Roman governors of the province, just as he did in other parts of the empire in which he owned property, and thus benefited from Roman activity in the region.⁷⁹⁷ At the same time, the value of these assets passively increased as the Eastern market recovered after the final defeat of Mithradates.⁷⁹⁸

In order to preserve the conditions favourable to maximal profit and minimal disturbance in this area, Atticus was obliged to nurture relationships with both locals and Roman administrators. His vast wealth enabled the former; just as he did in Athens, Atticus set himself up as a patron of the city of Buthrotum, and again his financial generosity resulted in the goodwill of the people and the dedication to him of statues at public

⁷⁹³ Cic. *Att.* 6.3.2 (SB 117). Marshall (1999) 59: "Hyperbole to be sure, but how much?" See also Hansen (2011) 91.

⁷⁹⁴ Hosfall (1989b) 61; Hernandez (2017) 211.

⁷⁹⁵ Nep. *Att.* 14.3: *nullos habuit hortos, nullam suburbanam aut maritimam sumptuosam villam, neque in Italia, praeter Arretinum et Nomentanum, rusticum praedium, omnisque eius pecuniae reditus constabat in Epiroticis et urbanis possessionibus.* See also Marshall (1999) 59.

⁷⁹⁶ Varr. *Rust.* 2.2.1.

⁷⁹⁷ Cicero recommends Atticus' *procuratores* and *negotia* to Minucius Thermus, an incoming governor of Asia: *Att.* 5.20.10 (SB 110); 13.2 (297) cf. Verboven (2002) 250.

⁷⁹⁸ Marshall (1999) 58 on the financial crisis caused by the Mithradatic wars.

expense.⁷⁹⁹ Passing Roman governors he impressed with his hospitality, inviting them to make use of his estate as they travelled to assume their posts in Epirus and beyond.⁸⁰⁰ Here they would be impressed by the elegance of his villa, which was so aesthetically pleasing as to inspire Cicero to mimic aspects for his own building project.⁸⁰¹ They would also have enjoyed a display of his culture and erudition; the Buthrotum estate was home to Atticus' Amaltheum, a literary shrine in which he displayed the busts of famous authors alongside epigrams of his own composition.⁸⁰² Thus they would take up their offices with positive sentiments toward Atticus, and likely the benefit of his local expertise.

These efforts were immensely effective. His financial success is evident from the fact that he was able, in the aftermath of the Ides of March, to summon liquid assets worth 300,000 sesterces at short notice in order to fund a fleeing Brutus.⁸⁰³ While the largest, this was no singular occurrence; Atticus had long been utilizing his offshore investments to issue *permutationes* for his friends.⁸⁰⁴ These "letters of credit," in which Atticus donated a debt-claim or traded it for one on Italian soil, allowed the recipient to transfer money to use abroad, without risking it to robbers or treacherous sea crossings.⁸⁰⁵ That he was left in effect to his own devices by the government in Rome can be seen from the fact that he felt free through several rounds of political conflict to offer his estate as a place of

⁷⁹⁹ *AE*. 1950.0168 cf. Hansen (2011) 95.

⁸⁰⁰ *Cic Fam.* 13.18 (SB 284): Cicero writes to Sulpicius Rufus, governor of Achaea, to recommend Atticus' Epirote estate.

⁸⁰¹ *Cic. Att.* 1.5.7 (SB 1). Cicero asks Atticus to source components for his villa in Tusculum.

⁸⁰² The Amaltheum is mentioned by Cicero in: *Att.* 13.1 (SB 296); 16.15 (426). It likely had little to do with any of the mythical Amaltheas, among them the wet nurse of Zeus: Moore (1906) 126. Rather, it appears to have been a shrine to his literary tastes and achievements, and one that Cicero saw fit to copy: *Att.* 1.6.2 (SB 2).

⁸⁰³ *Nep. Att.* 8.6. Verboven (1993a) 144 has the figure at 400,000.

⁸⁰⁴ E.g. *Cic. Att.* 11.1.2 (SB 211); 13.2a.1 (301); 15.20.4 (397).

⁸⁰⁵ On Atticus' use of *permutationes* generally: Andreau (1999) 19; Verboven (2002) 125; Jones (2006) 53.

safety to those seeking refuge from their enemies.⁸⁰⁶ Cicero was, then, not far of the mark when he suggested that Atticus had carved out for himself his own little province, and without engaging in any of the mentally and physically burdensome activities mandatory for a provincial governor: he had simply bought it.⁸⁰⁷ What was more, he would not have to give up his "command" at the end of a traditional term.⁸⁰⁸ Unless something threatened his territory, Atticus could maintain his power indefinitely.

The threat, when it came, was from Caesar. Shortly after the Civil War, he named Buthrotum as one of the cities to have been insufficiently hostile to Pompey and, citing this and unpaid taxes as justification, moved to make it a colony.⁸⁰⁹ This was a potential disaster for Atticus in several ways. First, the land for the settlement would be confiscated from his neighbours and likely clients, and could severely disrupt the network of business contacts he had developed over the decades.⁸¹⁰ At the same time, if he was unable to prevent the suffering of the locals at the hands of Romans, he stood to lose his status as their patron.⁸¹¹ Finally, his autonomy would be threatened by the influx of Roman magistrates necessary to govern the new colony. At once, he enlisted the help of Cicero and set about preventing the measure. Cicero writes to L. Munatius Plancus, the praetor-designate:

ut primum Buthrotium agrum proscriptum vidimus, commotus Atticus libellum composuit. eum mihi dedit ut darem Caesari; eram enim cenaturus apud eum illo die. eum libellum Caesari dedi. probavit causam, rescripsit Attico aequa

⁸⁰⁶ Deniaux (1987) 249-50. Cicero's first intended destination upon his banishment was Atticus' Epirote estate: Cic. *Att.* 3.1 (SB 46); 3.5 (50) cf. Claassen (1992) 26.

⁸⁰⁷ Surely not a fact that would increase his popularity in Rome.

⁸⁰⁸ Steel (2005) 14 suggests that extended commands (such as Piso's proconsulship) were an effective method of wielding power without becoming a Lucretian Sisyphus (*DRN.* 3.995-1002). See also West (1969) 100-102; Fowler (2007) 420.

⁸⁰⁹ Hansen (2011) 90.

⁸¹⁰ There is no evidence that Atticus' own land was ever under threat of confiscation: Deniaux (1975) 286.

⁸¹¹ Hansen (2011) 92: "It is possible that the long-term influence of Atticus at Butrint depended on just this... perceived ability to champion the city's cause."

*eum postulare, admonuit tamen ut pecuniam reliquam Buthrotii ad diem solverent. Atticus, qui civitatem conservatam cuperet, pecuniam numeravit de suo. quod cum esset factum, adiimus ad Caesarem, verba fecimus pro Buthrotiis.*⁸¹²

"When we first saw that the Buthrotian land had been scheduled, Atticus was much disturbed and drew up a petition which he gave me to give to Caesar, with whom I was dining that day. I gave Caesar that document. He approved the case, and wrote back to Atticus that his request was reasonable, with a warning however that the Buthrotians must pay the sum outstanding punctually. In his anxiety to save the town Atticus paid the sum out of his own pocket. That done, we went to Caesar and spoke on the Buthrotians' behalf."

These immediate and canny political actions demonstrate the importance of the cause to Atticus. He was opportunistic in his decision to present his case to Caesar through Cicero's prearranged engagement, one that ought to be relaxed and pleasurable, thanks to the presence of food and wine. He must have worked swiftly to compile his dossier in a single day, and there is no indication that he required Cicero's input to produce a compelling argument aimed at influencing the most powerful man in Rome. The decision to honour the city's debts from his own purse was likewise prompt, as was the payment, suggesting that he had already begun to consider this option before the offer was made. Atticus then capitalised on the goodwill earned by his financial contribution to maintain momentum for his cause, cementing the gesture by immediately making a personal visit to Caesar in order to solidify his professed stance on the Buthrotians' case. These are not the actions of a political naïf, and had Cicero coached him through the campaign he surely would not have hesitated to take credit, especially in this letter to L. Plancus, who was his friend more than Atticus'.⁸¹³

⁸¹² Cic. *Att.* 16.16a (SB 407a). In this letter to the praetor-designate for 43, L. Plancus, Cicero summarizes the entire affair to date.

⁸¹³ Cic. *Att.* 16.16a (SB 407a): *ad paternas enim magnas et veteres et iustas necessitudines magnam attulit accessionem tua voluntas erga me meaue erga te par atque mutua.*

Atticus' efforts met with temporary success; Caesar declined to make any official decree, but promised that some other territory would be found before the colonists reached Buthrotum.⁸¹⁴ But the events of the Ides of March left the matter in the hands of Antony and Dolabella, who would have been far more interested in the strategic importance of the site than the quelling of the fears of provincials.⁸¹⁵ The colonists arrived in the summer of 44 BC, and the settlement was established. Atticus, then, had lost his status as the sole permanent Roman authority in the region, and faced the prospect of watching passively while his profits slipped and his relationship with the Epirotes soured. He did not, however, give up so easily.⁸¹⁶

The series of archaeological excavations conducted on the site of Buthrotum have yielded a preponderance of magisterial and epitaphic inscriptions in various degrees of integrity.⁸¹⁷ Of these, almost ten per cent bear at least one name that is a variation of either of the two *praenomen-nomen* combinations used by Atticus in his lifetime.⁸¹⁸ These were probably freedmen of his household, some following the same naming convention that bestowed upon Attica's erstwhile tutor the appellation Q. Caecilius Epirota upon his manumission.⁸¹⁹ We know, however, that Atticus was flexible in his naming practices, mixing his original

⁸¹⁴ He was, as he himself admitted, loath to risk his popularity with the veterans by casting doubt over their new settlement before they set out. This move also shifted responsibility for the location of the settlement to its leader, L. Munatius Plancus, the brother of Cicero's recipient: Deniaux (1975) 288.

⁸¹⁵ Cic. *Att.* 14.10 (SB 364).

⁸¹⁶ Deniaux (1975) 286.

⁸¹⁷ The primary excavations have been an Italian expedition of 1928-1940, and an almost continuous series of surveys and excavations between 1992 and 2008 under the auspices of Richard Hodges: Hodges (2012) 2.

⁸¹⁸ Inscriptions bearing 'Q' and 'Caecilius': *HD.* 005856 (Q. Caecilius Epagatus); *HD.* 014112 (Q Caecilus Nicostratus); *HD.* 052257 (Q. Caecilio L[ucio]). Inscriptions featuring 'T' and 'Pomponius': *HD.* 064671 (T[ito] Pomponio Luperco); *HD.* 064685 (2x 'Pompo..'); *HD.* 067735 (Titos Pomponius Damostratos). *HD.* 021991, a possible honorific inscription, features both a 'Pomponianus' and a 'Q. Atticus.'

⁸¹⁹ This is an identification made with great certainty thanks to the salacious story offered by Suet. *Gram.* 16. Identification: Hansen (2011) 91. See also Cic. *Att.* 12.33 (SB 269); Hemelrijk (2004) 36.

praenomen and new *nomen* to rename one T. Caecilius Eutyichides shortly after his adoption, and even giving the tutor Dionysios the *nomen* Marcus in homage to Cicero.⁸²⁰ The actual number of freedmen from his estate represented in the epigraphy of the town could, then, be even higher.

Even accounting for the frequency with which the manumitted commissioned inscriptions, the 'freedman's epigraphic habit,' the volume of evidence for ex-slaves of Atticus' household enjoying privileged status in death, appearing on rolls of magistrates and performing dedications, suggests that his extended family maintained considerable influence in the city of Buthrotum even after Roman colonization.⁸²¹ Unable to thwart the settlement, he had nevertheless found a way to influence its fashioning, and to exert his influence in favour of his own interests and of those who relied on him, without ever having to hold office himself.⁸²²

His donation to Brutus from his holdings in that region can also be viewed in the same light; since the colonists were ultimately under the authority of Antony, who possibly used the city as a temporary mint, his use of Epirote wealth to fund the liberators may have been an attempt to restore the balance of political neutrality to Buthrotum, and protect it from potential repercussions of the victory of either side.⁸²³ Augustus also joined the struggle for influence in the city, likely recognising its strategic importance as the best place from which to control the Straits of Corfu.⁸²⁴ Echoing his competition with Antony for the affection of Atticus, he sought to claim ownership of Buthrotum by renaming the settlement, upon his victory, from Colonia Iulia Buthrotum to Colonia Augusta Buthrotum.⁸²⁵ The change was, however, short-lived, and no individual

⁸²⁰ Cic. *Att.* 4.15.1 (SB 90) cf. Mouritsen (2011) 39n19.

⁸²¹ As long as he lived, Atticus remained the *paterfamilias* of those he had freed: Mouritsen (2011) 39. Further strengthening the continuing bond would have been the fact that most of his freedmen would have been *vernae*, born in his own household: Nep. *Att.* 13.3-4.

⁸²² Hansen (2011) 91.

⁸²³ Hansen (2011) 92. Antony's possible mint: *RPC.1* 1383; Burnett, Amandry and Ripollès (1992) 275. See also Abdy (2012) 92-93.

⁸²⁴ Hodges (2013) 2.

⁸²⁵ Nep. *Att.* 20.4 depicts the courting of Atticus as a microcosm of the rivalry of Antony and Augustus: *hoc quale sit, facilius existimabit is, qui iudicare poterit, quantae sit sapientiae eorum retinere usum*

wielded such overt influence until the emperor Nero.⁸²⁶ Even while Augustus was in the midst of his remodelling project, he would have been hospitable to Atticus and his interests; the two were *adfines*, thanks to a marriage between Attica and Marcus Agrippa.⁸²⁷ Nepos even records that Atticus held enough sway with Augustus that he influenced him to repair the damaged roof of the temple of Iuppiter Feretrius on the Capitoline.⁸²⁸ Thus, even when Atticus found himself outranked politically, he found covert ways to influence events and regimes in his favour.

benivolentiamque, inter quos maximarum rerum non solum aemulatio, sed obtrectatio tanta intercedebat, quantam fuit incidere necesse inter Caesarem atque Antonium, cum se uterque principem non solum urbis Romae, sed orbis terrarum esse cuperet. Renaming of the settlement: Ceka (1999) 15; Hansen and Hodges (2007) 5-8.

⁸²⁶ Abdy (2012) 94.

⁸²⁷ Nep. *Att.* 12.1.

⁸²⁸ Nep. *Att.* 20.3 cf. Millar (1988) 51. The word used for Atticus' encouragement, *admonitus*, suggests that he still maintained some seniority in the relationship despite the younger man's rise to power.

7.iv. Atticus' Intellectual Services⁸²⁹

Atticus' greatest asset, after his vast familial wealth, was his formidable intellect, a trait that, according to Nepos, aroused great envy in his schoolyard peers.⁸³⁰ While the practical application of this intellect facilitated Atticus' financial gains and political survival, he also used it for more esoteric pursuits.⁸³¹ The project for which he earned the most renown was his *Liber Annalis*, a history of Rome set out year-by-year, which immediately displaced Nepos' own *Chronica*, itself a work of considerable innovation, as the tome of choice for historical research.⁸³² This does not seem to have affected the friendship between Atticus and his biographer, however, and in fact one of the few things on which Cicero and Nepos could agree was that Atticus' history was a work of extraordinary merit.⁸³³ Cicero claimed that the *Liber Annalis* was the inspiration for his own *Brutus*, and went out of his way to praise his friend's work in that book.⁸³⁴ Further, he included in the dialogue two digressions of dubious relevance in order to showcase both Atticus' research skills and his keen eye for embellishment in his sources.⁸³⁵

In the first of these, Cicero mentions that he and Atticus have, at times, put forth contradictory accounts of the death of Coriolanus, and admits that while his is rhetorically expedient, that of Atticus is closer to the truth. Atticus responds with superiority but good grace:

⁸²⁹ A phrase coined by Potter (2011) 73.

⁸³⁰ *Nep. Att.* 1.3-4. Cicero also mentions at *Leg.* 2.45 (cf. Cornell (2013) 349) that he had a prodigious memory.

⁸³¹ *Atticus: FRH.* 33; Drummond (2013a).

⁸³² On the originality of Nepos' *Chronica*: Stem (2012) 14. Habinek (1998) 95 suggests, based on comparison between the praise of the two histories, that that of Atticus was both better presented and more romanocentric. On *The Liber Annalis* supplanting the *Chronica*: Geiger (1985b) 16.

⁸³³ Cicero resented Nepos for finding fault with the very things he liked best about his own works: *Cic. Att.* 16.5 (SB 410)

⁸³⁴ *Cic. Brut.* 13-15.

⁸³⁵ See Steel (2003) 197.

*At ille ridens: Tuo vero, inquit, arbitrato, quoniam quidem concessum est rhetoribus ementiri in historiis, ut aliquid dicere possint argutius.*⁸³⁶

"At this he smiled and said: "As you like, since the privilege is conceded to rhetoricians to distort history in order to give more point to their narrative."

He follows this remark with an account of how the elaboration of bare facts affords writers better dramatic impact, giving specific examples from Cleitarchus and Stratocles as a display of his sensitivity to invention. The Cicero of the dialogue submits to his companion's superior knowledge with the promise:

*Sit sane, inquam, ut libet, de isto; et ego cautius posthac historiam attingam te audiente, quem rerum Romanarum auctorem laudare possum religiosissimum.*⁸³⁷

"Very well, as for him let it be as you will," I replied, "but hereafter I shall touch on history with more caution when you are present, an historian of Rome whom I can commend as most scrupulous."

Here Cicero establishes two things. Firstly, that any historical inaccuracies in his oratorical purpose are stylistic flourishes rather than errors founded in ignorance. Secondly, he sets up Atticus as the arbiter of historical accuracy and a paragon of intellectual honesty. This categorization is reinforced by a second somewhat gratuitous digression, putatively inspired by Atticus, in which Cicero muses at length on some apparent contradictions in Accius' account of the life and works of Livius Andronicus.⁸³⁸ He refers to the *Liber Annalis* as his most trusted source on dates, mentioning that it is supported by his own research into ancient

⁸³⁶ Cic. *Brut.* 42. (tr. Hubbell).

⁸³⁷ Cic. *Brut.* 44.

⁸³⁸ Cic. *Brut.* 74: *Haec si minus apta videntur huic sermoni, Brute, Attico adsigna, qui me inflammavit studio inlustrium hominum aetates et tempora persequendi.* As Steel (2003) 197 notes, the discussion is incongruent enough to merit an apology to the dialogue's dedicatee.

annals.⁸³⁹ The implication is that Atticus himself has trawled these records, as well as others in order to create his definitive chronology. This is almost certainly accurate; Atticus had at his disposal both an impressive personal library and a coterie of specially trained slaves.⁸⁴⁰

Yet despite Cicero's early enthusiasm for Atticus' history of Rome, and his celebration of his friend's diligence and honesty, it cannot have been faultlessly accurate. For one thing, Nepos tells us that it included among the exploits of Rome's early leaders the illustrious origins of contemporary families.⁸⁴¹ If he really did include filiations and *cognomina* for this early mythical period, then that in itself, and the rest of the tome by association, is suspect.⁸⁴² A second problematic feature of the work is Atticus' significant departure from the traditional date of 750 or 751 BC; he places it three years earlier.⁸⁴³ While it is possible that he simply adjusted the Roman timeline in order to bring it into line with events in Greek history, it is almost certainly the case that this was facilitated by the inclusion of four, probably spurious, "dictator years."⁸⁴⁴

These periods, unmentioned in earlier sources, are recorded in the new chronology as entire years for which there were no elected consuls, and Rome was governed by a dictator and a master of the horse. It is hard to dissociate their introduction from the fact that, at the time of writing, Caesar was pushing the boundaries of the tenure of the office of the dictator far beyond the traditional six months.⁸⁴⁵ It cannot have escaped Atticus' notice that it would have been expedient for the dictator to find

⁸³⁹ Cic. *Brut.* 72 (*FRH.* 33.6).

⁸⁴⁰ Cic. *Att.* 12.23.2 (SB 262). See also Treggiari (1969) 149n2; Horsfall (1995) 53, above Ch. 7.i.

⁸⁴¹ Nep. *Att.* 18.2.

⁸⁴² Cornell (2013) 349: "the work certainly included creative reconstruction of a questionable kind, making its broader reliability uncertain." The sources for the genealogical aspect probably included family records, a resource even then acknowledged as completely untrustworthy: Marshall (1993) 308.

⁸⁴³ Drummond (1978) 558. See also Drummond (2013) 458, commentary on *FRH.* 33.2 (Solin. 1.27); Werner (1963) 196-7.

⁸⁴⁴ Forsythe (2006) 369. The years in question are 333, 324, 309 and 301 BC.

⁸⁴⁵ On the traditional term of the dictatorship before Sulla: Cic. *Leg.* 3.9; Livy 3.29.7. See also Feig Vishnia (2012) 81.

some historical precedent beyond that of Sulla for his actions. Caesar, too, was likely aware of this. As is evident from his commentaries on his military campaigns, he had a keen understanding of the potency of historiography in the accumulation and consolidation of power.⁸⁴⁶ He also saw from early on the potential of recruiting intellectuals in order to promote and legitimise his ascent.

This is evident in the case of Atticus' good friend Varro, who went from serving as one of Pompey's generals to overseeing Caesar's grand library project after the civil war.⁸⁴⁷ The dictator had identified the prolific author as an apt target for solicitation long before his victory, as can be seen by the attention he pays the relatively minor military figure in his commentary on the conflict.⁸⁴⁸ While other historians largely pass over Varro's role, Caesar builds for him a narrative of wavering loyalties, which both demonstrates that he had been paying attention to his career, and lays the groundwork for his eventual pardon.⁸⁴⁹ After their reconciliation, Varro lent his intellectual credibility to Caesar's cause, a project he continued beyond the dictator's death with his *de Gente Populi Romani*, which supported the case for the deification of Caesar by highlighting past leaders who had secured posthumous divinity.⁸⁵⁰

While Atticus had not taken an active role in Pompey's campaign, nor had he aided Caesar in his, and he may have funded individual Pompeians as they left Rome, so his self-professed neutrality alone was

⁸⁴⁶ The argument that Caesar was, by the standards of his time, an historian, and that he used this *métier* to strengthen his position, was first made by Gelzer in a 1961 address, published as Gelzer (1974), cf. Damon (1984) 183.

⁸⁴⁷ Varro: *FRH*. 52; Drummond (2013b). Library project: Suet. *Iul.* 44. Varro was to have procured and catalogued the books for a library in Rome to rival that of Alexandria.

⁸⁴⁸ Damon (1994) 192. A great and prolific polymath, Varro wrote almost 500 works in Latin.

⁸⁴⁹ *Caes. Bell. Civ.* 1.38.1; 2.17-21. Varro's exploits in the civil war are otherwise only briefly mentioned in Cass. Dio 41.23.2. Caesar also stepped in before the pair were officially reconciled to prevent Antony from confiscating Varro's estate: *Cic. Phil.* 2.103.

⁸⁵⁰ Taylor (1934) 222. This work of 43 BC is unfortunately lost, but fragments are preserved in Augustine's *De civitate dei*.

likely not enough to ensure his safety.⁸⁵¹ Additionally, he needed more from Caesar than simply to be spared; at the time when he was composing his *Liber Annalis*, he was also heavily invested in his petitioning for the cancellation of the planned colonization of Buthrotum.⁸⁵² So Atticus was, at this time, particularly vulnerable to pressure from Caesar and, as has been argued by Drummond, could quite conceivably have inserted, or even invented, the "dictator years" at his behest.⁸⁵³ While this level of intellectual dishonesty seems incredible for a man held in such great esteem, it is worth noting that after the death of Caesar, Cicero seems to have abandoned his usage of the new chronology, including an anecdote in *Cato Maior de Senectute* about the interval between the consulships of one M. Valerius Corvinus which precludes all four of the possibly spurious years.⁸⁵⁴

That Atticus contributed his literary and historical capabilities to the promotion of other individuals, and not always in the most scrupulous manner, is supported by the aspect of the *Liber Annalis* that he chose to expand upon. Nepos tells us that he responded to the requests of several of his peers to extend the genealogical aspect of his history and produce accounts of the origins of their own lines.⁸⁵⁵ Likely they were hoping to be able to claim mythical or kingly origins, the popularity and acceptance of which at the time is evidenced by Caesar's funerary *laudatio* for his aunt in 69 BC, in which he stated publically that the Iulii were descended from Venus.⁸⁵⁶ Atticus himself claimed ancient and noble family origins that somewhat offset the fact that he was not of senatorial rank; the Pomponii were said to be descended from Pompo, a son of Numa.⁸⁵⁷ So he was well

⁸⁵¹ Nep. *Att.* 6.7 cf. Millar (1988) 45.

⁸⁵² Marshall (1993) 324 cf. Cic. *Att.* 16.16a (SB 407a).

⁸⁵³ Drummond (1978) 556.

⁸⁵⁴ Drummond (1978) 551. Val. Max. 8.13.1 and Pliny *NH.* 7.157 follow Cicero. On the other hand, Varro, still loyal to the memory of Caesar, remained so committed to the dating scheme that it has come to be known as the Varronian chronology: Forsythe (2006) 369.

⁸⁵⁵ Nep. *Att.* 18.3-4.

⁸⁵⁶ Suet. *Iul.* 6.1 cf. Wiseman (1974) 153. See also Millar (1988) 48.

⁸⁵⁷ Nep. *Att.* 1.1. Cornell (2013) 349.

aware of the social and political capital that could be derived from ancient lineage.

Most of the individuals to whom Atticus offered his genealogical services subsequently amounted to little.⁸⁵⁸ They were mostly struggling members of the Caesarean faction who perhaps hoped to supply evidence for their descendants' future claims to noble origin, a service Atticus may have been encouraged to perform by the dictator himself.⁸⁵⁹ There is one subject, however, on whom Atticus undoubtedly bestowed the favour willingly and perhaps on his own initiative: his beloved Brutus.⁸⁶⁰ It is in his interactions with this individual that Atticus' pretence of political neutrality is at its most transparent. He made no secret, to Cicero at least, of his desire to cultivate and encourage the young man, and repeatedly exhorted him to join the project.⁸⁶¹ The culmination of this was the *Brutus*, and Cicero's statement of his and Atticus' hopes for the addressee, a passage in which he evokes both his maternal and paternal lineages:

*Sed in te intuens, Brute, doleo, cuius in adulescentiam per medias laudes quasi quadrigis vehementem transversa incurrit misera fortuna rei publicae. Hic me dolor tangit, haec cura sollicitat et hunc mecum socium eiusdem et amoris et iudici. Tibi favemus, te tua frui virtute cupimus, tibi optamus eam rem publicam in qua duorum generum amplissimorum renovare memoriam atque auger possis. Tuum enim forum, tuum erat illud curriculum, tu illuc veneras unus, qui non linguam modo acuisser exercitatione dicendi sed et ipsam eloquentiam locupletavisses graviorum artium instrumento et isdem artibus decus omne virtutis cum summa eloquentiae laude iunxisses. ex te duplex nos afficit sollicitudo, quod et ipse re publica careas et illa te.*⁸⁶²

"But I grieve more deeply when I look on you, Brutus, whose youthful career, faring in triumph amidst the general applause, has been thwarted by the onset of malign fortune. This is the grief which touches me most closely, this care

⁸⁵⁸ They were: Claudius Marcellus, Cornelius Scipio and Fabius Maximus.

⁸⁵⁹ Marshall (1993) 314.

⁸⁶⁰ Nep. *Att.* 8.2. On the relationship between the two, see Ziegler (1936) 88ff.

⁸⁶¹ Cic. *Att.* 6.1.7 (SB 115).

⁸⁶² Cic. *Brut.* 331-2 (tr. Hubbell).

which disquiets me, and not me only, but my friend here who shares my love and esteem for you. Upon you our affection rests, for you we share the ardent wish that you may reap the reward of your virtue, for you we crave such a constitution of public affairs as shall make it possible for you to maintain the fame of two great houses and add to them a new lustre. Yours was the forum, yours was that arena, you were conspicuous in bringing thither, not only a tongue sharpened by training to excellence, but eloquence itself, enriched and equipped with arts of graver import, and through such studies you had joined to your renown for eloquence all that grace which belongs to the study of virtue. On your account a two-fold concern touches us, that you are bereft of the republic, and the republic of you."

This is unmistakably a call to action, and both Balsdon and Douglas have gone so far as to assert that it is an incitement to the overthrowing of Caesar.⁸⁶³ After all, Brutus' career had not truly stalled; he had been appointed governor of Cisalpine Gaul, and was in contention for the most prestigious praetorship in the next round of appointments.⁸⁶⁴ He was, however, reliant on Caesar, and even though he was advancing through the offices of the *cursus honorum*, he would never wield any true power while the dictator reigned. Caesar himself, and his nullification of the system that would reward Brutus for his oratorical excellence, was the only barrier to Brutus fulfilling his potential.⁸⁶⁵ It is interesting, though, that Cicero should bring Brutus' *duorum generum* into the discussion. The young man was clearly proud of both his descent from the Iunii and his birth and adoptive membership of the Servilii, and aware of their potential for conversion into political capital; he had issued coins in 54 depicting ancestors from both sides.⁸⁶⁶

Atticus' expansion of the early history of both lines must have augmented Brutus' ability for self-promotion through the invocation of his ancestors, and likely emphasised his ties to the earliest and most famous

⁸⁶³ Balsdon (1958) 91; Douglas (1966) 233 n331.

⁸⁶⁴ Governorship of Cisalpine Gaul: Cic. *Brut.* 171; Plut. *Brut.* 6. Praetorship: Plut. *Brut.* 7.2; Cass. Dio. 43.51.2-9.

⁸⁶⁵ Steel (2003) 198.

⁸⁶⁶ Crawford (1974) 88/ *RRC*. 455-456.

Brutus: L Iunius Brutus, the consul of 509 BC, who led the revolt against Rome's last king, Tarquinius Superbus.⁸⁶⁷ Cicero's reference to this is both a goad with which to spur Brutus to action and a reminder that he is qualified enough for the role.⁸⁶⁸ If Cicero is encouraging, then Atticus is supplying propagandistic aid, just as he has been compelled to do for Caesar. Despite his apparent neutrality, he showed after the assassination that he was fully in favour of Brutus' actions and even voiced approval for Cicero's more drastic plan to kill Antony as well, so it is not inconceivable that he in some way influenced or encouraged the plot against Caesar.⁸⁶⁹ After all, the dictator might have spared his life, but he still refused to definitively put an end to the plans for the colonization of Buthrotum, and furthermore he had made the matter yet more bitter by mocking the excessively deferential language that Atticus had been compelled to use in his entreaties.⁸⁷⁰ This might have been enough to push Atticus into meddling with political affairs in the most drastic way.⁸⁷¹

To use his scholarly writings as a political weapon was a shrewd move on the part of Atticus, even if it was initially Caesar's idea. It was not only effective, but also inconspicuous; his scholarly pursuits were so intricately linked with his *honestum otium* that few would have suspected partisan motives for his writing.⁸⁷² Cicero often conflated emulation of Atticus' literary endeavours with withdrawal from the perils of the political sphere, and wrote of his desire to use the former as a method of facilitating the latter.⁸⁷³ Writing, even on non-philosophical subjects, was a suitable activity for a Roman Epicurean who claimed to take seriously the warnings

⁸⁶⁷ Marshall (1993) 314.

⁸⁶⁸ In Plut. *Brut.* 10 Cassius persuades Brutus to join his plot by arguing that the abolition of tyranny is a debt he owes both to his lineage and the people. His descent is portrayed as a kind of wealth itself, and Plutarch compares it to the money used by other praetors for games and spectacles: Veyne (1990) 224.

⁸⁶⁹ Cic. *Att.* 14.10.1 (SB 364); 14.14.3 (368).

⁸⁷⁰ Cic. *Att.* 12.6a.2 (SB 243) cf. Corbeill (1996) 198.

⁸⁷¹ There may also have been a simmering enmity thanks to the actions of the *equites*, led by Atticus, in 63: Suet. *Iul.* 14; Sall. *Cat.* 49.

⁸⁷² Nicolet (1966) 710 identifies the composition of the *Liber Annalis* as the moment when "son *honestum otium*, consacré aux travaux littéraires, suit de très près la politique."

⁸⁷³ Cic. *Att.* 1.17.4-5 (SB 17).

against political activity. To employ it to exhort an ally to tyrannicide was both subtle and unexpected. The message was not, however, lost on Brutus, and we see from a letter of 43 that it had caused him to wonder whether Atticus was putting aside his neutrality altogether, only to reconcile himself later with the fact that he was not:

*nec me hercule te, Attice, reprehendo; aetas enim, mores, liberi segnem efficiunt*⁸⁷⁴

"I am not criticizing you, Atticus, upon my word. Your age and habits and children make you loth to move"

Apart from a brief blip during the Catilinarian debacle of 63, Atticus had been consistent in following what Nepos called his *institutio vitae* of avoiding taking sides in conflicts, and Brutus must have been aware of this.⁸⁷⁵ So for him to need to reassure Atticus that he does not hold his inactivity against him means that there must have been some form of reassessment of their duties to each other. Perhaps he hoped that Atticus' private encouragement, and the moral basis of his cause, meant that he would once again lead the *equites*, this time in the name of *libertas*. But Atticus was playing, as he always had, a much longer game.

⁸⁷⁴ Cic. *Ad. Brut.* 1.17.3. (SB 26) This letter is addressed to Atticus but, since its main subject is Brutus' opinion of Cicero's actions after the assassination, it found its way into Cicero's hands and eventually archives.

⁸⁷⁵ Nep. *Att.* 7.3.

7.v. Atticus' Niche

While presenting himself as a man apart from the undignified and perilous struggle for power in the late Republic, Atticus successfully accumulated influence far surpassing some of his senatorial contemporaries. Some of these, Cicero among them, relied on him in his capacity as *procurator*, and all likely recognised the importance of this role to the functioning of the state and provinces. As a result, he could sway the result of elections (as when he campaigned for Cicero), lobby against unfavourable legislation (the decree for the colonisation of Buthrotum), protect his friends and financial interests from prosecution (see Brutus and the Scaptius incident), and persuade warring parties to leave him out of the fray. He controlled land and wealth overseas comparable to a provincial governor, and despite his refusal to enter the Senate, his line became desirable for the marriage prospects of those in the highest reaches of power.

While his fellow Roman Epicureans gained influence and security by finding a place for themselves in the retinue of the ascendant Caesar, Atticus maintained a strict policy of appearing to shun factions. While he did perform services for Caesar, among them his propagandistic insertion of extended dictatorships into his *Liber Annalis*, he also aided his opponents indirectly through individual contributions, and refused to ever make an overt statement of allegiance either way. As a result, he found himself in a more precarious position than, say, Pansa, under Caesar's dictatorship, as is evidenced by the punitive colonization of the city he patronized. In the longer term, however, his strategy was the more successful of the two, as the ambiguity over his loyalties allowed him to use his wealth and influence to maintain the goodwill of every major contender in the struggle for power after the Ides of March, and to remain unscathed no matter who prevailed.

Atticus evaded criticism for this ultimately self-serving strategy by cultivating the image of an intellectual unconcerned with worldly affairs, whose monetary donations were merely acts of service to friends. He reinforced this with public acts of patronage to the *Kepos*, with authorized

appearances as a quasi-Epicurean in the philosophical works of Cicero, and through hints to his biographer. The identity he projected, as characterized by his self-designated *cognomen*, revolved around his apparent prioritization of esoteric, Greek pursuits rather than the typically Roman concern for offices and power. In reality, however, one of the greatest influences on Atticus' lifestyle and his decision to shun traditional politics was the money he acquired from his father and uncle, and invested with great success. By declining to enter the Senate, he maintained his ability to invest in provincial property and to diversify his investment in politics by supporting a portfolio of candidates rather than focusing on himself. In doing so, he relied less on the teachings of Epicureanism than the appearance of it; his professed quietism justified his lack of public service and distracted from his private interference with elections and legislation.

Atticus did not, however, merely profess Epicureanism; he made the effort to study the philosophy, he socialised with the Scholarchs, and he acted as a patron and benefactor of the School. His appearance in Athens after Sulla's sack of the city, bringing with him the sort of wealth that could make a real difference to a struggling institution, and a willingness to put it to use, must have seemed like a blessing to the Epicureans, and he continued his advocacy for them throughout his life. Whether he truly believed all of the School's teachings, then, is somewhat immaterial. His relationship with the *Kepos* was symbiotic, as was his involvement with politicians; Atticus may have had his own interests at heart in all of his dealings, but he was undeniably generous and a positive force in every arena in which he exerted himself. Even if he did not really believe in *eidola* or the atomic swerve, and even if he never declared himself one of Epicurus' faithful, it is doubtful that any Scholarch or adherent would begrudge him the right to call himself, when it suited him, an Epicurean.

Conclusion

Since Robert Leslie concluded his influential doctoral thesis of 1950 with the assertion that Atticus was a "Roman Epicurean," a number of critics have questioned what exactly would constitute such a thing.⁸⁷⁶ While a definition encompassing every potential adherent of the *Kepos* of Roman origin remains elusive, due to the diversity of the lifestyles of possible Epicureans and the difficulty of identification in many cases, there is in fact much we can say about what a Roman Epicurean *did*, even if we cannot define exactly what one *was*. In looking at the career choices of the securely identified Epicureans of the late Republican elite, we have seen that they shared values, approaches and strategies that had significant impacts on the success of their acquisition of offices, their navigation of social and political turmoil, and the preservation of their safety and wealth.

Many, if not all, of these commonalities are influenced by the unique social and political climate of the late Republic. There was both need and opportunity for new career styles in a period characterized by political instability, in which the potential for an individual or small group to override and co-opt the state apparatus had been made brutally clear by the dictatorship of Sulla and the success and then breakdown of the First Triumvirate. The Civil War between Caesar and Pompey awakened Romans of the Senatorial class to the reality that they must reconcile themselves to serving a master when previously they had operated as part of a relatively equal social group, while members of the lower orders sensed new opportunities to climb to power and status by finding a role that would make them useful to a leader in ascendance. At the same time, those with too much to lose to play the political game, sought justification for making nontraditional choices, and for evading established political courses entirely.

Piso and Pansa likely did not envisage their conversion to Epicureanism as a career choice; and their motivation for adopting the

⁸⁷⁶ Leslie (1950) 74. See Bailey (1951) 163-164; Griffin (1997) 105; Nicgorski (2002) 22 n.27.

philosophy probably had an external origin: in the advances of Philodemus, in Piso's case. The *Kepos* itself stood to gain from the cultivation of politically active recruits; they could advocate for favourable conditions from the Roman provincial administration currently ruling over them in Athens, send their valuable resources to secure locations in peaceful areas, and benefit from the financial patronage of these successful individuals. The Scholarchs and their agents would have known from the School's history that adoption of their supposedly quietistic philosophy would be no impediment to political success, and they targeted young men of significant potential; not just those, like Atticus, who ventured to Athens in pursuit of new knowledge and cultural experiences, but also those, like Piso, who remained in Rome but could be seduced by the friendship of a charming and witty individual like Philodemus.

Their success as political Epicureans, however, would not have gone unnoticed, either by themselves or others. Piso and Pansa both emerged from the Civil War unharmed, the former having maintained his prestige, fortune, and safety without even lifting a hand for either cause, and the latter cemented in his role as right hand to the victorious general. It would have escaped no one that they had in common adherence to Epicurean philosophy and loyalty to Caesar, and certainly not the shrewd and probably quite worried Cassius, whose daring exploits in the name of Pompey would have made him a marked man. His appropriate concern for his own physical security would have made him receptive to Epicurean ideas about tranquillity, so it might not have been an entirely cynical decision on his part to associate himself with the *Kepos* as he strove to find a place for himself in the new regime. He must, however, have known that an ideological bond with Pansa and a professed commitment to avoiding civic turmoil would have made him more palatable to his new master, who was otherwise likely only tolerating him for the sake of his brother-in-law Brutus. By emulating the career choices of Epicurean magistrates, he cemented them as a strategy.

This strategy consisted of avoidance as much as pursuit. As Epicureans, Piso, Pansa and Cassius either opted out of military activity or fulfilled their martial obligations as safely as possible, even at the expense

of winning recognition and accolades for their success. Piso defended his province, with help from his legates, but did not petition for a triumph; Pansa accompanied Caesar on several campaigns, but was never hailed as *imperator* until after his death, and never performed any feat daring enough to merit a mention in his master's war commentaries; and Cassius, one of the greatest soldiers of his generation, was conspicuously absent from all military conflict during the period in which he professed adherence to the *Kepos*. Likewise, all three avoided oratory as a means of political advancement. While this is less surprising in the case of Cassius, whose early career was boosted by his daring proquaestorship of Syria, it is conspicuous in the case of Piso and almost baffling in the case of Pansa. Cicero, in his statement that *cedant arma togae*, and in his own career, presented public speaking as the alternative route to political office for those who could not hope for military glory.⁸⁷⁷ Yet Pansa, a *novus homo*, neglected this aspect of his career so much that he needed a remedial course before taking up his consulship.

What the political Epicureans did do was forge alliances with the rising star of the late-Republican political scene. Whether because they recognised the inevitability of his ascent to sole power, or because they appreciated his aspirations to clemency and tolerance of neutrality, or through simple affection or a combination of all three, they attached themselves to Caesar and publically pledged their loyalty. Piso became his father-in-law, Pansa accompanied him on campaigns, and Cassius submitted to his authority after Pharsalus. All three helped to facilitate and cement his ascent to power: Piso by publically lending him the support of his celebrated family at a point when Caesar was overly reliant on his triumviral alliance with Crassus and Pompey, Pansa by aiding him in his project of self promotion, by acting as messenger to petitioners and by governing his stronghold of Cisalpine Gaul. Cassius, in becoming a high profile beneficiary of the *clementia Caesaris*, encouraged others to desert the Pompeian cause after its leader's death, and to submit themselves to the dictator. Piso and Pansa, by allowing the modification of the *leges Aelia et*

⁸⁷⁷ Cic. *Pis.* 29.62.

Fufia and by overtly disregarding omens respectively, aided Caesar in his efforts to stymie the influence of the State Cult over politics, and to prevent a reoccurrence of Bibulus' efforts to thwart his aims during his consulate by invoking unfavourable signs.

Memmius too tried to be of service to Caesar, by denouncing and even trying to prosecute his running mate, a vocal opponent of the eventual dictator, in the consular elections of 56 BC. He combined this with patronage of the Epicurean poet Lucretius, and the purchase of the house of the Master in the Deme of Melite, and perhaps hoped that he might prove himself as valuable an ally as Pansa or Piso. The scheme failed, however, and he found himself an exile in Athens, with a ruined property to remind him of his folly and a philosophical community intent on preventing him from converting the land to practical use. His strategic conversion was ultimately a failure, as was that of Cassius, who found reliance on the favours of Caesar too demeaning to tolerate, and who abandoned quietism for the most decisive action possible: the assassination of his new master.

Atticus, and the less famous quietists, perhaps foresaw the pitfalls of making allegiance so central to an Epicurean strategy for navigating the contemporary political climate. Like those who sought to combine physical and mental security with progression along the *cursus honorum*, he was well aware of the inherent dangers of the traditional routes to power, and as one of the wealthiest men of his day, he had perhaps even more to lose. His fortune, on the other hand, also offered him another path to influence. Instead of working his way to the reward of a lucrative proconsular province, he simply purchased so much land in Epirus that he effectively had permanent governance of the area, and was able over time to build up such a comprehensive network of agents that he profited as much as any official appointee. In Rome, he made himself integral to the political process by offering his services as *procurator* to those absent from the city due to provincial postings, and by offering loans and overseas financial transfers. He was meticulous, however, to never give the appearance of taking sides in any conflict, even though he clearly favoured certain individuals and worked to further their goals (Brutus in particular).

Atticus' strategy, along with the fact that his fortune was ultimately derived from the *faeneratio* of his maternal uncle Q. Caecilius, might easily have given him a reputation as a toady or a coward, had he not worked tirelessly to earn himself a rather more positive image. As is epitomized by his adopted *cognomen*, Atticus presented himself as primarily a hellenophile intellectual, an image to which he earned the rights by facilitating the distribution of literary texts in Rome and Athens through his copying workshop, by appearing in Cicero's philosophical works, and by composing his own verse and prose works, including a systematic history of Rome. His Epicureanism was part of this presentation; the portrayal of him in Cicero's dialogues conveys that he was sufficiently learned in Epicurean philosophy as to engage with a succession of Scholarchs on their own intellectual level and to earn their friendship. It also functioned as a justification for his approach to politics: his refusal to run for office or take sides was not cowardice, but quietism. He was not unwilling to risk his capital in order to enter the Senatorial order; rather he was simply above the whole thing. Yet he never outed himself as a card-carrying Epicurean, and perhaps never was one; for every piece of evidence suggesting he was there is a built-in component of plausible deniability.

This fits well with Atticus' general strategy of bet-hedging. When Caesar eventually triumphed in the Civil War, Atticus found himself in a position where his life was not under threat, and even after the assassination he still held enough influence to advocate for the estate of his friend Gellius Canus.⁸⁷⁸ In an alternative scenario, in which it was Pompey who emerged victorious, Atticus would have been equally, if not more, assured of his safety. He had, after all, always been generous to Brutus, and he had aided Cicero (who eventually committed to the cause, with limited effect). If the Pompeian regime had proved more hostile to Epicureanism, he could easily have shrugged off the association; after all, he didn't employ a house philosopher like Piso, nor had he been overtly working to convert his contemporaries like Pansa. As it was, his association with the

⁸⁷⁸ Nep. *Att.* 10.4. He also recovered the property of Lucius Saufeius (12.3) and prevented the proscription of the poet Lucius Julius Calidus (12.4.)

Kepos suited Caesar, and his reputation as an intellectual allowed him to offer a service in exchange for forgiveness for his tacit support of the losing side. The inclusion of the "dictator years" in the *Liber Annalis* was a step towards legitimizing Caesar's regime, and Atticus probably hoped that it would allow him to prevent the colonization of Buthrotum.

What all of the Roman Epicureans had in common was recognition of the inherent danger of the contemporary political climate, and a desire to evade as much of that peril as possible while still accumulating power and/or capital. They saw the truth of the Epicurean teaching that one should take precautions against the violence of other men, and saw that that was true not just of military exploits, but also of the *contio* and the law courts, yet understood that political clout would help them to protect both themselves and the *Kepos*. Thus they endeavored to carve a different path through the structures of power, hoping to insure themselves against harm either by allying with Caesar or by refusing to take a side at all. At the same time, they brought the philosophical School, its representatives and its wealth increasingly into the protection of Roman politicians and institutions, and equally their control.

The legacy of these innovations was the long survival of the *Kepos* and its teachings, which in the second century AD would be shared with the citizens of Oinoanda by the wealthy Diogenes in the form of a massive inscription, some twenty-five thousand words filling two hundred and fifty square metres of portico.⁸⁷⁹ Even later, Diogenes Laertius would marvel that the School had survived, with a continuous succession of Scholarchs, to his own day in the third century.⁸⁸⁰ How exactly the strategies developed by Piso, Pansa, Cassius and Atticus facilitated the persistence of Epicureanism through Rome's transition into an Empire, and through the subsequent series of tumultuous dynastic shifts, is a question beyond the scope of this thesis. There is, however, an intriguing clue in a letter from Pompeia Plotina, the wife of the Emperor Trajan, to her adoptive son Hadrian, preserved as an inscription in AD 121.⁸⁸¹

⁸⁷⁹ Smith (2001) xxi.

⁸⁸⁰ Diog. Laert. 10.9. See also Clay (1989) 314; Griffin (1989) 8.

⁸⁸¹ Pompeia: *RE*. 131. See Castner (1988) 51-55.

[Quod studium meum] erga sectam Epicuri sit, optime scis, d[omi]ne. Huius successioni a te succurrendum (5) [est. Nunc quia n]on licet nisi ex civibus Romanis adsumi diad[o]chum, in angustum redigitur eligendi [facultas. Rogo er]go nomine Popilli Theotimi, qui est modo diado[c]hus Athenis, ut illi permittatur a te et Graece [t]estati circa hanc partem iudiciorum suorum quae ad diadoches ordinationem pertinet et peregreinae condicionis posse sub[s]tituere sibi successorem, s[i i]ta suaserit profectus personae; et quod Theotimo concesseris, ut eadom iure et deinceps utantur futuri diadochi sectae Epicuri, eo magis quod opservatur. (10) quotiens erratum est a testatore circa electionem [di]adochi, ut communi consilio substituatur a studiosis eiusdem sec[t]ae qui optimus erit: quod facilius fiet, si e[x] compluribus eligatur.⁸⁸²

You know well, my lord [my enthusiasm] for the School of Epicurus. You must come to our aid in this matter of succession to the headship. [Since] it is [now] allowed for none but Roman citizens to hold office by right of succession, the [available choices] are narrowly limited. [Therefore I ask], in the name of the present head of the School at Athens, Popillius Theotimus, that you allow him to make provisions in Greek in his will concerning the succession and to appoint a successor who is not a Roman citizen, if the individual is deserving. And if you allow Theotimus to do this, I ask that you allow future heads of the Epicurean School the same freedom. This is all the more desirable because if the head ever makes a bad choice of successor, the students are accustomed to choose by general vote the best substitute. This will be easier if the choice is made from several candidates.

We see here that the *Kepon* is still in the habit of forging associations with those in and adjacent to positions of power, and that it is still entangled with the Roman institution. This is evident not only from the fact that the School is now affected by a law limiting official successions to Roman citizens, but also by the fact that this does not completely deprive it of potential Scholarchs, only narrows the field.⁸⁸³ Among the highly

⁸⁸² *CIL*. III 12283; *IG*. II(2) 1099 1-10, found in Athens (tr. Castner).

⁸⁸³ There is no record of a specific law, and Millar (1977) 504n88 suspects there was no specific ruling, but that the fact that Popillius Theotimus, the

educated adherents of the School must, then, have been several Romans, and more were counted among the greater Epicurean community, including the most influential of the imperial women. Like Atticus before her, Plotina petitioned those in power to protect the *Kepos* and its interests, and like him she was successful; the inscription goes on to record Hadrian's very precise granting of her wishes, and her jubilant report to her fellow adherents.⁸⁸⁴ That the emperor acquiesced so easily implies that he was not hostile to the School or its followers, and this was probably for the same reason that Caesar was so open to its adherents: they were his friends, his followers, his female relatives. In the Empire as in the Republic, Epicureans found a niche in supporting positions to those in power, and in securing their goodwill, guaranteed their safety and that of the School.

reigning Scholarch, was himself a Roman citizen, brought the school under more general Roman legislation relating to the making of wills in Latin and making testamentary dispositions only for the benefit of other citizens.

⁸⁸⁴ In, as Hemelrijk (2004) 117 notes, the language of *amicitia*.

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(Abbreviations, where used, follow the conventions of *l'Année philologique*)

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